

WETHERSFIELD EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

LOVE GOD. LOVE OTHERS. MAKE DISCIPLES.



2020-21 ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 2021

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Senior Pastor:

*“He will not let your foot be moved;
he who keeps you will not slumber.
Behold, he who keeps Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.”*
Psalm 121:4-5



God is at work. That is one thing we can say for certain. In a time when there seems to be a lot of uncertainty, this truth is especially comforting and reassuring. God does not sleep. God is not caught off guard. No! Quite the opposite is true. God is at work.

No doubt, it has been a challenging year. While the challenges of this past year were not unique to us, they were keenly felt by us. The crawl out from underneath the rubble of the pandemic has been a slow one. But as we emerge more fully, we are hopeful to soon return to a more normal way of life as a church family.

Much of the year was spent trying to operate under the health restrictions of the state and at the same time still do ministry. We went from doing purely virtual services, to no more than a 100 in attendance with the requirements of pre-registration and masks, to two services with no restrictions.

During this year of restrictions, we found a way to do mid-week children’s ministries and middle school and high school ministry throughout the entire school year. Many meetings and community groups and ministries within the church were conducted via Zoom. We were also able to host two online seminars through Urban Alliance. The first one was on mental health and the second one was on how to have a difficult conversation. Both were well attended and well received.

You were patient. We adapted. We learned how to live out our faith in this environment. No doubt, we will continue to do so. In all of this, God was at work in our lives and in our congregation.

Our mission as a church is to love God, love others and make disciples. We call this mission the irreducible core. In other words, we can do a lot of things as a church, but these things we must do. It is the great commandment and the great commission. This mission is not bound by programs or buildings. It is our way of life, and we were able to live that out in the past year.

Highlights of the Past Year

Sunday Morning Services remained a weekly touch point for our church family even though many of us were worshiping remotely. Each week we were able to gather to worship our Lord Jesus, hear from God’s Word, confess our sin and pray together. One of the features we incorporated during most of this time was the Q & A session after the sermon. This allowed for more thoughtful reflection on the sermon.

I am so grateful for all those who faithfully lead us in worship and for those who work behind the scenes on the technical aspects that bring the worship service to us each week. Our church is blessed to have willing and capable people who serve us in this way.

This past year we preached through the following topics.

- Do Justice: The book of Micah
- The Gospel: Romans 1-5
- Psalms of Encouragement
- Sanctification: Romans 6-8 along with the book *The Common Rule*
- A Study on the book of Ruth

I would like to thank the Preaching Cohort for their ministry alongside of me. We are blessed to have a variety of capable preachers in our church family. Thanks to Dave Baer, Mike Conserva, Wally Culup, Steve Durgin, Matt Lloyd, Steve Peery, Dave Rucquoi and Dan Warriner.

Revision of the Bylaws was a significant accomplishment this past year. We have officially moved from an executive board to elders and deacons. I am grateful for the tireless work of the bylaw committee during the past three years. The committee consisted of Maria Greenslade, Don Jensen, Steve Keller, Steve Peery and me.

This project did not just result in the revision of the constitution and bylaws. Rather, it will have direct impact on the kind of care the leadership is able to give to the church family. The elders will be responsible for the spiritual and shepherding needs of the church, while the deacons are established to care for the physical and practical needs of the church family.

We approved and installed the first group of elders and deacons. Please see Steve Peery's report to learn about the training the elders and deacons went through in order to step into their roles. The elders are Ned Cornwall, Rob Durbois, Skip Hardy, Glenn Horter, Brian Hucks and John Rascius. The deacons are Mercella Bingham, Janice Catrone, Janise Foley, Rich Foley, Ed Johnson and Karen Mann. Please pray for them as they step into these roles.

Pathway to Opportunity: As a result of our discussion on justice, we formed a group called "Pathway to Opportunity." This group is looking for ways to reach into the minority and immigrant communities of Wethersfield with the love of Christ.

Our "pathway" forward looks like this:

- Prayer: Seek God's Guidance
- Presence: Celebrate WEFC's Diversity
- People: Build relationships in Wethersfield
- Process: Promote discussion and understanding
- Program: Identify and meet needs

Thank you to Mercella Bingham, Ned Cornwall, Brian Hucks, Lisa Peery, Steve Peery, Sheran Smith, Amanda Rago, Alyssa Lewis, Ed Johnson, Janice Catrone, Gwen Clark and Glenn Horter for being part of this conversation.

A Word of Thanks

I continue to be grateful for the opportunity to serve as your pastor. These past 18 years have been rewarding and life-giving to me. Thank you for your love and for the privilege of serving Jesus with you.

I am grateful for the Executive Board and for their faithful and shared leadership. They give so much of themselves to you and to the church. Thank you, Steve Peery (chair), Brian Hucks (vice chair), Skip Hardy (finance chair), Ned Cornwall (clerk), Daryl Ostergren, John Rascius, Glenn Horter, Rob Durbois, Janice Kookan, Karen Mann, Gerry Gingras (trustee chair) and Mike Schuberth (missions chair).

I am grateful for our Church Staff. It is a joy to serve alongside of them each week. Pastor Mike has been a true partner in ministry, and I appreciate all the things he does; much of which enables me to do what I am called to do. Thank you also Colleen Smith, Sharan Crabtree, Matt Lloyd, Kirsten Trumbull, Mary Sarratt and Bill Tolstick. At the end of this fiscal year, Sharan Crabtree and Matt Lloyd stepped down from their positions and we are grateful for all they did.

May God continue to use us for his glory.

Blessings,
Pastor Scott

Executive Pastor:

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD.”

Isaiah 55:8



As I reflect on this past year...my goodness, what a year it has been. What started as a two-week lockdown, turned into months, which then stretched out to an entire year, then to eighteen months and it doesn't appear to be slowing down as more variants of Covid are emerging. What started out as a world-wide pandemic has now turned into, what I believe is an endemic and something that we are all going to have to live with.

I started ministry back in 1986 and in the 35 years that I have been doing ministry this has had to be one of the most challenging, as well as frustrating years, that I have ministered through. The masks, the social distancing, all the restrictions we have had to live through both individually and as a church all the while trying to keep ministries sustainable and vibrant. Whether it be our community groups, student ministry, ministry to our children, visitation ministry, adult ministry, it all had to be processed in a different way and we had to learn how to do ministry in a different context.

Yet, only because of the Grace & Goodness of our God, we were able to keep things going. Granted, it didn't satisfy everyone, but we did what we could given the circumstances and we were able to accomplish quite a bit.

God's thoughts are certainly not our thoughts, and His ways are definitely not our ways. After all, who can understand the mind of the Lord?

We have learned many things this past year, but one thing that I think we all learned is that ministry is not bound by buildings and programs or even our feeble efforts. God is at work and He is always at work perfecting us to become more like image of His dear Son.

I also saw in this past year God "shaking" His church. There is only one reason why the Lord allows His bride to be shaken and that is to purify her and I believe that WEFC has been going through somewhat of a purification process. So, I am thankful for all that God is doing, even though sometimes we don't always understand what He is doing while we are in it. Rest assured, though, He is bringing all things together for His good and for His glory.

Highlights & Responsibilities

Managing Technology: It seems much of what drives our world today is technology. Ministry is no different. This has required a role change on my part and I have had to learn an awful lot when it comes to managing technology. Whereas technology is something we have all had to learn in our lives to some extent, I have had to put it into higher gear and do technology well in order to serve our body. We have made a lot of advancements. I probably spend about 10-15% of my time managing technology, whether is it working with the livestream and YouTube to managing the office as required.

Office Staff & Volunteers: We have a great staff that works really well together. I am thankful for very competent people who serve you. I see how tirelessly they serve the body to be able to provide the programs, events, services and everything else that we do as a church. I am grateful for **Kirsten Trumbull** who serves as our Financial Controller and, oh, so, so, much more. Kirst, as we fondly call her, is the glue in the office. If we need something done, its done before we even get the words out of our mouth. She is "Johnny on the spot".

Mary Sarratt is our Database & Administrative Assistant. For most people the thought of working with databases and spreadsheets is enough to cause them to run and hide, but not Mary. She eats it up and is always on top of her game. Besides that, Mary is the one who maintains our website and puts together the PULSE every week and she does it all with a smile on her face.

Bill Tolstick is our custodian. I am thankful for Bill who keeps our facilities clean and sanitary, especially this past year when we were required to take extra measures to make sure people were safe. Bill often goes way beyond the call of duty and assists in other areas as well.

Colleen Smith is, of course, our Director of Worship. She is our longest serving staff person and she does a tremendous job in putting together uplifting worship services. Much more difficult than you would imagine, especially when so many people have their own ideas of what worship should consist of. Colleen does so much more than worship. She jumps into help wherever and whenever she can. Colleen very much keeps us on track.

Sharan Crabtree served as our Director of Children's Ministry and she did a tremendous job with our Kingdom Kids program. Despite it being a very tough year, she managed to provide quality programming for our children. As of the end of the year, Sharan stepped down from her role and is pursuing other things. Nevertheless, very grateful for Sharan's ministry.

Matt Lloyd also served as our Interim Director of Student Ministries. Matt became my hero this past year having to endure so much. He willingly stepped into this role responding to a need that we had. Given the circumstances of the Covid pandemic, Matt adapted, improvised and did what he had to do in order to make middle school and high school ministry work throughout the entire year. He did a stellar job.

Pastor Scott...I can't say enough about Scott. He is a godly man who preaches the Word of God and serves his flock well. I look after the staff and Scott looks after me.

You, the people who serve and volunteer. It is sometimes mind boggling when you think of the number of volunteers it takes to run and operate a church smoothly. I often think of volunteers as the golden goose. I am thankful for each and everyone one of you who serve our body. May God continue to use us for His glory.

A New Website: One of my long-term goals has been to improve our website which looked dated and did not inspire. It became all that much more important due to the pandemic as we moved to a virtual service for a season. I am grateful for Colleen and Mary who did much of the leg work to make this happen. We wanted a website that would be attractive... inspiring people to visit our church. The new website is more interactive and user friendly in allowing people to join a community group, sign up and pay for events and so much more.

The Employee Handbook: Another goal for this past year was to update our Employee Handbook, which was out of date and was not consistent with CT laws. I worked in conjunction with our Human Resource company Kardaslarson to bring it up-to-date and reflect changes that we are required to comply with in CT.

Adult Bible Studies: We were able to offer a couple of adult bible studies via Zoom this past year as well. I am thankful for Daniel Warriner for teaching a class on Death & Dying Well. It was a fascinating class to say the least. Daniel always does a great job and brings topics that are a little off the beaten path. Michael Benevento was also able to teach a class on apologetics, which was an extension of the first class he taught on how to defend the faith. Both classes were well received.

Community Groups: I am thankful that many of our community groups meet during the year despite all the disruptions and having to rely on Zoom to meet. Thank you to all of our facilitators who kept things together. May God continue to use the ministry of WEFC for His Glory.

Humbly submitted,

Pastor Mike

Student Ministry:



What a year that was. Somehow, we managed to survive. Thank God for that! This year it was my mission to create opportunities for students to engage with God, scripture, and others despite the many challenges the pandemic presented. I got to share the gospel with the students every week. I did that to the best of my ability. I invited students to serve others and practice their faith. For the things I got right, God gets all the credit. For the times I got it wrong, know that I am God's fool at least. I'm thankful that God loves and accepts me despite my success or failure, and I've tried to live openly and share my journey this year with anyone who was listening. To me, youth ministry is about creating an environment where students can explore their faith and be disciplined. As a team, I can confidently say we did that this year, and for the students and families who took advantage of those opportunities, it has been a joy and an encouragement to us all to watch their faith grow.

Objectives: My goals for this year were straightforward, but not simple.

1: The youth group would meet safely throughout the year with as many students and parents feeling comfortable/safe attending youth events as possible. The church leadership and the other youth leaders helped me to shape our guidelines for meeting. No decision was made solely by me—we made these choices as a group.

Let me start by saying that we were able to meet in person the entire year as a youth group! Going by what I've heard from other youth pastors, we are an exception to the rule. Most groups in the area met sporadically if at all. How did we manage this? We decided at our second meeting to wear masks at all our meetings throughout the pandemic. The leaders agreed this was the best and most enforceable rule we could decide on. The students unanimously voted to wear masks and try to make the youth meetings as normal as possible. We met outside when we could. Some parents found this too restrictive and did not send their kids to our meetings. Some parents found this not safe enough and didn't send their kids. Most parents found this to be the most reasonable course of action and supported it. I'm thankful for the trust and support of people who sent their children to our meetings during a pandemic.

Responding to parents concerns and health expert advice, we committed to wearing masks at our youth meetings and trying to maintain 6ft of social distance. We tried to structure our time in the youth group to help with social distancing. We made the service 30 minutes shorter and took away much of the unstructured hang-out time. This was our best attempt to keep the masks on and keep the kids reasonably spread out. Some parents felt strongly that we should continue to serve candy at our meetings. We couldn't find a reasonable way to stay on track with our service, keep masks on, and maintain social distance while serving candy, so we decided not to do it. The results were amazing. The youth paid such close attention during our service, and we didn't have problems with talking or cell phones. Compared to previous years where distractions were a constant problem, it became clear to us leaders that removing the snacks was a real positive change. We did it for COVID, but when we saw the behavior, we didn't want to go back. Some people see the situation differently. I can understand that, especially if they were not witnessing it for themselves. Students do like candy, and food can be a positive part of fellowship and student ministry, but it should not be a focal point. I'm thankful for the students and their willingness to be flexible and do what we asked in order to be together and follow Jesus, even when they didn't get exactly what they wanted. They made the best of the situation and followed the guidelines we set forth.

In the end, we followed the recommended safety guidelines as best we could, and I think that allowed us to have as many students present as possible and share the gospel with as many as possible.

Last summer "Challenge" was cancelled and we were unable to go on our winter retreat this year due to covid precautions. I worked hard to try to put a winter retreat together, and I'm thankful to the youth leaders, the board members, and the parents and students for trying to make that work. We were the only group I'm aware of that signed up for a winter retreat at Spofford, and as far as I know Spofford did not host any winter retreats this year. It was a disappointment to everyone to not be able to do these events. I feel especially for the youth—they've spent the last 2 years under the dark cloud of COVID.

2: Discipleship of the students. This year being the pandemic presented a great opportunity for the church to be the church and serve others. The focus of my ministry was to start by understanding the gospel message and then seeing ourselves in the story. I asked the question every week: if this scripture is true, what do you need to do right now in your life to follow Jesus? So often our faith is reduced to ideas about ourselves and the world. Rather than have parties like we have in the past (which was difficult due to our covid precautions) we leaned into doing community service. We served the homeless once monthly at street church in Hartford. It was my joy to bring students and parents to street church so they could see what Jesus is doing among the homeless in Hartford. The homeless would light up when our students came to serve them. I am still smiling from watching our students sacrifice their time and comfort to go out in the name of Jesus and minister to broken people. I won't soon forget the joy in the midst of suffering that I saw there.

We worked through the gospel of Mark, Judges, and CS Lewis' "The Four Loves" in our time studying scripture weekly. It was my goal to make these books resources for the students to be able to use when their life gets hard. When their faith is challenged, I pray they have the knowledge necessary to stand on God's truth.

Thanks: I would not have made it through this year without the other youth leaders: Jonna Roberge, Ellen Conserva, Bethany Gallagher, Cathryn Hucks, Christina Fontana, Robb Barnum, Ben Lewis, and Dan Henck. These people supported, challenged, corrected, and lived a faith that serves others and not self. We served faithfully and to the best of our ability amid difficulty. To all the students, parents, and God's people who supported and encouraged us in undertaking this ministry, I'm thankful for your encouragement. When things became increasingly difficult, it was your kind words that helped to keep us going. I want to specifically mention the Simpson family-Caleb and Hannah, and Josh and Stacy. Caleb responded to God's call by stepping into the role of worship leader for the youth group this year. Hannah sang with him, Stacy learned and played keyboard to fill out the band, and Josh was basically their roadie. He re-worked and perfected the sound system every week. They saw me struggling to serve the students and they stepped in to help. They reminded me what it looks like to live the Christian life together. Thanks for all your help Simpson family.

Blessings,
Matt Lloyd

Children's Ministry:

*"Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it."
Proverbs 22:6*

Children's Ministry exists to assist parents in training their children in the Christian faith. My prayer is that each child who is a part of WEFC's Children's Ministry will have a knowledge of their Lord and Savior, a personal relationship with Him and learn how to grow in their faith. As Children's Ministry Director, I oversee our children's program from nursery age through 5th grade, GEMS, Boys Brigade and head the Board of Directors for Bright Beginnings Preschool.



The Lord blessed us with another great year...even with a world pandemic hovering over us.

Fall: Due to the pandemic we could not meet for Kingdom Kids in person on Sundays. This was due to the restriction by the government to only allow 50 people in the building. I continued sending out weekly Bible Lessons and worship songs every Saturday evening via email to continue and engage the children as they learn more about the Bible.

On September 23, GEMS and Boys Brigade were able to start meeting in person. Some minor adjustments were made to maintain social distancing and limit personal contact. It was such a joy to spend time with the children face to face and walk along them during this time of uncertainty. The Lord truly blessed this ministry and kept us safe as we followed the Covid protocols. Thank you to our great leaders who poured into each of the children and, for at least two hours, made feel somewhat normal for them.

Bibles were handed out as we celebrated our first graders in person and online. *Trunk or Treat* had another great turn out this year. It's always a blessing to see our families.

Winter: Boxes for *Operation Christmas Child* were sent out to bless others around the world. GEMS made 30 Christmas Stockings for our Seniors/Shut Ins. Boys Brigade and GEM families were able to go Christmas Caroling as they delivered these special gifts.

In February, we were able to meet in person in the church on Sundays and Kids Church was formed. This allowed families to worship together and then the children were able to come to Kids Church and learn more about the amazing stories of the Bible. This was for 4 years old to 5th graders.

Spring: On Mother's Day our GEMS girls handed out carnations to each lady in the church with a sweet note attached.

Father's Day - our Boys' Brigade passed out bookmarks to each gentleman in the church.

Boys' Brigade was able to continue with their Pinewood Derby Race and their Camp out weekend.

We finished off the school year by having an end of the year celebration for our GEMS and Boys' Brigade children and families. We celebrated our 5th graders who are moving on to the youth group. We topped it off with an ice cream truck to make things a little sweeter.

Our kids' programs were successful because of the amazing team of leaders who poured themselves into GEMS and Boys Brigade. Special acknowledgement to John Thompson who has been a Brigade leader for the past 10 years while his 3 boys attended. It's special to see how God works through the generations. John was a former Boys Brigader when his dad, Parker Thompson, was a leader.

I also want to thank Ned Cornwall, Ray Damdar, Rob Durbois, John Thompson, Dinah Sinema, Terrie Cook, Jo-Ann Grazlavich, Ellen Felgate and Denise Lewis for their leadership to our Wednesday night clubs. You all are truly a blessing to so many.

Blessings,
Sharan Crabtree

Worship Ministries

Office Manager:



“With challenges come new opportunities.” “Necessity is the mother of invention.” Both sayings ring true for the worship ministry during this past year. We found ourselves moving in new directions to accommodate opportunities and address needs. As with each passing year God is faithful as He continues to provide the means and strength to do His work.

Our ministry cycle began with the anticipation of reopening for onsite worship in mid-July. Once safety protocols were created, I assisted in the implementation by working on building signage, check in /hand sanitizing stations and other tasks as needed. Combining onsite and livestream services required us to shift our focus from an online audience to what was happening in the room. Livestream only services were intentionally simple. As more people returned, we gradually made the shift and by September most service elements were back including communion.

A generous donation allowed us to purchase a digital drum set in the fall. Even with acoustical enhancements made during the renovation, we were never able to achieve any clarity of sound, so this change was our next logical solution.

Instead of our annual evening Thanksgiving Fest, we used the last Sunday morning in November for an interactive Thanksgiving service. People were able to send in videos of what they were thankful for, post testimonies on our livestream chat, or share in person during the service. We found this to be very meaningful and it reached a far broader audience than in the evening. All that was missing were the sandwiches and pies.

For Christmas Eve we planned to livestream an outdoor service. This would enable people to come who did not yet feel comfortable entering the building. Because of potential bad weather, we recorded the service inside earlier in the week. Unfortunately, the onsite service did have to be cancelled, but we were able post the pre-recorded service online.

In January, Nick and Kyra Carrano moved to Branson, MO for Nick to work at the ministry of Sight and Sound Theaters. They have both served faithfully in our worship ministry and especially so during the pandemic. We miss this dynamic duo greatly but know they are where God has called them.

Just as the Carranos were about to leave worship leader, Dave Johnson, told me his 10-year-old son, Luke, was ready to play drums on team starting in January. He ended up subbing with little notice In December and has been serving with his dad ever since. God provided and it warms my heart to see how welcoming the congregation has been to him.

On Good Friday we typically do a Tenebrae Service with gradual diminishing of lights as the story of Jesus crucifixion and death unfolds. It did not translate well in the livestream the previous year, so we moved in a different direction. The service was created and based on the phrase “Upon Him” which appears multiple times in the scriptures pertaining to Jesus. (i.e. Isaiah 9:16, 11:1-2, 42:1, 53:5-6, Matt. 12:18, Luke 2:40)

On Easter we were able to offer an outdoor Sunrise Service at 7 am followed by a light breakfast. The service was well attended and again was an option for those concerned about Covid.

Sunday, June 6th, we held the first of 3 Sunday services/picnics under the big tent behind the Missions house. How special it has been to celebrate communion and share a meal together. We have found it to be a great way to reconnect as a church family.

This year I am reminded what a team effort it takes to accomplish our work in worship and tech ministry. The tech team of Neil Knudsen, Jim Knorr, Nathaniel Pearson, Paul Borgen, Derek Tewksbury and Jim Tripoli continually go above and beyond to meet our ministry needs. The worship team has functioned with a smaller roster of musicians than I can remember and do so with joy and a heart to serve our WEFC family. They are Steve Mann, Dave and Luke Johnson, Mike Ball, Jim and Nancy Tripoli, Wally and Linda Culup and a s mentioned before the Carranos.

Outside of the worship ministry, one of my biggest projects this year was working with Mary Sarratt on our new website which launched in March. My main responsibility was research, writing and gathering content including pictures. Mary worked on the backside of the process by learning how the site worked and entering all the data. One new feature we were excited to add was a global missions map with contact links for each missionary or organization we support. Now anyone can be directly connected to learn of ministry news and prayer needs. As part of the Missions team, Ellen Conserva worked closely with us on this page by gathering and writing much of the content.

Respectfully Submitted,

Colleen Smith

Director of Worship Ministries

Clerk:

From July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021, the church held four (4) quarterly business meetings and one (1) special business meeting. During this same period, there were a total of forty-one (41) Executive Board Meetings. The Executive Board continued to meet weekly via teleconference to ensure continued church operations during the pandemic.



Throughout most of this past year, the Executive Board was focused on the re-opening of the church and a gradual return of our congregation to church activities. As state and federal guidelines changed, the board focused on re-opening services in a safe manner so that our church could once again gather and worship together. The other main focus this past year was the revision and subsequent approval of the Constitution and Bylaws. The changes to these core documents were vetted through many different forums to allow for church membership to speak into the changes being suggested; especially the leadership change from an Executive Board to Elders/Deacons.

From July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021, our church membership declined from 366 to 356. The quorum for our congregational business meetings throughout the coming year will be a minimum of 36 members present. This 356 member total does not include the nineteen (19) Associate members.

During this past year, there were four (4) individuals who became regular members; one (1) member changed from associate member to active member. There were thirteen (13) members removed by request or result of change in pastoral status; zero (0) members transitioned to associate membership; and there was one (1) death; Rosemarie Roy

Additions (4): David & Jo Rucquoi
 Gini Draughon
 Cynthia Phippen

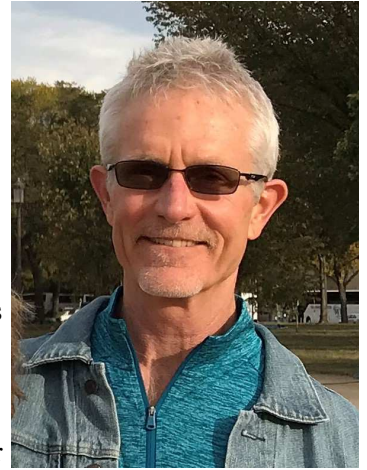
Removals (14):	Rich & Marilyn Riccardo	Jeff & Krystin LeMay
	Ryan & Katelyn Warner	Rosemarie Roy
	Jo Anne Burgh	Jeff & Carol Coleman
	Connie May	Ray Gratton
	Dave & Lynn Gough	

To my knowledge, all of the clerk records are current.

Respectfully Submitted,

David (Ned) Cornwall

Executive Board/Spiritual Care/ Deacons:



This past year has been one of patient endurance as we have relied upon God to guide and sustain us through challenges and changes. Our nation and local community have continued to suffer through the health crisis of the COVID-19 Pandemic, political divisions and polarization, and adverse economic conditions these past 12 months. Throughout these challenges we have been able to worship together, study God's Word together, pray together, and grow together in our love for Christ and for one another. The Executive Board is grateful to our staff and our volunteers who have worked so tirelessly to enable our on-line worship services and ministries through this period of COVID isolation. As we enter the new fiscal year, we are now eagerly welcoming the ability to meet together, worship together, and embrace one-another.

We praise God for His faithful provision that has allowed us to continue to progress in our WEFC church health, our leader development, and disciple-making. We are grateful for the steady financial support from the congregation, which has provided stability through this past challenging year. We would like to recognize the work of the Finance and Missions Committees for their work in preparing the annual budgets for 2022 in a timely fashion. We are thankful to Pastor Scott, Pastor Mike, and the entire staff for their continued care and ministry while expanding God's kingdom in this region of New England. Our Pastors continue to guide and support our community group leaders in their facilitation of our community groups. Our community group ministries have been crucial in providing spiritual care to our members in this time of social distancing and we are grateful for the service of the community group leaders.

We are thankful to the congregation for approving the revised Constitution and Bylaws which installs Elders and Deacons into the leadership structure of our church. We began the revision process over three years ago. The goal was to produce and adopt a revised Constitution and Bylaws that the church can operate according to and advance the gospel with integrity, agility, and ministry empowerment. While maintaining a Congregational governance structure, we are moving from an Executive Board to an Elder Board and establishing intentionally trained Elders and Deacons to better care for the spiritual and physical needs of the church family.

During the past two months we have completed six Elder training sessions and six Deacon training sessions in order to prepare the Elders and Deacons for their leadership and ministry responsibilities beginning on July 1st 2021. The Elders have now been trained in the following areas:

- **Understanding the nature of the church and the roles of Elders and Deacons**
- **Dependence:** A collective commitment to seek the Lord through extraordinary prayer and to lead the church to become a house of prayer through their example.
- **Doctrine:** A collective resolve to study God's Word and engage in the teaching of the Scriptures to nurture the fellowship with care as shepherds of the flock.
- **Direction:** A collective responsibility to discern the direction of the Holy Spirit and guide the church for his plans for ministry.
- **Discipline:** A responsibility to engage in the process of spiritual restoration of believers as outlined in Matthew 18:15-20.
- **Deployment:** A commitment to equip the saints to do the work of the ministry of the church for the building up of the body of Christ.

The Deacons have now been trained in the following areas:

- **Understanding the nature of the church and the roles of Elders and Deacons**
- **Hearts** of compassion. Deacons display a lifestyle of Christian love for others within the body of Christ and community.
- **Eyes and ears** that see and hear the needs of the church. Deacons identify the caring needs of those within the body of Christ and community.
- **Arms** that welcome visitors and church members into the body of Christ. Deacons display a welcoming attitude toward all others making sure that everyone feels connected within the body of Christ.
- **Feet** that mobilize the congregation into action to meet the caring needs of all church members. Deacons work to match the gifts and calling of church members with the caring needs of the church.
- **Head** organized to accomplish the task of caring and welcome.

It has been one of my greatest joys to witness our Elders and Deacons prepare to fulfill their duties and I praise God for their willingness to serve, their leadership, their humility, and their love of our church. The new Constitution and Bylaws will continue to reflect a commitment to congregational accountability, biblical leadership roles, and staff who equip and mobilize individuals for the works of ministry service.

The church board is so very grateful to the Bylaw Subcommittee members Maria Greenslade, Don Jensen, Steve Keller, and Scott Solberg for their relentless commitment to the revisions and assuring a transparent and collaborative approval process.

Regarding our church board, we are forever grateful to Janice Kooiken, Daryl Ostergren, and Gerry Gingras who will be leaving the executive board. We also want to welcome into leadership our new Elders; Brian Hucks, John Rascius, Ned Cornwall, Rob Durbois, Skip Hardy, and Glenn Horter. We also welcome our new Deacons; Mercella Bingham, Karen Mann, Janice Catrone, Janise Foley, Rich Foley, and Ed Johnson.

We praise God to be sons and daughters deeply loved by God in Christ, who serve one another, investing what we have for the sake of the kingdom. We are all honored to serve the congregation and, most of all, to serve our Lord Jesus Christ.

God bless one and all.

Steve Peery

Trustees:

The Trustee Committee serves the church by managing and maintaining its property, buildings, and mechanical equipment. The committee members include Nathaniel Pearson, Nick Rago Jr., Bob Bingham and me. Also, numerous volunteers have contributed their time and skills enabling us to get more done and lower our costs.

In addition to addressing the routine property maintenance issues needed to keep our facilities operational, work on our Phase II capital improvement plan approved by the congregation in April 2019 has continued.

The highlights of the work performed this fiscal year include:

- Completion of the lighting, video, and sound system enhancements.
- Completion of the renovation work in Fellowship Hall.
- Installation of new front doors.
- Completion of the renovation work at the Parsonage.

Other approved Phase II projects are scheduled for completion in the coming year as funding becomes available.

After the completion of the kitchen renovation, a kitchen oversight committee was formed to manage the activities pertaining to the use of the kitchen as well as its equipment and supplies. The current committee members are Janice Catrone, Chris Rideout and Kirsten Trumbull. I wish to thank them for their service.

Our efforts to provide a safe environment on church property due to the Covid-19 virus included the following activities:

- Implemented procedures for routinely disinfecting touchpoints as the church building was re-opened.
- Purchased an electrostatic sprayer to enhance our surface disinfecting capability.
- Purchased and installed a 20' x 40' tent to facilitate outdoor activities as the season allowed.

Additional projects completed included:

- Repair work at the pastoral residency house at 543 Maple Street due to water damage from a heating system failure over the winter.
- Repair a section of the rear fence damaged by a fallen tree during a storm in the fall.

Many thanks to Bill Tolstick for doing such a great job keeping the church disinfected and clean as well as handling the day-to-day tasks preparing for scheduled functions & meetings; and in general, handling the lion's share of the work keeping the church in good repair.

The beautiful decorations that you see in the interior of our church during the holidays and in preparation for special occasions are the work of Linda Sylvester and Leslie Loose – thank you both!

I also wish to extend special thanks to the Garden Committee for keeping the flowers and general area around the church looking great throughout the spring, summer, and fall (Even while the church building was closed.) They are Debbie Wisneski, Maureen Alexander and Brian Debacher; and, as always, they would love the opportunity to welcome new members.

Sincerely,

Gerry Gingras



Missions Committee:

Executive Summary: This past year with COVID was definitely a challenge (but not a show-stopper) to everyone including Missions. The Missions Committee continued to work hard at supporting and encouraging our missionaries. One way we did this was to send missionaries letters of encouragement, complements of the GEMS ministry group. GEMS also made scarfs for the Street Church ministry in Hartford. We also sent periodic emails to let the missionaries know we care and are thinking about them and praying for them. "Missionaries of the Month" prayer requests were highlighted in the WEFC prayer sheet and projected on missionary photos and names the sanctuary screen at the beginning of services. Missions Committee member Elle Conserva collaborated with WEFC staff to launch a new church website which incorporates an awesome WEFC Missions "Global Outreach" section highlighting WEFC supported missionaries and missions organizations. Check it out !!!

Budget and Missionary Support: The budget for fiscal year 2020-2021 was established by the church at \$166,720. The Missions fund is tracking a bit behind budget at the present time, but we have faith that at the end of the fiscal year God's people will fully fund the budget and all our missionaries will be paid. We on the missions committee **thank you all** in advance for your sacrificial contributions.

Assisting our efforts to be good stewards of God's money, we ask each of our missionaries to fill out an annual review report and financial needs survey. We received 100% of the requests and this aided us in establishing the budget for fiscal year 2022. A wonderful side benefit to this effort was to hear from our missionaries about their work and impact in the communities that they serve, and God's blessing on them.

Three new missionary funding support requests were received and accepted: Amirah, The Hartford Project, and Street Church.

Two currently supported missions' organizations were increased, and one was decreased in support levels.

Mission House: WEFC has been blessed by the Zimmer family who have been staying at the Missions House since January 2021. They left Myanmar for a missionary interim transition. The church family loved on the Zimmers by greeting them with gift cards, prepared meals, and clothing to help make their transition easier, and to experience the love and compassion of Jesus through the WEFC church family.

Missionary Visits: Dave and Karen Baer came from Columbia South America from December 2020 through June 2021. Dave and Karen are special people who have joined us as members. What a great thing it is to have the Baer's as members. They work 6 months in Columbia as seminary professor and encourager and then 6 months in CT working on other initiatives for their mission.

November 2020 Missions Emphasis: The Missions Emphasis Month theme was "*Hope Endured*". During this month, the WEFC Youth Group and members of the Missions Committee served at the Street Church, one of WEFC's funded partner ministries. A WEFC Missions Committee led outreach service project at the Coram Deo substance abuse woman's recovery house in Meriden incorporated fall cleanup, fellowship, and prayer. Two missionary guest speakers, Bishop Victor Rush (Hartford City Mission Director) and Dave Baer, Bible Seminary of Columbia, South America, preached and shared from the pulpit. They advanced the gospel in a time of COVID, racial tensions, and unstable governments that only the *Hope Endured* through Jesus Christ our Lord can bridge those world challenging gaps. Hallelujah!!

Additionally, two missionaries Dale & Ann Little (Tokyo Multi-Cultural Church) and Jay Pinney (EFCA Reach Global, Montreal Canada) prepared Youtube videos which were shared during WEFC Adult Small Group, Youth Group, and Sunday School discussion times. What a blessing learning about their ministries, their families, and their joys and challenges while advancing the gospel in the areas of influence around the globe.

We thank our pastors and all of the participants for making the WEFC Missions Emphasis Month impactful and successful.

New Missionary (Derek Tewksbury): Derek Tewksbury, high-school junior and long-time youth at WEFC, will be serving as an Intern with The Hartford Project (THP) this summer. Derek excitedly presented his THP internship roles and responsibilities with the Missions Committee. Derek's undeniable surrender to the Lordship of Christ and his heart to serve His people by bringing to gospel to the poor, the lost, and unsaved, moved the Missions Committee. Given that Derek will be serving with one of WEFC's sponsored mission's organizations, the Missions Committee, unanimously moved by the Holy Spirit, voted to assist Derek with some expenses that he will incur during his role as THP intern and as WEFC ambassador serving the Hartford urban communities.

As a footnote: Derek has served for many years in assistant leadership and worship capacities in the WEFC Youth Group and Sunday School church ministries, and is a Godly role model to many.

Missionaries Leaving the Field (Muriel Johnson)

The Missions Committee was notified that long time supported and retired missionary Muriel Johnson went to be with the Lord in 2021.

Mission Trips 2021 -- WEFC

Due to COVID, all Mission trips were suspended; the Missions Committee and Elders are prayerfully considering 2022 missions trips.

Officers for 2021

The re-elected officers for July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022 are as follows:

Chairman – Mike Schuberth

Treasurer – Mike Kookan

Missions House Coordinator – Elle Conserva

Submitted in Christ's love, compassion, and service,

The WEFC Missions Committee -

Elle Conserva, Rick DeMaio, Jo-Ann Grazlavich

Mike Kookan, Mike Schuberth, Brad Vanderburgh

Bright Beginnings Preschool:



This year (the year of COVID-19), Bright Beginnings Preschool offered a morning session for the 4's class. Over the course of the summer, our incoming 3's families slowly withdrew due to COVID-19 and we only had 4 families willing to send their children to school. Due to this low enrollment, and it being so late in the summer, we canceled the 3's class for the 2020/21 school year. In the 4's class, we decided to keep enrollment at 12 students to maintain a safe learning cohort. We did not offer an Extended Day Program (EDP) this year. In terms of next year, BBP currently has 6 students enrolled in the 4's class and 7 students enrolled in the 3's class. Please note that our 3's students typically roll over to provide us with a majority of our 4's students for the following year. Since the 3's class did not happen this year, we do not have any students rolling over so we are starting both classes from scratch.

Coming into the school year, we were required to adopt and enforce many CT State COVID-19 policies. All staff members and students are required to wear masks during school hours. Parents are no longer allowed inside the building to drop off and pick up their child. Instead, parents drop their child off at the double doors near the parking lot and pick-up at the exit door by the playscape. Upon arrival, kids' temperatures are recorded and the parents are asked screening questions. Because of this new requirement, we changed the 4's schedule to 9:30am-12:00pm. Please note this was before we cancelled the 3's class which would have met from 9:00-11:30am. The idea was that staggered start times would help avoid parking lot congestion. The 3's families would be cleared out in time for the 4's families to arrive. It is recommended that we keep these staggered start times for the 2021/2022 school year. Unless we hear otherwise from the OEC (Office of Early Childhood), the assumption is that these COVID-19 policies will still be in effect. For more information about these policies, please refer to our COVID-19 policy handbook which is available upon request.

This is our thirteenth year with the four-day four-year-old program. Our staff consisted of Heather Dzubin, Director, Carol Coleman, teacher of the four-year-old class and Beth Murphy, Assistant Teacher. The students' daily schedule includes circle time, Bible stories, songs, finger plays, crafts and free choice-play. There were no field trips or classroom visitors due to COVID-19 restrictions. Our curriculum is varied and interesting. We emphasize God's involvement in our world and in our daily lives.

Carol and Beth had another great year working together. They make a high-quality instructional team!

This was our fourth year of the 4's class meeting on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays (instead of Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri). The schedule worked out great for both the staff and our families. We found that it allowed for us to foster a more cohesive preschool community because we were all there on the same days (except for Mondays). The timing of the school day shifted and we met from 9:30am-12:00pm (see above for explanation).

Next year, if there is interest, we will offer the extended day program (EDP) for the 4-year-old class on Tuesdays and Thursdays until 2 pm. The purpose of this program is to further develop the students' gross and fine motor skills, creativity and peer relationships through music, arts & crafts, theatrical performances, cooking, science experiments, etc. It is a great opportunity to help further prepare these children for full day kindergarten. We will need at least 6 students for EDP to run.

This was our third year working with our new snow day policy. On days when Wethersfield Public Schools had a delayed opening, we also operated on a delayed opening schedule, opening from 11:00-12:30. This decreased the number of days that the preschool was actually closed for inclement weather.

We are still exploring the installation of a fence around the outdoor play area in order to increase security. For the time being, the teachers set up cones as a visible boundary/safety line for the students. This works well for student management but there is still the risk of outsiders being able to walk right on to the playground area. The committee is still looking into how much this will cost and then we will be able to determine if the church can help financially in any way and then how much money the preschool would need to contribute towards this project.

In April I notified the BBP Committee that, after 12 years of service, I will not be returning next year as Director. Carol Coleman will not be returning next year after 15 years with BBP. Heather Warriner is also not returning after 8 years with us. We pray that God will continue to take care of BBP as we face these staffing transitions!

For the coming school year, the preschool committee will be: Sharan Crabtree, preschool chair; Matt Durbois, member; Nathaniel Pearson, member; Shelagh Schuberth, member; and Kirsten Trumbull, treasurer.

In His Service,

Heather Dzubin

Director