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**THE UNITED CHURCH OF ROWAYTON**  
**63<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting, February 1, 2015**

**OFFICERS FOR 2014**

Moderator	Roger Wachnicki
Clerk	Michael Ziegler
General Treasurer	Peg Mullaney
Business Manager	Lou Froelich

**STATISTICAL REPORT**

<b>Total Adult Members on rolls as of December 31, 2013</b>	<b>352</b>
Inactive Members Removed from Church Records During 2014	2
Transfers Out During 2014	0
Members Deceased	8
Members Received During 2014	27
Confirmands Received in 2014	8
<b>Adult Members on rolls as of December 31, 2014</b>	<b>377</b>
Baptisms	12
Weddings	3
Funeral and Memorial Services	7

*Members and Friends who have died in 2014*

Andrea Williams Brown  
Richard Hopkins  
Fred (Ted) Horne  
Robert Lindsay  
John Longley  
Phillip R. Roberts  
Ashley Rumery  
Alan Wyland





*Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place;  
I can feel his mighty power and his grace.  
I can hear the brush of angels' wings,  
I see glory on each face.  
Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place.*

One day, according to legend, a neighbor observed Michelangelo rolling a jagged boulder up the street and onto his front step. When the sculptor took out his hammer and chisel, and began to strike the boulder, the neighbor was overcome by curiosity. He crossed the street and asked, "What are you doing hammering on that boulder?" To which Michelangelo responded, "There's an angel inside and I'm trying to let it out!"

This story expresses an essential aspect of congregational leadership. Congregational leadership involves seeing the holy in the congregation's members and the activities of the church and trying to bring that holiness out in partnership with God and others. During a recent conversation I had with one of our denominational leaders, we were talking about this story and he remarked, "It is relatively easy to see the boulders in our congregations. Every congregation has naysayers, obstructionists, complainers, and, frankly, quirky and grumpy people. Virtually every congregation faces limitations of time, talent and treasure which can lead to frustration, anger and hopelessness among pastors." As I listened to his comment I reflected on our Family of Faith. Of course, we have among us some people who are not as positive as others. However, as your Pastor I feel very blessed because we have such strong leadership guiding our Family of Faith. We have wonderful leadership capable of seeing and bringing out the angels in the boulders and seeing and bringing out the holiness in themselves and one another.

This Annual Report, which captures a tremendous year, is all about the leadership, the angels, and the holiness within our Family of Faith. As you read each report say a prayer of thanks to God for all the people mentioned including our staff, Marsha Hall, Kris Jenkins, Sally Stansbury, Wayne Gamache, Lou Froelich, and Judi Livingston; our Officers, Roger Wachnicki, Michael Ziegler, Peg Mullaney, and Lou Froelich; the Chairs of Boards and Committees and say a prayer of thanks for all the activities, programs and worship experiences that help to strengthen your life and faith.

Judi and I are so grateful for the ministry we share here at The United Church of Rowayton. We look forward to an exciting 2015. In conclusion, I offer these words of encouragement written by Jacqueline Schiff. These are words for each one of us individually and for our united Family of Faith.

*Be true to your dreams and keep them alive. Never let anyone change your mind about what you can achieve. Always believe in yourself. Be true to the light (angel) that is deep within you. Hold on to your faith, hope and joy for life. Keep good thoughts in your mind and good feelings in your heart. Be giving, forgiving, patient and kind. Have faith in yourself and listen to the voice that tells you to be your best self. Be true to yourself in the paths that you choose. Follow your talents and passions, and never forget that there is no brighter light (angel) than the one within you!*

With Love,

*John*

## FROM THE LAY LEADER

Many people believe that angels are God's messengers at work in the world today.

Angels come in many forms - from helpful animals to mysterious strangers, from heavenly angels to earth angels - human beings who generously help others. Angels can also come to us in dreams, on a breeze or in a strain of music. When they do appear, they always radiate life-affirming hope.

Here, at The United Church of Rowayton, you can experience the spirit, love and compassion of God through the work of the many "angels" found in this special place.

Words cannot describe the loving and inspirational sermons, ministries and educational programs provided by our special angel, Pastor John.

We are very fortunate to have a dedicated and extremely helpful bunch of angels that make up our office staff. They bring a positive energy and life to this Church.

I've witnessed the hard work of a caring group of angels who give of their time, talents and energy to serve on the different Boards and Committees. Please take the time to read their reports and to discover all they have done for us this year.

Through our heavenly choir, the music, caregiving and other various ministries, mission trips and assistance to local agencies, this Family of Faith has touched the lives of many both within and outside of this Church. I am constantly amazed by the willingness of the many angels in our Family of Faith to support one another and to serve the need of this Church in various ways. Hosting Fellowship, greeting newcomers and new members, helping the Youth Group, teaching in the Christian Education programs, volunteering at various Church events and making the Sanctuary such a beautiful place to worship.

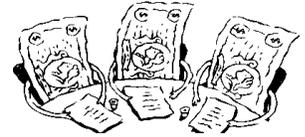
For all of us it has been a busy year, full of happiness and healing, of reflection and growth. A year in which all of our hearts have been touched and blessed.

I believe our Mission Statement is an accurate reflection of who we are as a Family of Faith..."We are a Christian community, dedicated to welcoming all who seek a relationship with God, to sharing God's word and love and to nurturing all in their journey of faith."

We are all on a faith journey. If you travel alone, you can probably go faster but the journey will never be as rewarding and you probably won't be able to go as far. Together, as a Family of Faith, may we all continue to feel the joy, the love and the spirit of God here at The United Church of Rowayton.

Sadly, my term as your Lay Leader/Moderator has come to an end and I am required to step aside. It has been my pleasure and honor to have represented and served you all.

With a grateful heart and appreciation,  
Roger Wachnicki, Lay Leader/Moderator



## **BOARD OF HOUSEHOLD CONCERNS**

The Board of Household Concerns is responsible for finance, setting of budgets, raising revenue, monitoring expenses, managing the endowment and maintaining the Church's physical plant. Several Committees report to the Board: Investment Committee, Stewardship Committee, Property, Plant and Equipment Committee and Planned Giving Committee.

The Board is made up of twelve individuals each serving a three-year term. In 2012 the Board's members were: Jim Ackerly, Billie Anker, Gehr Brown, Rob Lamendola, Tammy Langalis, Peter Ludwig, Des McLaughlin, Graham Powell, Tom Robinson, Sarah Starkweather, Shawn Sullivan and Chris Wittstock. Church Officers with financial responsibility also attend the meetings: Jim Clark, representing the Investment Committee; Lou Froelich, Business Manager; Peg Mullaney, Treasurer; Roger Wachnicki, Moderator and John Livingston, our Pastor.

### **SUMMARY**

In summary, The United Church of Rowayton is in good financial shape and ended the year with a significant surplus (income minus expenses). The 2015 Stewardship campaign is off to a strong start. Our investments are sound and growing while actions are underway to improve investment return performance. Our property, plant and equipment have been improved during the year and are now under the management of a committee responsible for its upkeep. We have approved a conservative budget for fiscal 2015. Fundraising is currently being reviewed and new revenue sources are being evaluated. The largest of our fundraising sources, the Tag Sale, is being re-evaluated and restructured. I am confident that we will have a Tag Sale in 2015. A weak point of the year was the lack of action on my part to address the Planned Giving aspect of our responsibilities.

The work of the Board of Household Concerns this past year has laid a strong foundation for the years ahead and will allow the Church to expand its ministry both internally and in the community.

### **STEWARDSHIP**

The 2014 Stewardship campaign, under the leadership of Tammy Langalis, is now complete and was a success as we surpassed the target of \$375,000. We are fortunate to have Tammy volunteer to again manage the Stewardship campaign for 2015 with a target of \$400,000, a 7% increase. To date (1-15-2015) we have 138 pledges totaling \$334,867. With such a strong start, it is likely we will attain our goal.

### **INVESTMENTS**

Our investment accounts have performed well in 2014. The balance of the Church investment accounts as of 12-31-2013 was \$1,963,031. The year-end 2014 investment balance as of 12-31-2014 was \$1,935,261 a decrease of 1.4% or (\$27,770.). While this may be disappointing, during the course of the year we used \$88,000 to carry out upgrades to the Church property and various smaller projects. Market performance in December was negative and thus did not help counter the year-to-year decrease.

### **PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT**

This past year the Board reconstituted a previous committee and charged it with preparing a plan to address issues related to the property, plant and equipment of the Church including the Parsonage. The subcommittee prepared a list of projects needing attention in order of importance. In 2014 projects were undertaken to replace the roof and paint the shingled exterior of the Meeting House. Trees were removed from the Church property in Emig Park, adjacent to the parsonage and near the Church parking lot and the lines repainted in the parking lot. Additional projects are planned for

each of the Church buildings during 2015. Our property, plant and equipment are the most valuable physical assets we own and their upkeep one of the most important responsibilities of the Board.

### **BUDGET**

The congregation approved a Budget for 2015 in the amount of \$507,000 (less than 1% increase over the 2014 budget) with the largest source of revenue anticipated from Stewardship Pledges at \$395,000. Additional sources of income are from the nursery school, other rental income, endowment and interest income and plate donations. The income is offset by a conservative expense schedule, anticipating significant fuel saving versus the budgeted costs, and thus should allow us to achieve a modest surplus in 2015. The Board recognizes the exceptional efforts of the church office staff to control expenses and achieve a reduction of 4% versus budget.

### **TAG SALE AND GENERAL FUNDRAISING**

In 2014 a need to recruit and train new leadership for the annual Tag Sale resulted in its cancellation. With this began a complete review of the structure and organization of the event. At the same time a group of interested people began an exploration of new avenues for fundraising. While these two efforts are actively on-going a number of factors have come to pass that will greatly influence the decision of whether to continue the Tag Sale. First we are fortunate that a sizeable group of core tag sale volunteers, through their actions and service, are adamant about continuing the event. Second we have had a very gracious volunteer to take over management of the Tag Sale. Three, we have put management of Tag Sale departments into the hands of those departments directly. Fourth, we have seen a significant increase in volunteerism to assist with the Tag Sale. Fifth, we have divided the opportunities for volunteerism into more manageable blocks of time. I am confident that with new leadership, the restructuring of operations and the trend toward increased volunteerism continues, the Tag Sale will endure. With additional restructuring in the years to come we can continue to serve the church, provide a service to our local community and a special fellowship opportunity for our members.

The fundraising subcommittee will present a final slate of fundraising opportunities before the summer break.

### **RECOGNITION**

On behalf of Gehr Brown the BOHC co-chairperson and me, we thank all our fellow Board members for their service and long hours of work on subcommittees to fulfill the mandates of the Board. The Board sincerely thanks the Officers who do so much to keep the Church affairs in order: Peg Mullaney, Lou Froelich, Roger Wachnicki. The exemplary leadership of our Pastor John Livingston and his dedicated ministry sets the tone for who we are and how we live at The United Church of Rowayton. The Board accords a special thanks to Kris Jenkins and Lynne Pratt for their invaluable assistance and guidance through the process of reviewing and restructuring the Tag Sale.

Lastly, the Board thanks everyone who pledged and makes possible all the Church programs and community outreach.

Respectfully submitted,

Desmond McLaughlin  
Co-Chairperson  
Board of Household Concerns

# 2014 FINANCIAL SECRETARY REPORT



## Total Receipts

Pledges Paid	\$286,179
Unpledged Contributions, Plate, Church School	28,653
Rentals	48,300
2013 Pledges	5,655
Fundraisers	33,439
2014 Pledges paid in 2013	89,813

**Total** **\$492,039**

2015 Pledges Paid in Advance	65,133
Endowment Income	28,000

**Grand Total** **\$585,173**



## TREASURER'S REPORT as of December 31, 2014

Fairfield County Checking Account	\$72,583.47
Fairfield County Money Market Account	\$90,269.81
Amerprise Financial	\$4,225.22
	<b>\$167,078.50</b>

Benevolence Checking	
Deacon's Fund	\$2,876.15
Mission Trip	\$1,725.15
Outreach	\$1,490.55
Sabbatical Fund	\$10,773.33
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$16,865.18</b>

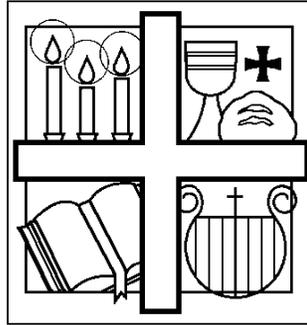
Capital Checking	
Capital Fund (Depreciation)	\$1,546.53
Memorial Gifts	\$4,161.60
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,708.13</b>

Flower Fund	\$4,650.82
Memorial Garden Checking	\$403.61

Schwab Unrestricted Account	\$153,387.48
Schwab Restricted Account	\$65,598.63
Schwab Memorial Garden Account	\$29,479.00
Schwab Investment Account	\$99,430.49
(Includes Rainy Day, Memorial, Other Unrestricted Dollars)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$347,895.60</b>

## PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 2015

<b>INCOME</b>	<b>ACTUAL 2014</b>	<b>BUDGET 2014</b>	<b>PROPOSED 2015</b>
Actual Pledges Received	\$375,993	\$285,587	\$395,000
Anticipated Pledges		\$89,813	
Building Rental	\$20,800	\$25,000	\$25,000
Endowment and Interest Income	\$28,000	\$28,000	\$38,000
Nursery School	\$27,500	\$27,000	\$27,500
Plate/Unpledged Contributions	\$28,652	\$20,000	\$21,500
Fundraisers	\$33,439	\$30,000	\$0
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$514,384</b>	<b>\$505,400</b>	<b>\$507,000</b>
 <b>EXPENSES</b>			
<b>Board of Christian Education</b>	\$4,914	\$7,000	\$7,000
Class Activities and Curriculum, Youth and Confirmation Programs, Special Events, Child Care, Adult Ed			
<b>Board of Christian Outreach</b>	\$47,900	\$47,900	\$47,900
<b>Board of Deacons</b>	\$8,168	\$10,100	\$10,100
Spiritual Development, Sabbatical, Music Program Development, Supplies, Instrument Maintenance and Special Programs			
<b>Salary and Benefits</b>	\$283,436	\$290,400	\$286,200
Clergy and Staff including Director of Music, Children's Choir Director, Office Manager, Business Manager, Maintenance Manager and Director of Christian Education(2014)			
<b>Administration</b>	\$47,150	\$45,000	\$50,000
Office Expenses, Communications (Telephone, Website), Payroll Taxes, Legal and Auditing, Insurance, Advertising Stewardship and Social Committees			
<b>Plant and Facilities</b>	\$88,989	\$100,000	\$100,800
Heating Oil, Electricity and other Utilities, and General Maintenance of House of Worship, Meeting House and Parsonage			
<b>Capital Repairs</b>	\$4,800	\$5,000	\$5,000
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$485,358</b>	<b>\$505,400</b>	<b>\$507,000</b>



## **BOARD OF DEACONS**

The United Church of Rowayton Board of Deacons had a meaningful and productive 2014. We appreciate the guidance and leadership of our Pastor John Livingston.

We thanked outgoing members: Carolyn Snyder, Marcia Smith, Tobe Johnson and Stephanie Close. We welcomed new members: Jessica Knowles, Bill Sarr, Caroline Robinson and Neville Peltz. George Close resigned for personal reasons. Discussion resulted in the decision not to fill the vacancy at this time and divide the duties.

Each meeting we received updates from committees including Caregiving, Music, Altar, Prayer Shawl (Knitisters), Christian Education, Outreach, Social, Financial/Stewardship and Worship. Please read their reports for details of what they do for our Church.

As Deacons we listen to the ideas and concerns of the Congregation. Sometimes this results in something as simple as where to put restroom signs to guide newcomers and guests. We reviewed and updated the UCR pamphlet for print and placement in the pews.

Some date highlights: May 4<sup>th</sup> Confirmation Sunday; June 1st Outreach Trip Volunteers Commissioned; June 8<sup>th</sup> Senior Recognition and Jonathan Wildman Scholarship presentation; Sept. 7<sup>th</sup> Rally Day (John accepted the ice bucket challenge); Oct. 5<sup>th</sup> World Communion Fellowship.

Summer worship was once again held in Pinkney Park with John (July) and Holly Adams (August) sharing the pulpit responsibilities. The Pinkney Park service started at 9:15 am followed by the 10:15 am service at West Norwalk's United Congregational Church.

December was an exciting month welcoming 27 new members on December 7<sup>th</sup> followed by the Advent pancake breakfast. That evening was the well-attended tree lighting with pizza and Santa. Christmas Eve family service had over 500 people and 11:00 pm service had approximately 200 people. Our Church is alive and growing!

Respectfully submitted,  
Diane Albano, Chairperson

# ♥ CAREGIVING MINISTRY ♥

\*Dedicated to listening and keeping in touch\*

The Caregiving Ministry is now in its 11th year because of the dedication of its caregivers—Diane Albano, Billie Anker, Stephanie Close, Debbie Douglas, Diane Glover, Carol Haskell, Heather Hopkins, Ray Meurer, Graham Powell, Caroline Robinson, Linda Scull, Donna Wachnicki, Roger Wachnicki, and Michael Ziegler. These members have unselfishly given their time and energy for the well-being of our Church Family.

The Caregiving-By-Cooking group has met three times this past year and provided many wonderful meals we were able to distribute to our Family of Faith.

February 1 - Salisbury steak, mashed sweet and white potatoes, green beans with mushrooms and cookies.

March 29 - Pasta dinners with tea loaves.

October 25 - Chicken potpies and apple loaf bread.

On October 12, along with the Prayer Shawl Committee, we prepared the reception after Dick Hopkins' remembrance service.

Knowing caregivers lose sleep and realizing they are not the only ones, we opened one of our educational programs devoted to sleep to the entire Congregation. Dr. Dominic Roca, M.D., Ph.D., who is board certified in Allergy & Immunology, Internal Medicine, Critical Care Medicine, Pulmonary Disease and Sleep Medicine, led this informative program.

A special thank you to Caroline Robinson who heads our Caregiving-By-Cooking Ministry and Carol Haskell who runs our Card Ministry.

All of our work is strictly confidential.

## MISSION STATEMENT

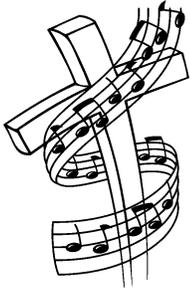
The Caregiving Ministry of The United Church of Rowayton is dedicated to utilizing its spiritual gifts in a shared ministry that provides for the well-being of God's people.

Caregivers are caring Christian friends who listen, understand, accept and pray for and with care receivers who are experiencing the joys and sorrows of life.

Respectfully submitted,  
Joanne Brown and Ann DiLeone, Co-chairpersons

*Caregiving Ministry*





## MUSIC DEPARTMENT

The Music Department is proud of our continued efforts, bringing praise to God through music. We offer music opportunities for children, teens and adults.

### **Senior Choir**

The dedicated Senior Choir is an integral part of worship. Not only do they provide special music through weekly anthems and extended works, they lead the Congregation in glorious hymn singing.

Their participation in the Interfaith service sets an uplifting tone each and every year. Special music is always a highlight of Christmas and Easter. The choir is fortunate to work with some outstanding instrumentalists throughout the year always adding dimension to the choral experience. The pride the choir shows and the depth of commitment makes this group a treasure and a gift to this church.

### **Adult Bell Choir**

The musical growth of this group has been remarkable. They are determined to ring with precision and musicality. Their ringing during worship always adds to the service. In 2014, they participated in a two-day bell festival on Long Island. It was a great educational experience and the group had a great time ringing and being together in friendship.

### **Youth Bell Choir**

This year the Youth Bell Choir is full of talented ringers. We have ringers from 5<sup>th</sup> grade to 11<sup>th</sup> grade. It is a one-room school house at its best. They not only ring well, but they are the best young people. They are so loved. They ring, they chat, they ring some more and are always so loving and polite. We are blessed to have them!

### **Children's Choir**

Judi Livingston has been hard at work building the Children's Choir. They sing throughout the year and are always a highlight at Christmas time. Not only do they grow as singers in this group, they learn to work together and understand they are giving to their Church through their music. What a wonderful beginning to a lifetime of serving the Church through love of music.

I continue to urge you and your children to be involved in the music program here at The United Church of Rowayton. We will thrive with your participation and dedication. Continue to put music as a high priority. We will not disappoint.

Respectfully submitted,  
Marsha Hall



# ALTAR FLOWERS

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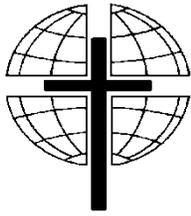
## ALTAR COMMITTEE

The Altar Committee continues to provide altar flowers for Sunday worship as well as carnations for Mother's Day. We also care for the plants in the sanctuary. We decorate the sanctuary at Christmas, Easter and Thanksgiving with plants, flowers and greenery as the season requires. We provide and care for the Advent wreath as well as all the outside wreaths. Our funding continues to come from the Congregation throughout the year in the form of memorial flowers for loved ones or the celebration of a particular joy. We do not receive any funding from the annual Church budget. Any surplus monies from these gifts, particularly at Christmas and Easter, form the basis for our regular expenditures. Cost of flowers has increased, as everything else, but so far we are still OK for funds.

The Committee members are the same as last year, namely Stephanie Close, Kate Davies, Kathy Draper, Lynne Pratt, Caroline Robinson, Gere Thompson, Beverly Viele, and myself, June Strubinger. The Deacons supply the communion and baptismal roses. The Committee in a combined effort took charge of the Harvest Festival decorating. It was decided to extend the decorations by another week as it seems a shame to put so much effort for only one Sunday. It is always a fun challenge to express our creativity. Everything except the floral plants and Altar arrangement was donated for the occasion by the members of the Committee. We enjoy making the Church look festive. The planter care has been handled by Stephanie Close. Plants are replaced as needed to keep the planter attractive. There are extra plants to care for at Christmas and Easter which are later given away. I'm still trying to get one person to take charge of the whole job.

We thank the Congregation for its contributions throughout the year. Their gifts allow us to provide a pleasant setting for worship each Sunday. We are grateful for their generosity.

Respectfully submitted,  
June Strubinger  
Chairperson



## BOARD OF CHRISTIAN OUTREACH

The Board of Christian Outreach (BOCO) thanks the Congregation for taking action through volunteering, donating goods and providing monetary support to extend a “hands up” to the impoverished in our own community, and to the Lakota Nation at the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation. Your enthusiasm inspired BOCO’s hard work this year.

In 2014, **\$49,239.12** was distributed, principally to non-profits serving Norwalk residents. Attached find a list of 2014 grant recipient agencies, its general mission and amount of financial assistance provided. Each BOCO member interviewed candidate agencies assigned to them, and made a report and recommendation for funding. Attention was given to the amount of each organization’s overhead as a percentage of revenue, as well as its strength in raising funds from other sources. This allowed BOCO to direct UCR dollars to groups and causes that needed it most and have the greatest impact.

As part of the decision-making process, BOCO conducted an examination of its past funding patterns, by principal mission. Financial support in 2013 and 2014 was generally allocated as follows:

	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
Basic Food and/or Shelter	21%	36%
Social Services	30%	27%
Health; Rehabilitation Services	20%	24%
Human Rights	8%	4%
Other (Mission trip and global outreach)	21%	9%

In addition, the Congregation stepped up to BOCO’s many drives for in-kind donations, exceeding 2013 levels. BOCO’s food drives were well supported, with over 100 bags of groceries donated for Thanksgiving dinners. Over 40 Easter Baskets and 43 school backpacks were collected and distributed. This year’s White Dove Program benefited 60 Norwalk children through Person-to-Person, with each child receiving a new toy, board game and book.

In addition, UCR has participated in its monthly work at the **Open Door Shelter** serving dinners, with several teen volunteers. BOCO is extremely grateful and proud to Team Rowayton’s work with **Simply Smiles** in July at the Lakota Nation’s reservation in South Dakota building new housing, conducting a summer day camp for youth and sharing their experience with the Congregation in October. We look to the Congregation to step up and form another team for 2015!

Please join me in thanking BOCO’s members for their dedication, insight and hard work: Bill Peltz, Fouad Onbargi, Donna Gauthier, Sarah Ritchey, June Foster, Betsy English, Shirley Sykes, Bob Aldrich, Elise Donahue, Bill Close and Dianne Eleck, May they be an inspiration to you to take action, in any way you can, to extend compassion and care through service.

Respectfully submitted,  
Anne Campbell, Chair

## BOARD OF CHRISTIAN OUTREACH BENEVOLENCE 2014

<b>Americares Free Clinic</b>	<b>\$1,500.00</b>
Provides walk-in care for underinsured clients	
<b>Appleby School-Based Health Clinics</b>	<b>\$5,000.00</b>
Provides on-site physical and mental health services to adolescents at local schools	
<b>Child Guidance Center of Mid-Fairfield County</b>	<b>\$2,500.00</b>
Provides comprehensive mental health services to local children and their families	
<b>Community Plates</b>	<b>\$1,000.00</b>
Collection of fresh produce and prepared meals for distribution to the “food-insecure”	
<b>Domestic Violence Crisis Center, Inc.</b>	<b>\$2,500.00</b>
Helps those involved in physical, emotional and sexual abuse	
<b>ElderHouse, Inc.</b>	<b>\$2,500.00</b>
Provides seniors with a safe and supportive environment	
<b>Family and Children’s Agency – summer camp</b>	<b>\$5,000.00</b>
This fund sends approximately 25 pre- and early-adolescents to summer camps	
<b>Family ReEntry, Inc.</b>	<b>\$2,000.00</b>
Works with those who are incarcerated and the recently released to re-integrate into society	
<b>Keystone House</b>	<b>\$1,500.00</b>
Helps people with mental illnesses remain in society	
<b>Norwalk Meals on Wheels</b>	<b>\$2,000.00</b>
Provides 2 meals/day to Norwalk residents not meeting their nutritional needs	
<b>Open Door Emergency Shelter</b>	<b>\$4,000.00</b>
Addresses the needs of the homeless and working poor	
<b>Our Churches Wider Mission</b>	<b>\$2,000.00</b>
This contribution to basic support is sent to our Conference	
<b>Person to Person</b>	<b>\$2,000.00</b>
Provides food, clothing and financial assistance to needy Norwalk families	
<b>Person to Person – Emergency Assistance Fund</b>	<b>\$3,589.00</b>
One-time financial assistance for utilities and basic shelter	
<b>Pilgrim Towers</b>	<b>\$1,000.00</b>
Provides independent living for low-income seniors	
<b>Service Trip</b>	<b>\$1,150.12</b>
Day Camp Supplies, Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation, South Dakota	
<b>Silver Lake</b>	<b>\$2,000.00</b>
UCC – CT Conference Retreat Center; Serves up to 1,300 youths	
<b>Simply Smiles</b>	<b>\$3,000.00</b>
Dedicated to providing brighter futures for children specifically in South Dakota and Oaxaca, Mexico	
<b>STAR, Lighting the Way</b>	<b>\$2,000.00</b>
Provides services, beginnings at birth, for mentally challenged clients	
<b>Thanksgiving Gift Certificates to Dept. of Children &amp; Families</b>	<b>\$1,500.00</b>
For turkeys and other fresh foodstuffs	
<b>Visiting Nurse &amp; Hospice of Fairfield County</b>	<b>\$1,500.00</b>
Provides home health and hospice care services	

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**Total: \$49,239.12**

## FROM THE DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

“**Happiness** is spring and the small shoots through the soil  
and the baby birds taking their first flight.  
**Happiness** is summer, laying in the sun and forgetting your worries  
when the insects are buzzing amongst the flowers.  
**Happiness** is autumn, walking in the falling colorful leaves.  
**Happiness** is winter, speeding a hillside on a sled  
with the wind rustling past you and the snow softly covering everything.”

Samantha Jones, 11 from **A Child’s View of Happiness**

From the children we, as adults, can learn so much. The Board of Christian Education emphasizes developing the child through time with John at the Altar, time with the teachers at Church School, time with Santa Claus and time with the Easter Bunny. Children giggle and run and say the most wonderful things.

We also want to be just as important to the non-children in our Congregation. In 2014 we introduced the beautifully created Thankful Tree which allowed young and old alike to write on a leaf what they were thankful for and adhere it to the tree. We also offered our first International Fellowship Hour where families made and brought a dish from their country of origin (and if we were lucky enough they provided the recipe as well).

From years before we continued Rally Day with ice cream and lots of toppings and our Advent Pancake Breakfast.

We decided this year to expand our Circle of Friends and invited The United Church of Rowayton Nursery School families to our annual caroling and tree lighting event. Our Congregation and the nursery school families amounted to 160 attendees on a beautiful, clear December night.

The Board of Christian Education has many exciting plans for 2015. All of our members are to be thanked for what they have made happen and what they will make happen going forward.

Warm regards and Happy New Year,  
Sally Stansbury



Church School



## BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

*“In learning you will teach...and in teaching you will learn.” – Phil Collins*

This has been a tremendously successful year for the Board of Christian Education. I want to thank my fellow Board members Greg Jacobson, Sarah Sykes, Shirley Johnson, Val Harden and Dana Basta for their enthusiasm, commitment and creative ideas. At the request of Pastor Livingston, I remained as Chairperson for this year.

This year the Sunday school entered a new chapter under the leadership of our new Church School Director Sally Stansbury. Sally has infused a renewed sense of excitement into the program and we've already seen growth in attendance.

Our Youth Group has continued to evolve as well. This year we saw the introduction of a monthly Sunday evening gathering of the Youth Group led by Brooke Lowe, a high school junior, and supervised by Sally. Attendance has ranged from as few as four people to as many as eight over the past four meetings. Brooke is dynamic and well-liked by the group members and I anticipate this program growing.

We are still challenged in identifying enough Sunday school teachers despite tremendous effort on Sally's part. The Board is requesting that everyone, regardless of whether they have a child in Sunday school, consider teaching even if it's just for a few Sundays. High school students are also welcome to begin teaching.

Once again the Board hosted an Advent Pancake Breakfast with the support of the Youth Group and Confirmation class. The turnout was wonderful and pancakes delicious as always thanks to Mike Harden!

Our Christmas Tree Lighting/Pizza Dinner was a tremendous success. After many years of decreasing attendance we had over 160 people attend. We extended the invitation this year to families from the nursery school which was also a wonderful opportunity to introduce them to our Family of Faith.

We have begun a new initiative this year of monthly events coinciding with the season or specific dates. This so far has included Rally Day (our ice cream social), International Fellowship Hour (parishioners shared meals from their country of origin), Thankful Tree (words of gratitude were written on the leaves that were placed on the tree) in addition to the Advent Breakfast and Christmas caroling. We are currently planning events for the coming months.

The Board is grateful to the members of the Church who have volunteered their time to help teach our children every Sunday and welcome everyone to be a part of sharing the glory of our Lord with them. They truly are the future of our Church and we prayerfully ask for guidance as we lead them along the path.

Respectfully submitted,  
Alison Jacobson  
Chairperson

## **LAY DELEGATE TO THE CONNECTICUT CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST AND FAIRFIELD-WEST UCC ASSOCIATION**

The United Church of Rowayton is a member of the Fairfield West Association, which is one of fifteen associations in the Connecticut Conference. The main function of the Association is to work with people who are in training to become ministers and to provide oversight, authorization and support of ordained and other ministers. Sarah Starkweather is our Moderator, and I serve as Treasurer.

In October, the Conference held its annual meeting. I was elected Vice Moderator and sit on the Board of Directors. By far the most exciting element of the meeting was Conference Minister Kent Siladi's keynote address. He said UCC churches really understand the meaning of the word *autonomy*, but we're not so good at *interdependence*. He said our future lies in our ability to share and work with other churches. Kent brings both energy and vision to the Conference. In November, the Boards of Directors from the Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island Conferences met for a day to explore how these three groups might work together interdependently.

Respectfully submitted,  
William H. Peltz  
Lay Delegate

## **HISTORIANS COMMITTEE**

The narrative history of our Church for 2014 has been completed for review and approval by the Pastor with an eye to it being published about the time of the Annual Meeting. Copies will be available in the House of Worship for anyone interested.

Maintenance of the files continues, as does gathering of new material. We encourage anyone to offer clippings, photos or other items of possible interest for consideration and request their source and date be clearly indicated. Such items should be placed in the Church Office "slot" labeled Flowers and Historical.

Respectfully submitted,  
Michael Ziegler

## **MEMORIAL COMMITTEE**

The Memorial Committee has received gifts for the year of 2014 in memory of the following:

John Longley	Dick Hopkins
Andrea Williams Brown	Alan Wyland

Respectfully submitted,  
Lois Froelich

## MEMORIAL GARDEN COMMITTEE

The Memorial Garden is for past and present members of The United Church of Rowayton, and their immediate families: spouse, partner, siblings, children and parents. Applications for a reservation are available in the Church Office. Any member of the Memorial Garden Committee will be happy to answer any questions that may arise.

Last year, 2014, there were five new reservations and seven interments. The Memorial Garden now has 234 members, with 112 interments. With the current Garden configuration, there are 39 available spaces.

All of the Memorial Garden funds have come from reservations of Church members and contributions specifically designated for the Garden. This year two new Memorial Benches were donated. The Memorial Garden continues to be financially responsible for its maintenance and upkeep.

The Memorial Garden Committee thanks our Church Family for their continued support for this beautiful project.

Chris Basta  
Caroline Robinson

Kate Davies  
Marcia Smith

Marsha Hall  
Emily Zerega

Respectfully submitted,  
Michael A. Poler, Chairman

## SOCIAL COMMITTEE

The Social Committee had another successful year for 2014.

There were the usual four events:  
March--Winter BBQ  
May--Spring into summer  
September--Welcome back from summer  
December--cookie tasting



We are looking forward to planning another successful and fun year for 2015.

Respectfully submitted,  
Linda Fritsch, Chairperson



## **PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

The Public Relations Committee published six Newsletters in 2014. Members from Boards, Committees, Staff and the Congregation contributed many articles which facilitated putting together these issues. Thanks to all our contributors.

The Committee supported the Church's fundraising activities through publicity for our auction. Weekly sermon topics were run weekly in The Norwalk Hour and the Darien Times.

Joanne Schreiber sent in articles on Lenten worship services to local papers. George Albano wrote an article about John participating in the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge in addition to an article about Jim Mulhearn and his involvement with the Darien High School football program.

The PR Committee looks forward to continuing to serve The United Church of Rowayton.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kris Jenkins



## **NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

The function of the Nominating Committee is to select members of the Congregation to serve on the various Boards and Committees of the Church as well as those to serve in Delegate and Officer positions.

Those candidates will be presented on the proposed slate at the Annual Meeting held in February. Thank you to those who have agreed to serve!

The Committee is always open to know of anyone with an interest in serving on a Board or Committee of our Church. Please identify yourself to a committee member.

Currently serving on the Committee are: Neville Peltz, Stephanie Close, Tobe Johnson, Lyn Kreager, Bill Sarr, Meggan Douglas Warren and Courtney Oldrin.

Respectively submitted,  
Debbie Douglas and Lynne Pratt