



Annual Reports - 2018

Conference President	Ms. Marcie Miller
Transitional Conference Minister	Rev. Dr. Charles C. Buck
Conference Treasurer	Mr. John W. Herbert
Christian Formation Ministry	Ministry Team
Clergy Support Ministry	Rev. Mark Rideout
Finance Ministry	Mr. Matt Van Wagner
Justice and Witness Ministry	Rev. Gray Fitzgerald
Local Church Support Ministry	Rev. Andrew J. MacLeod
Wider Church Relations Ministry	Rev. Robert Vodra

Conference President's Annual Report - 2018

What an exciting year of change and transition!

Last September as we bid a fond goodbye to the Rev. Gary Schulte and welcomed our Transitional Conference Minister, the Rev. Dr. Charles Buck, I anticipated, with a bit of trepidation, my new role as Conference President, knowing that it would be both a busy and challenging year. It did not disappoint! However with the highly competent support and assistance of the Conference staff, coupled with new perspectives and energy from Charles Buck, we set in motion a number of critical initiatives while keeping abreast of the normal activities inherent in directing the Conference.

The role of President includes planning for and chairing the Board of Directors five regularly scheduled meetings to address important items and set the vision for the Conference. In addition, the President chairs the monthly Executive Committee meetings, which includes the Conference officers where we handle discussion and actions items of a more administrative nature. Working with these groups of dedicated, thoughtful, experienced and spirit-filled folks from across New Hampshire has been a joy and a blessing. I can't thank them enough for their leadership, support and guidance. Also grateful thanks to Rev. Stacey Kullgren, Rev. Ed Koonz and Mr. Phil Kimball, for their years of service as they complete their terms on the Board.

A key initiative for the Board of Directors this year was developing a vision for Conference outdoor ministries and how to use Horton Center most effectively. Working closely with two camping consulting firms, United Camps, Conferences and Retreats (UCCR) and Kaleidoscope, we conducted a careful review and evaluation of our camping programs, took a hard look at the actual costs and identified potential options and opportunities. Out of that work came the decision to move toward partnering with others in outdoor ministries. Specifically, the New Hampshire Conference will explore collaborating with the Vermont and Maine Conferences to provide outdoor ministries programming across various locations, including Horton Center. This change would allow Horton Center to save costs by not having to hire its own staff for the entire summer, and would make the camp more available during summer months for rental by churches and outside groups. An initial task force had been appointed and planning for the 2019 camping season will start in early September.

This time of transition in Conference leadership requires planning for our future. In December, the Board appointed a Conference Minister Search Committee, hoping for a call of a new Conference Minister before the 2018 Annual meeting. The Search Committee, chaired by Neal Cass, worked closely with the Rev. Lee Albertson from Cleveland, effectively accomplished their task by identifying a highly qualified and

experienced candidate in the Rev. Gordon Rankin. At a special meeting on August 4th Gordon was called, in a unanimous vote, to be our new Conference Minister. Thanks to the members of the Search Committee for their fine work and excellent recommendation.

The Board of Directors is also responsible for the financial health of the Conference. Keeping in mind the ministry that the budget numbers represent, much time and energy goes into Conference finances, from preparing a realistic budget, monitoring expenses and reviewing income. While we will once again be faced with a deficit budget for the upcoming year, our financial position remains strong, carefully and thoughtfully managed.

In April, the Board once again met jointly with the Havenwood-Heritage Heights Board of Directors to renew the covenant we share. Their Board joined us at the Conference Center, shared a meal and celebrated our joint histories and highlights of their 50 plus years.

Finally, we continue to explore collaboration initiatives and opportunities with our northern New England Conference neighbors. Initial discussions on sharing financial practices and oversight, while exploring communications/marketing, and search and call activities have begun, along with the outdoor ministries initiative noted above.

The New Hampshire Conference, while in transition, has been full of life and vitality. Working together with the six Ministries that spearhead our outreach in our communities, throughout the state and across the globe, we also care for our local churches and Associations through numerous support activities, such as search and call. We have been truly blessed to have the Rev. Dr. Charles Buck as our Transitional Conference Minister this past year, along with the steady and knowledgeable presence of the Rev. Richard Slater. Together they are quite a team! And to the Conference staff, who behind the scenes, keep everything functioning so smoothly, we owe a great thanks as well. Finally, to all of you who provide the gifts of your time, talents and monetary support, I thank you! Together, we ARE the church!

As we look forward to officially welcoming the Rev. Gordon Rankin, I am so thankful for the “day of the poured-out spirit” each day and every day during this time of transition in the New Hampshire Conference, United Church of Christ.

Thanks be to God!

With a Grateful Heart,

Marcie Miller, Conference President

Transitional Conference Minister's Annual Report - 2018

In this, my first and last, report to you as Transitional Conference Minister, I want to begin with heart-felt gratitude for the privilege of serving you this last year. Though the time was brief, it was rich and intense, and hardly a beat was skipped in the ongoing ministries of the New Hampshire Conference as evidenced by the reports in this handbook. I am grateful to have journeyed with you between the fond and wistful farewells to Gary Schulte and the warm and eager welcomes to Gordon Rankin.

When I began last October 2017, the Board of Directors and I agreed that we would use the coming year to address immediate needs, laying the groundwork for a broad strategic and visioning process with the new, settled conference minister once on board. To this end, and with the usual day-to-day tasks, the following are the major areas where my attention and energy were focused.

Horton Center

Hands down, Horton Center was the major preoccupation this last year. Not long after I arrived, a major storm struck, washing out the access road to the camp. Waist-high gullies made the road completely impassable, and damaged culverts threatened further erosion from storm runoff or snow melt. The winter months were spent negotiating and striking an agreement with the National Forest Service (which owns the lower two-thirds of the road) and hiring a contractor who could perform the work as soon as possible after ground thaw and before camp opening. This we accomplished with much of the credit going to Reuben Rajala, our site manager, who was instrumental in assessing damage, obtaining quotes, and coordinating a contractor. The cost to repair the road was \$27,000, about two-thirds of which we hope to have reimbursed by the Forest Service.

A second major task was the search for an interim executive director, leading to the hiring of Tim Hughes in January 2018. Previous acting director, Leslie Chatfield, whose one-year contract as acting director expired on December 31, 2017, was helpful in orienting Tim, and he dove in quickly and gracefully to plan and lead the Summer 2018 camp program with the excellent camp staff and Outdoor Ministries Group.

A third major task was developing a plan for the future of Horton Center, which has suffered from declining enrollment and growing operating deficits. Two consultants were contracted by the Board to consider the question of future viability, and their reports led the Board to make the decision to partner with neighboring Conferences—Maine and Vermont—in developing outdoor ministries programming that would utilize a variety of sites, including Horton Center. More detail can be found in the July 16, 2018,

letter sent to New Hampshire Conference churches and posted on the Conference website: www.nhcucc.org.

A future major need for Horton Center is dedicated fundraising, including both annual appeals and a capital campaign to address deferred maintenance and repair issues. Fundraising will be integral to any future plans for Horton Center.

Search and Call

With over forty churches at any one time in various stages of transition in pastoral leadership, Search and Call has been a predominant theme this last year. The implementation of “consultants” to guide churches in the actual search process has worked out well judging by feedback from churches and consultants. We are thankful for the excellent work of our consultants, the Revs. Michael Bennett, Dawn Berry, Michael Carrier, Jeff Evans, Andy Gilman and Rebecca Larson.

Feedback received has also enabled us to make tweaks to the system to make things easier to understand and more efficient in practice. A major change is the standardization of materials and resources so that, when possible, we utilize the same ones used throughout the UCC rather than those specific to New Hampshire. This has both reduced the number of resources used with churches and alleviated the confusion of search committees and ministers searching online for information, forms or resources.

Our search consultant model has drawn interest from other conferences, especially Maine and Vermont. Tentatively, the staffs of the three New England Conferences are developing a training for new consultants to be held jointly sometime in the fall.

Northern New England Conferences

Conference Ministers of New Hampshire, Vermont and Maine met several times this last year to discuss collaborative possibilities for ministry across Northern New England. These discussions were not about merger, the route being taken by Southern New England conferences. Instead, we have sought the things that we could do better together than apart or alone. Our discussion quickly gravitated toward four potential areas:

- 1) Outdoor Ministries (see above, Horton Center);
- 2) Search and Call (see above, Search and Call, as well as a system allowing pastors to search regionally rather than conference by conference);
- 3) Communications (a staff person to write stories, maintain websites, handle social media)

4) Finances (staff for bookkeeping, accounting or reporting needs)

The staffs and boards of the three conferences will now enter the picture to help flesh out ideas and, if consensus is reached, to develop plans for implementation.

Committees on Church and Ministry (COCM)

In addition to the usual work of staffing the seven Association committees, the COCM Chairs group, and the Conference Oversight Committee, Richard Slater and I spent time with these committees reviewing the contents of the newly revised Manual on Ministry and planning for its adoption and use in the life of our Associations and Conference.

In August, a training opportunity was provided to all COCM members throughout the Conference. Leading the day-long event were Elizabeth Dilley from the UCC's Ministerial Excellence, Support and Authorization Team; and Calvin Genzel from Pastoral Counseling Services in Manchester. The Rev. Dilley also provided a day-long training for Response Team members, who are called upon during times of fitness reviews.

Conference Center (Pembroke)

Half of the Conference Center building is available for rent. The tragic, untimely death of one of our tenants last September 2017 left us with four vacant spaces out of six. Since then, we have been fortunate to find three new tenants, with one long-time tenant leaving in May (NEARA) due to financial constraints, leaving us with two spaces available currently. Rental revenue has helped considerably with Conference finances.

With increasing requests from outside groups to rent rooms or space at the Conference Center for brief events (usually one day), we needed to develop a Facility Use Agreement. Starting in the summer, the new agreement went into effect and will be used for all future renters, including NHCUCC groups.

Wider Church

As a "middle judicatory," the Conference relates both to local congregations and to the wider church—that is, regional, national and ecumenical expressions of the church—and the Conference is often in the position of linking one with the other.

This last year, my wider church relationships or involvements included the New Hampshire Council of Churches, New England Conference Ministers, Council of Conference Ministers, UCC Outdoor Ministries Association, American Civil Liberties Union, Immigrant Prayer Vigils (Manchester), as well as my ongoing board work with

Chalice Press (the Disciples publishing house) and United Church Funds (of which I am board chair).

Also, this last year, on behalf of the New Hampshire Conference, I sent letters to state legislators, Governor Sununu and U.S. government officials on topics related to immigration, diversity, the Medicaid Expansion Resolution (following the resolution from our Economic Justice Mission Group) and Ukama.

Conference Staff and Board of Directors

Although small and lean, the Conference staff is immensely capable, knowledgeable and adaptable. All of the staff function at a very high level, able to work independently and on their own initiative, as well as cooperatively and part of a team. Even more, as members of local congregations themselves, they deeply care about and genuinely love the churches and people of the New Hampshire Conference. My ability to do the transitional ministry this last year was in direct proportion to the support, collegiality and assistance I received from Richard Slater, Ann Desrochers, Lydia Frasca, Cindy Bradley and Helen McGlashan. Any missteps or mistakes are entirely of my own making.

The New Hampshire Conference is served well by its Board of Directors, which is among the very best that I have seen anywhere. Each board member makes a contribution to the conversation, with keen insight into the issues and loving concern for the people who are involved or affected. Even faced with needs aplenty and a limited budget, the board has made difficult decisions, but never once given in or given up. Their affection for the church and respect for one another are amply evident when they meet, which are times of both serious discussion and joyous laughter.

Board excellence is shaped in no small part by the faithful leadership of our Conference Officers. Secretary Dawn Berry, Treasurer John Herbert, President-Elect Carolyn Keilig, and President Marcie Miller have been enormously helpful colleagues and guides in the administration of the Conference. Though they would refute it, I would say that because of them the transition to new Conference leadership this last year has been both smooth and successful.

Closing

For those who want just the facts, I have prepared the following executive summary.

Length (in days) of transition ministry: 374

Miles driven (estimate): 16,000

Sunday visits to local churches: 38

Meetings of Associations and COCMs: 18

Other church visits: 14

Quarts of maple syrup consumed: 1

Moose encounters: 0

God is doing great things in New Hampshire, and I look forward to seeing even more of the same in your glorious future!

Peace and grace,

Charles Buck

Transitional Conference Minister

Conference Treasurer's Annual Report - 2018

Once again, our financial report is a “good news, bad news” story. The New Hampshire Conference is alive and well and financially sound. But, there is always a “but.” We have not for most years been able to end the year with a positive budget result. For several years we have budgeted for a deficit.

We finished 2017 with a budget deficit of \$11,542. Maybe that's good news. We had budgeted for a \$17,500 deficit. The budgeted deficit was improved by increased revenue from OCWM donations, Fellowship Dues, investment distributions and administrative fees. It was further improved with underspending by the Ministries.

Our total Contributed Revenue was actually \$1,000 over that budgeted but \$35,840 less than 2016. Our Churches Wider Mission income was 104% of budget, but it was \$49,745 less than 2016. Our Fellowship Dues was a bright point and was slightly over budget and a little more than in 2016.

Total Conference Expenses were 99% of what was budgeted and were \$26,304 less than 2016. The Ministries again did very well in controlling expenses and were almost all under budget with a positive variance of \$14,500. Horton Center, that is Outdoor Ministries, had a \$37,871 deficit for the year, which was \$11,655 worse than 2016.

The reductions in prior year budgets for Conference staff, office expenses and the building, (budgeted as “General Mission”) helped the bottom line for the 2017 year. But, even that was higher than 2016. Year 2017 was not great, but certainly could have been much worse.

Year 2018 is following the trend set by the last few years. At the end of July the budget was \$77,719 in the red. That will get better, but we cannot expect to end the year with a positive result. Horton Center will probably do better than last year, but will still have a significant loss.

As I said the Conference is alive and well and financially sound. But. There's that word again. We need to do something about our Conference revenue and our losses at Horton Center.

John W. Herbert
Treasurer

Christian Formation Ministry Annual Report - 2018

The Christian Formation Ministry provides local churches with information about New Hampshire, national and regional faith formation events and offers financial assistance for participation in those events, as needed. The Ministry also serves as ambassadors for Horton Center, Star Island, youth events, and campus ministries.

In the past year, the one significant investment of time and energy for the Christian Formation Ministry was the Youth Environmental Justice Summit. As an action, in accordance with the Conference adoption of a resolution expressing concern about the effects of climate change and the role of communities of faith in addressing the causes, the Ministry partnered with the Environmental Stewardship Mission Group to develop the Summit. Held at the Brookside Congregational Church, UCC, in April, the Summit featured keynote speakers Rev. Jim Antal, Massachusetts Conference Minister and the UCC national voice of climate change awareness, and the Rev. Brooks Berndt, the UCC Minister for Environmental Justice. Other workshops were held on justice issues surrounding climate change; the story of the water protectors at Standing Rock; food issues around climate change; a musical workshop on climate change; and information on the campaigns opposing fossil fuel pipelines in New Hampshire. Several of the young people in attendance were motivated to preach on the subject at their home churches, and organize activities around climate change and environmental justice.

At the time of this writing, plans are well underway for our sixth Confirmation Retreat to be held at Horton Center in late September. The retreat continues to maintain a focus on providing an understanding of the UCC in various settings, and helping the students learn more about their collective and individual gifts and identities. We always conclude with ways in which the participants can take their lessons “on the road” back to their local churches.

The Ministry works closely with Ann Desrochers to support the work of AUCE (The Association of United Church Educators), and particularly the annual New England Conference. Ann publishes a monthly CE Newsletter, which is available on the NHCUCC Web page, and is one of many resources offered to our local churches. We strive to facilitate faith formation for all ages, and in as many settings as possible!

Respectfully Submitted,

Christian Formation Ministry Team

Clergy Support Ministry Annual Report - 2018

Clergy Support Ministry, accountable to the Board of the Directors, works diligently to “provide opportunities for continuing education and support to augment the work of the Conference Minister and the Association Committees on Church and Ministry.” [NH Conference By-laws, Article IX, Section 2]

Clergy Support Ministry (CSM) Noted in this report is a list of Mission Groups that “link” to CSM for both communication and ongoing action in support of authorized ministers in the NH Conference.

Prior to each monthly meeting, we invite communication via a closed email to Mission Groups related to CSM. This is for CSM awareness of what folks are doing, but also allows Mission Groups to identify areas in which CSM can help. CSM welcomes the naming of resources that can be shared with our clergy to enhance and support the practice of ministry. The New Hampshire Conference *Weekly News* is a wonderful resource for this sharing!

Our continuing challenge is to discern ways CSM can best support our authorized ministers.

CSM developed and/or partnered with others on the following:

- Conversation about **Part-time Ministers**, and **Part-time Ministry** in various settings [church, chaplaincy, community], and have found that the needs specific to the reality of “part-time” for ministers and settings is growing. Is there a need for some type of grouping specifically for Part-Time Ministry?
- **Chaplain Support Group** is discerning next steps.
- **Retired Clergy Support Group**—began meeting this year!
- **Educating Clergy for Racial Justice Understanding**
CSM partnered with Racial Justice Mission Group of Justice & Witness Ministry to present Preaching Beyond Black History Month, with nationally recognized speaker, Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson at a *May 23, 2018 Clergy Day* held at Brookside Congregational Church. This event was made possible by the partnering, with significant funding from a Brown Endowment Continuing Education Grant and by OCWM funds through the NH Conference UCC. We had 36 Authorized UCC Ministers in attendance, with very positive feedback. Our thinking is this needs a Mission Group of its own—Clergy Day Mission Group.

- **Leadership Development for the 21st Century Church**
A *New Thing Task Force* developed a two-year class “*Leading the 21st Century Church*” and 7 churches signed (enrollment up to 9 churches) to begin in September, 2018. Partners include Local Church Support Ministry, Professional Resource Development Mission Group [formerly NH School of Ministry}, Clergy Support Ministry. Growing edges of the church—clergy and laity—are being nurtured!
- **Continuing Education Opportunities for Authorized Ministers**
This is a constant for CSM. We would welcome a “one-time opportunity” facilitated by a Mission Group who wants to bring a continuing education opportunity to life. Your leadership will make it happen.

Work Specific to CSM during the year:

- **Prepared to Serve** CSM often coordinates table space for CSM mission groups, and works on CSM display, including resources to be shared
- **NH Conference Annual Meeting** CSM often coordinates table space for CSM mission groups, and works on CSM display, including resources to be shared
- **Clergy Compensation Guidelines**
CSM reviews, and recommends guidelines to the NH Conference BOD. We offer deep thanks to the team of Rev. David Jadlocki and Ethel McConaghy who shared their time and expertise in reviewing the 2016 document, to compare and contrast it with other New England Conferences, and to address the particular needs of Part-time Ministers. As if planned [it wasn't!] the Interim Ministers Mission Group crafted a document, “*To Parsonage or Not to Parsonage - That is the Question*” which we found timely and informative, and added that to the mix for our discussion, which continue to unfold. The NH Conference BOD approved a 2% COLA
- **Prudential Committee** focuses on monies for supplemental insurance for ministers and their spouses (see more in the report below).
- **Periodic articles about CSM in Weekly News**

Funds overseen and reported out to CSM:

- Authorized Ministers Continuing Education Fund
- Grace Scott Fund
- Seminarian Scholarship Fund

Quarterly reports are written and submitted to the BOD. A sincere word of thanks to our NH Conference Ministers, Charles Buck and Richard Slater, and the NH Conference

Office Staff who have been so helpful to me: Cindy Bradley, Ann Desrochers, Lydia Frasca who are so patient and supportive in their interactions.

Respectfully submitted: Mark Rideout, Chair

Mission Groups related to CSM:

Professional Resource Development Mission Group

[Formerly, NH School of Ministry]

Rebecca Werner Maccini revrwm@tds.net

The mission of this group is: "To provide continuing education and boundary awareness opportunities for authorized ministers and lay people. In addition, the PRDG offers to be a resource to Committees on Church and Ministry (COSM) in their work with Members in Discernment (MID) pursuing an alternative track to authorized ministry." We are working of boundary awareness training: basic and advanced for 2018-2019.

UCC Polity Course, Regional

Leadership is shared and hosted amongst the New England Conferences of the UCC, and the NH Conference portion of funds are in the CSM budget.

Clergy Convocation

Andrew MacLeod pastorbucc@myfairpoint.net

Convocation will be held from Monday afternoon through Wednesday afternoon, 9/17-19/2018 at the Marie Joseph Spiritual Center, Biddeford, ME. Our speaker will be the Rv. Dr. Kirk Byron Jones, minister, professor and author, who will be presenting material from a course he has taught at Andover-Newton Theological School, "Ella, Louis, and Love: The Spiritual Reservoir of Jazz." As many may know by now, Convocation is a mix of education and Sabbath with clergy colleagues. Convocation is for authorized ministers serving in the NHCUCC, retired NHCUCC authorized ministers, and is also open to graduated Members in Discernment (MID's) of the NHCUCC who expect to be serving in a called position within the year. This Mission Group applies for funding to offset the costs through the Pembroke Fund. Registration opens in early May.

Committees on Church & Ministry [COCM's]

Our NH Conference Ministers are the link between the Chairs of the COCM's, CSM, and shared effort to support the work of all authorized ministers.

Pastoral Leadership Support Groups

David Reynolds dbr@pcs-nh.org

There were six Pastoral leadership Development Groups (PLDG) for 2017-2018 that ended in June. We have just completed the second year of a three year contract. PLDG's have been in place for 10 years! The partnership with Pastoral Counseling Services (PCS) began in 2008 as agreed in the current Memorandum of Understanding, which has been reviewed and will continue for another 2 years. There will also now be some flexibility with re/ to the size of the groups. These six groups, with 31 participants, have done well. In the year-end evaluations, the facilitators and their leadership is rated highly.

Groups include:

Carroll-Strafford Association [Rev. Dr. David Reynolds leads]
Merrimack Association [Rev. Dr. William Brown leads]
Merrimack Association/Hopkinton [Rev. Robert Anderson leads]
North Country/Plymouth [Rev. Dr. Margaret Hess leads]
Rockingham [Rev. Dr. Mark Watts leads]
Southwest Association [Rev. Rebecca Maccini leads]

Facilitators meet three times a year via Skype. Recruitment happens via NH Weekly News, through each Association via email—most facilitator's are handling groups in specific Associations, and so they reach out to do marketing. Some group are full, some still looking. Groups begin in Sept/Oct. At present a NH Conference clergy pays \$20/per session, with the balance being underwritten by the Grace Scott Fund.

David Reynolds has written a *Thriving in Ministry Grant* to the **Lilly Foundation**. With a requested amount of \$691,000 over three years, this would cover all expenses for a major yearly speaker event on being church in a new era; yearly spiritual retreat, training for facilitators, training on donor development (to address financial struggles in the church) through the Lake Institute. David applied with the encouragement of Charles Buck; the Samaritan Institute Network, an umbrella organization of 53 spiritually oriented psychotherapy agencies (of which PCS is a part) provided coaching for the grant writing. Clergy not participating in the PLDG's may be able to attend some events if space allows.

David will hear back re: the grant in 10/2018, with potential availability of funds in 1/2019.

Interim Ministry Group

Carolyn Keilig revcehk@gmail.com

The Interim Ministers Group continues to meet year round, the third Thursday of each month, 9-11am. Our annual workshop, held on March 15, welcomed presenter, the Rev. Jim Thomas, who led us through both the legal/organizational steps and the “heart” concerns surrounding church mergers. We learned about the difference between yoked, united and federated mergers as well as the many issues that surround coming together. Most churches are not in the process of merger, but understand the current cultural realities which might draw churches to consider this in the future.

At our monthly meeting we added a ½ hour educational piece that began in May. In May, Susan Tarolli and Carolyn Keilig led a discussion on the pros and cons of keeping or selling your parsonage (a question that often comes up during the interim time) and we did a case study about it. (and generated a brief document “*To Parsonage or Not to Parsonage, That is The Question*”, which provided a synopsis of the pro’s and con’s related to the question.) In June and July our educational piece was on congregations that are grieving. In June, we learned about how to recognize grief and some of its “symptoms”, and in July, what an interim pastor can do. These were led by Celeste McQuarrie and Rhonda McLeod. In September our Conway colleagues led a session on the ins and outs of doing a capital campaign during an interim. John Hughes has been a settled pastor with experience in this area, which is a help as the Conway Village Church is in the midst of a capital campaign where he is now the interim. Also leading this piece is Ruth Shaver, from North Conway and that church is doing a capital campaign on a non-profit they have started..

Prudential Committee

David Jadlocki rev.david@jadlocki.com

In 1815, through an act of the New Hampshire legislature, funds were established to support retired clergy or their widows. As time moved on, these funds were transferred to the PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE, which now functions as a ministry group of the New Hampshire Conference, United Church of Christ.

202 years after this vital ministerial support was formed, the Prudential Committee is proud to be able to continue the honorable tradition of caring for NH clergy. In 2017, we continued our mission through the distribution of emergency assistance grants to both retired and active clergy who are facing personal or financial hardship. The Medicare Supplemental Insurance Grants, awarded to qualifying clergy upon their retirement, continued to be an essential component to the mission of the Prudential Committee, and a deeply appreciated support to many retired clergy in NH. In September, we had the privilege of hosting our annual retired clergy lunch.

New in 2017/18, the Prudential Committee is happy to report that we will be underwriting a new retired clergy group which will be facilitated in partnership with the New Hampshire Conference and Pastoral Counseling Services. This group will provide support and engagement for retired clergy across the state.

To gather more information about the financial assistance available through the Prudential Committee, please visit the NH Conference web site (www.NHCUCC.ORG) and click on Conference Ministries, then PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE to download our brochure.... OR you may contact the conference office at 603-225-6647.

Clergy Spouse and Partner Support Mission Group

Bob James rajames21@gmail.com

The Clergy Spouse and Partner Support Mission Group met only once in the past year, and is in discernment about its future. While we have been active since 2015 and sponsored numerous activities including a retreat day for clergy spouses and partners and two presentations at Prepared to Serve, participation has never reached the critical mass I believe necessary for a truly self-sustaining mission group. I think this is due to a number of factors. To begin with, unlike clergy, spouses/partners do not have an established network, directory, or other way to communicate with one another, nor is one available to our group, making organization difficult. But beyond that, spouses/partners whom we have reached have shared some of the reasons that vibrant participation is hard for them. First, clergy families are very busy with church related activities already. Second, despite agreements honoring confidentiality, spouses/partners are concerned that their honest opinions of the stresses of life in the church might get back to their congregation. And thirdly, although this is rarely admitted, some spouses/partners don't want to upset the applecart in their own marriages by openly sharing how life in the ministry affects them. I believe that many spouses/partners have friends or perhaps one other clergy spouse/partner that they share with, but a larger group can seem too public. Of course, these are things that we had hoped the mission group would provide support for, but we seem to have been unsuccessful in bringing enough NH folks together to meet regularly, plan activities, and develop materials on a consistent basis. People (from all over) continue to visit the Wordpress site (www.supportforclergyspousesandpartners.com) that I (personally) maintain, with topics like "Ten Books for Clergy Couples" or "Six Ways to Support Pastors and Clergy Families While Building Stronger Congregations", and I will certainly continue that. Contact will be made with the people who have taken part in mission group activities together in order to discern future directions.

Pastor Parish Relations Mission GroupTim Wildman wildhov@comcast.net

Rev. Dr. Tim Wildman has a presentation explaining why having a PPRC is in the best interest of the church, and how such a group can be effective for the health and vitality of the authorized minister and the church. Tim brings materials to share, and has done workshops at Prepared to Serve, and will come to any local church who would want to hear about how to start such a group, or maybe repurpose a such a function within a church's present structure.

Newly-Called in the NHCUCC Support Bill Brown bbrowncornerstone@comcast.net

The Newly Called Group has had a good year. Billy Brown, facilitator has retired. CSM affirms that a few things needs to be addressed: a) New Facilitator for this group, b) Funding Source (Grace Scott Fund) needs to be confirmed. c) The Conference Ministers will review if this group specific to New Called in the NH Conference should fall under the purview of the PLDG. Interestingly each Association has a different take on whether or not participation in the PLDG constitutes whole or part of the required Continuing Education hours now required for authorized UCC ministers.

Retired Clergy GroupRon Dieter rondieter@outlook.com

There were 7 committed participants that met monthly. Each meeting starts with a "checking in" time followed by an agreed upon topic for discussion, with leadership by those attending. All participants found the group engaging, supportive, and nourishing. This group will re-convene on September 21, 2018 at the Barrows Activity Center at Heritage Heights. CSM heartily supports this group. Approved funding from the Prudential Committee is pending.

Chaplain Support GroupBarb Brawley bbrawley@elliott-hs.org

Barb is actively working with Cindy Bradley and using the NH Conference Directory to identify those who are serving in a chaplaincy setting—which may include: hospital, prison, extended care facility, Fire, Police Department, or other agency, to generate a contact list. Once list is drawn up, Barb would initiate contact to assess interest and arrange a first gathering. If you are an Authorized UCC Minister serving in any capacity as a chaplain, please be in direct contact with Barb.

Finance Ministry Annual Report - 2018

This year, our ministry has been involved in various initiatives to help bolster the financial underpinnings of the Conference, including

- Sending a first-ever, second Friends of the Conference appeal letter.
- Follow up calls and contacts to member churches to encourage as many as possible to get their pledged commitments in before end of fiscal year.
- Creation and initial small rollout of an Advocates program where local church volunteers help raise awareness of the Conference activities through pulpit moments, newsletter pieces and personal contacts with other members.
- Awareness and stewardship messages in Conference Weekly news.
- Design of printed and printable materials for promoting the work of the NH Conference in support of local church budget planning and pledging to NH Conference in 2019.

We continue to struggle with the lack of understanding in local churches of what the Conference is all about, and its central role in all our ministries together near and far. To most of the 18,000 or so members within our 133 churches, the Conference seems to be dimly understood, known as the big OCWM line item on their church budget, or as Horton Center, or, and to those churches who have been, are now, or soon to be, in search and call, as the lifeline to help them find new leadership.

Our biggest revelation this year that is driving our ministry for the coming year is the epiphany that our Finance Ministry is really a marketing ministry. I don't mean marketing as the annoying practice of advertisers haranguing us at every waking moment, but marketing as in effectively communicating our mission. Our mission for 2019 is to do the following:

Communicate Connectedness
Communicate Covenant
Inspire Generosity for Our Wider Missions

We believe that if we can more effectively communicate the missions and ministries that connect our NH Conference churches together and communicate the covenant we share to be in mission and ministry together, that the finances will naturally and generously flow out.

For 2019, we are working on two new major initiatives to support ministers and stewardship leaders in their efforts to inspire generosity within their congregations. We are planning two events for Spring 2019, one for clergy and a second one for lay leaders and clergy, in conjunction with the New England Stewardship Council.

Especially as we travel through this time of transitions – a new conference minister, new pastors coming on board at over 1/3 of our congregations, and of course, the changing relationship between the national setting of the UCC – we believe that the finance ministry is uniquely positioned for, and charged with, communicating the need for financial support as we look to revitalize and evolve our ministries throughout New Hampshire.

Respectfully Submitted.

Matt Van Wagner

Finance Ministry: Matt Van Wagner (Chair), Dan Tinkham, Rev. Gayle Whittemore, Rev. David Keller, Roger Arend.

Justice and Witness Ministry Annual Report - 2018

The Justice and Witness Ministry (JWM) is the organizing, connecting, and supporting link between the conference and seven mission groups. The work of these groups is centered around peace, justice and environmental values. The groups are Economic Justice, Peace with Justice Advocates, Racial Justice, Environmental Stewardship, Open and Affirming, Opioid Crisis, and Immigration and Refugee mission groups.

We like for a JWM member to attend the meetings of each of these groups as a link and to facilitate communication. However, given our limited numbers we are spread pretty thin and not always able to do that. Some of these groups are well established with strong leadership. In these situations, it is not unusual for them to go about their mission and function independently. However, when there is a problem related to a group or when a new group is attempting to form, it is common for us to play a much more supportive and active role.

The mission groups have sponsored wonderful conferences, workshops, vigils, marches, and actions. They have been effective advocates at the statehouse and have held workshops to teach others how to be effective advocates related to the values of their mission. When the missions of the groups overlap, they join with each other in order to be a stronger witness. They also join with other groups outside of the Conference who hold similar values, such as American Friends Service Committee, NH Peace Action, and NH 350.org. Mission groups also sometimes join with other parts of the conference when their missions overlap.

In spite of the mission groups' excellent work, members and churches of the conference are sometimes unaware of their work and sometimes unaware that these groups exist. Given that, recently JWM has recently moved to encourage the mission groups to have a more direct impact on the churches themselves. The new JWM mission statement reads, "The Justice and Witness Ministry commits to being an agent of transformation, informing and inspiring a revolution in ourselves, our churches, and our conference that is rooted in the gospel values of peace, justice, and creation care."

The JWM has been sponsoring two potlucks a year when we invite all members of all mission groups. These potlucks started out as times for the groups to become familiar with each other, to learn about the work other groups were doing, and to discuss best practices. At this point in time, we are focusing the theme of the potlucks around the new mission statement. The last potluck in the spring and the one coming up this fall will focus on the theme of the previous paragraph, that is on learning how the groups can "inspire a revolution in ourselves, our churches, and our conference that is rooted in the gospel values of peace, justice, and creation care."

Each mission group makes up a budget for the upcoming year. Most of the time, each group gets roughly \$1,800.

Gray Fitzgerald
Chair, Justice and Witness Ministry

Local Church Support Ministry Annual Report - 2018

It has been a relatively quiet year for the LCSM. The ministry did not receive any applications for two grant programs of the NHCUCS since last year. Please remember that local churches and individuals may apply for grants from the Lay Leadership Development Fund or for Strengthen the Church-Youth Ministry Grants. Eligibility requirements and application procedures are available on the Conference website (<http://nhcucc.org/resourceslinks/grants-scholarships>).

LCSM currently has two Mission Groups that fall under this Ministry. The New Church Start Mission Group has been in a period of rebuilding in the past year. The "A New Thing Task Force" has been working to bring to plan and schedule a new training course in conjunction with the BTS Center in Portland, Maine.

On April 25, Administrative Professionals Day, LCSM and Conference staff welcomed over 30 church administrative professionals to the Conference Center. The day included networking, sharing, training, celebrating the unique role of church admins, and lunch. Full or part-time, large or small church, city or rural setting, church admins have roles unique to the local church setting and were pleased to come together to support one another and build network ties for their special and vital ministries in our churches.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev Andrew J. MacLeod

Wider Church Relations Ministry Annual Report - 2018

The reports from the mission groups of the Wider Church Relations Ministry (WCRM) are as follows.

The Syrian Refugee Mission Group has been moved to Justice and Witness Ministry group. We felt this was a better fit for their ministry.

The Disaster Response Mission Group is still being led by Rev. Jan Howe. She reports that she has been distributing information to churches, informing them that preparing for a disaster and having a plan is important for churches. They hold a conference every year, with costs split between the National setting and our Conference, unfortunately the past two years she has been unable to attend.

Rev. Howe and her mission group has set up displays at Prepared to Serve and Annual Meeting with information about this mission group and with helpful resources for churches. Our budgeted amount covers our Conferences portion of travel for a representative to attend the national Disaster Response Ministries conference, display tables at two events, and materials for churches.

General Synod. General Synod happens every two years, and did not occur in 2018. We are planning to send a delegation in 2019 to Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The delegates and alternate delegates will be elected at Annual Meeting, and will start to meet several months before Synod to talk about arrangements, and start our discussion of proposed resolutions. In our non-Synod year we ask for funding for approximately half of the total cost of delegates, with the other half requested the year we have Synod.

Ukama Partnership (aka, Ukama Mission Group or UMG). The Ukama Mission Group facilitates the work of our partnership with the UCC in Zimbabwe and the 47 partnered churches in the NHCUCC. They are implementing a new organizational structure over the coming months to increase educational opportunities and communications with partner churches, as well as those wishing to learn more about Ukama.

We are hosting a small delegation from the United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe from October 12-29, 2018. The delegation will attend Annual Meeting and travel throughout the state worshipping with churches and sharing fellowship to strengthen our partnership. Please refer to the *Weekly News* for a schedule of regional gatherings and other opportunities to engage with the delegation. The UMG is responsible for the travel costs for the leader of the delegation, Rev. Dr. Menson Mpfu, while partnered local congregations are supporting the delegates' travel and hospitality expenses. These face-to-face visits are essential to fulfilling the mission of the Ukama Partnership – “to walk together in faith and to serve together in ministry among God’s people.” The heart of the relationship is the love of Christ and the call “That they may all be One”.
John 17:21

The Ukama Mission Group continues to work with the Ukama Committee of the UCCZ to enable better communications between partner churches. Improvements in technology have greatly enhanced opportunities, and many partnerships are regularly using whatsapp and Facebook messaging to keep in touch and share news back and forth. A new Ukama website (<http://uccz.org/>) was developed this year with a link from the NHCUCC webpage (<http://nhcucc.org/conference-ministries/wider-church-relations-ministry/ukamapartnership>).

22 years since its beginning in 1996, Ukama Partnership continues to be one of the distinctive features of the New Hampshire Conference. We appreciate all the work this mission group does to maintain and grow this important ministry in the New Hampshire Conference.

New Hampshire Council of Churches. The New Hampshire Conference has supported the work of the New Hampshire Council of Churches (NHCC) in various amounts over many years. In 2015 and 2016 our support was being reduced every year. In 2017, the NHCC was in a time of transition, and funding was greatly reduced. In 2018, funding was increased and we have asked for a bit more in the 2019 Conference Budget, still below our support for 2016, and well less than our support in 2015.

Rev. Jason Wells is the current director of New Hampshire Council of Churches and has turned this organization around, defined its purpose, and it is doing amazing things (along with their board of directors).

Over the course of the past year, the NHCC has had three areas in its focus:

1. **Death Penalty repeal**, especially by bringing Shane Claiborne to speak here and through testimony at public hearings
2. **Immigrant Solidarity**, especially through organizing Sanctuary churches in Manchester and in advocating for pastoral care at the Federal Building
3. **Poor People's Campaign**, through being leading organizers tri-chair and drawing out the substantial faith participation

As we move into the next year, we won't be as much contending for death penalty repeal and the major 40 Days of the Poor People's Campaign has ended. As those recede, we'll be picking up a bigger focus on the **opioid epidemic**, organizing existing recovery ministries and trying to support clergy with appropriate pastoral care skills and resources. The National Council of Churches is again housed in the Conference Center in Pembroke.

The Global Ministry Mission Group is a brand-new group. As of the writing of this report, they have met once. After a successful day with a couple who had just returned from Global Ministry in Sri Lanka, the Wider Church Relations Ministry felt the need for a new Mission Group starting to support and advocate for Global Ministries in the New Hampshire Conference. Our first meeting was full of ideas from how to present information about Global Ministry all the way to the possibility of hosting a Global Ministry trip at some point in the future. As we continue to meet more focus will become clear.

Respectfully Submitted by Rev. Robert Vodra with support and information from:
Rev. Jan Howe, Chair, Disaster Response Mission group.
Rev. Jason Wells, Executive Director of New Hampshire Council of Churches
Kathy Blair, Chair, Ukama Partnership