New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ

ANNUAL REPORTS

2011 - 2012

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Welcome to the 2012 Annual Meeting. Your Conference Council has been busy this year meeting on a monthly basis, acting as the decision making body between annual meetings. I want to thank all who have volunteered to serve on the Council, the Conference staff and a special thanks to Rev. Schulte and Rev. Slater who walk with us as we discuss and make decisions on a wide variety of topics.

In November 2011, Council approved use of $12,594 to make necessary repairs to the attic in the Conference building to solve ice damming issues. These funds were what remained in the Bicentennial Fund which had been set aside in 2001 for office improvements. The Executive Committee, with authorization from the Conference Council, explored an updated Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) agreement with the town of Pembroke. A revised agreement was reached allowing our real estate agent to market the unused space at the Conference to prospective tenants other than religious and not-for-profit groups. Our newly formed Conference Council and leadership had the opportunity to spend a few hours in January gaining insight from our national counsel, Don Clark, regarding differences of governance and administration and how we as your Council can best serve you and support our Conference Ministers and staff.

As you will read in other reports, much time and energy has gone into changes at Horton Center. It is a time of renewal and looking to the future. Conference Council unanimously supports leadership at the camp and the Outdoor Ministries Board as they walk through this time of growth. The Council also authorized Rev. Schulte to sign a three - year agreement with the Maine Conference for the management oversight of Horton Center.

We continue our relationship with Havenwood-Heritage Heights. The Conference Council has two roles in regards to HHH, approving bylaw changes and serving as the Incorporators electing the HHH Board of Directors. The Council held its April meeting at HHH where following tradition, the covenant envisioned by former Conference Minister Everett Barrows between the Conference and Havenwood-Heritage Heights was read together.

During the past year, Council approved a number of items to include the Local Church Revolving Fund, guidelines for an ongoing resolution process that allows for timely reaction to important issues, approval of the covenant with Dale Hempen as Acting Conference Minister, changes to our Clergy Compensation guidelines, acceptance of the 2011 auditors report, and use of the Grace Scott Fund to support pastoral leadership
groups for authorized ministers. We also had the opportunity to interact with the Restructuring Task Force and support their changes to our structure and revisions to the Bylaws to accommodate that restructure. After many years of being in relationship with Family Village, the Council voted in favor of submitting its resignation as a member of Family Village and those serving on our behalf have resigned. NHCUCC was designated as the recipient of $77,000 from the Richard and Marguerite Edmunds Estate. We are thankful for such a generous gift.

As mentioned above, the Council now has a process in place to review and pass resolutions. There were three resolutions passed by the Council in 2012; one sponsored by OCWM and two by the Commission for Witness and Action. Please consult your packet for the specifics of the resolutions and the approved action plans.

I look forward walking in covenant with all of you in 2013.
Peace and blessings,
Laura Sevigny

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Report of the Conference Minister
Rev. Gary M. Schulte

I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. —1 Thessalonians 1:3-5 (NRSV)

I write this report while basking in the glow of my sabbatical time. This was a great gift—one for which I am exceedingly grateful. This was my first sabbatical after thirty years of ordained ministry. I had not fully appreciated the value of such a Sabbath time until I experienced it. I have been able to leave the responsibility for the administration of the Conference to others, and that is right and good. Perhaps, going forward, we might create a pool of sabbatical supply ministers who will assist pastors and congregations during their sabbatical times—so that every pastor can really disengage and every church will continue to receive the attentive pastoral leadership it needs during the sabbatical.

During 2012, a task force charged with drafting new bylaws for the Conference completed its work. The proposed Bylaws, which will move us toward a new structure in 2014, will come before the Gathered Conference for a ratifying vote on October 20. I fully support the direction in which we are moving. These Bylaws make clearer what was instituted when the Conference decided to move from the ”Team” model and called a solo Conference Minister in 2006. The new structure will help us to distinguish between
the Conference’s governance (responsibility of the Board of Directors) and its management (responsibility of the Conference Minister). The anticipated structure, which is symbolized by a living tree, allows for normal cycles of organizational growth and change, and will be more responsive to current needs in the church and in engaging in Christ’s mission in the world. The primary functions that are at the core of our present structure will continue. We will be in covenant with the United Church of Christ in all its expressions (locally, regionally, nationally, and globally), and we continue to live out our United Church of Christ identity as a United and Uniting, Multi-racial Multi-cultural, Open and Affirming, Just Peace, Accessible to All, Global Mission Church. The draft of the proposed Bylaws, as commended to the Gathered Conference by the Conference Council, is posted on our website.¹

In December 2011, after being trained by our Global Ministries staff to be a Ministries and Mission Interpreter (MMI), I had the privilege of traveling to India with a delegation of leaders in the United Church of Christ. To see the effects of our mission partnerships in India was a life-changing experience for me. I especially appreciated the collaborative work that has been accomplished by building new homes and restoring lives in the areas ravaged by the Christmas tsunami of 2004. It was a great blessing to share this journey with two of our own, the Rev. Kim and Mr. Mark Mc Kerley of Pilgrim United Church of Christ, Brentwood-Kingston. This fall, I look forward to being with a delegation from the Conference as we travel to Zimbabwe to celebrate the installation of the Rev. Ephraim Ngadziore as the new President of the United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe. We are a Conference with a passion for mission partnership in God’s world. It’s who we are!

This summer’s National Youth Event (NYE) at Purdue University was energizing and hopeful. More than 2,000 United Church of Christ youth and adult leaders gathered for four days of inspirational worship, workshops, and fellowship events. The energy, vision, and wonderful organizational gifts of the Rev. Jennifer Valentine of First Congregational Church in Manchester helped make this possible for us. We had twenty youths, seven adults, and one “youthful” Conference Minister at NYE. The hope is that this group will assist in the renewal of youth ministries in the congregations and associations of the New Hampshire Conference.

This renewal will include our Outdoor Ministries programs at Horton Center on Pine Mountain. We made some significant, radical changes in the past year. Most notable was the collaborative contractual agreement with the Maine Conference for the “active management” of our ministry at Horton Center. The Rev. Bryan Breault, who has directed the Outdoor Ministries programs of the Maine Conference for fifteen years, has also become the Director of our programs at Horton Center. Bryan will be assisted by the Rev. Mollie Landers, who will be based at Horton Center in the summer of 2013 and
will maintain an office in the Pembroke Conference Center during the off season. After a careful study, it was determined that the summer of 2012 needed to be a transformational time, a season that would afford us the opportunity to bring the best from the past forty years of camping at Horton Center into a new day, create and implement policies to ensure the safety of our campers and staff members, and to make important physical improvements to our camp facilities. The Conference Council voted earlier this year to endorse and mandate a plan of the Outdoor Ministries Board to move intentionally toward the goal of American Camp Association accreditation by 2014. A new day is dawning. This ministry is a priority for our Conference. We must invest the funds necessary over the next two years to make it so, and we must encourage our local churches to utilize this wonderful resource to enhance their own ministries with children, youth, and adults.

I rejoice that two congregations officially voted to become Open and Affirming (ONA) in the past year. They are Brookside Congregational Church, United Church of Christ in Manchester and First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ in Lebanon. We now have twenty-seven ONA churches in our Conference. My appreciation to our “retiring” ONA Consultant, the Rev. Carlos Jauhola-Straight whose spirit and dedication have been so helpful to so many across the Conference. Thank you, Carlos! Your ministry has made a great difference in our churches.

In the summer of 2012, Ms. Ann Desrochers was hired to serve as our Specialist in Christian Education/Formation. While this is a very part-time position (currently five hours per week), it is an important step toward making the Christian formation of our children, youth, and adults a priority across the Conference. The 2011 statistics reveals that enrollment in our congregations’ Christian Education programs is at a low point with 4,708 members. We have suffered a 41.2 percent decline in CE enrollment since 2001. Ann has the vision and passion for Christian formation in the churches of our Conference. She will recruit and send out a group of leaders, who are trained in various aspects of Christian formation, to local churches and associations. She has already created a monthly e-newsletter and would be pleased to send it to you, if you are not already on her mailing list. Please be in touch with Ann at adesrochers@nhucc.org.

The search and call ministry of the New Hampshire Conference continues to assist our local churches through their seasons of pastoral transition. We have welcomed twelve new settled ministers in the past twelve months. Additionally, eleven new interim ministers began serving among us in 2012. We currently have about twenty-five congregations at some stage of this transition process.
The Conference supports our churches and authorized ministers with grants and scholarships made available through the generosity of members. This year, guidelines were created and adopted for the use of a new Local Church Revolving Loan Fund\textsuperscript{iv}. In addition, the Pembroke Fund, the Lay Leadership Development Fund, the Authorized Ministers Continuing Education Fund, the Seminarian Scholarship Fund, and the Strengthen the Church: Youth Ministry Fund\textsuperscript{v} are available to you and are intended to be used for the upbuilding of ministries throughout the New Hampshire Conference.

Recently, we received a generous bequest from Richard and Marguerite Edmunds, who were devoted members of First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, in Concord. Their witness is a great example for us all. Planned giving is essential for the future of the church! Such generous sharing of our estates will ensure that the ministries of the communities of faith that have nurtured us will continue to be financially supported in future generations. Have you endowed your pledge to your local church? Have you remembered the wider settings of the church—including your Conference—in your will? Now is the time.

Could we use more money? Absolutely! We managed to end 2011 in the black, even though the adopted budget projected a $44,166 deficit. We have done this kind of prudent, careful management for two years, turning red ink to black. But, we also know that this pattern cannot be sustained for the long term. Soon we will need to tap the resources of our unrestricted endowment or take other action to balance the budget and remedy the shortfall in revenue. Thank you for your local church’s contributions to Our Church’s Wider Mission (Basic Support) and for your individual gifts to the Friends of the NH Conference annual appeal. These are vital for our mutual ministries. If ever there were a time to be an advocate for the ministries of your Conference and to give more, it is now. Please give!

My gratitude goes out to all who have served in Conference leadership this year. So many have given so generously of their time, expertise, and resources in serving the churches and pastors of this Conference. My special thanks extends to our officers, Ms. Laura Sevigny (President), the Rev. Gayle Whittemore (President-Elect), Mr. Neal Cass (Secretary), and Mr. Michael Gfroerer (Treasurer), who love the church and have worked so diligently to make this Conference a strong and respected leader among the thirty-eight Conferences of the United Church of Christ.

Our staff is a dedicated team, working together for the good of the whole Conference. The hard, often behind-the-scenes work of Deanna Bennett, Merle Cole, Ann Desrochers, Donna Follansbee, Bill Hoysradt, and Helen McGlashan strengthens our Conference connections with local churches, associations, other conferences, and the national settings of the United Church of Christ.
I am deeply grateful for my colleague in ministry, the Rev. Richard Slater, our Associate Conference Minister, who patiently and persistently embodies the gospel. Richard brings to our ministries a pastor’s heart and soul. He cares deeply and is steadfast in his service. Thank you, Richard, for the great gift of your ministry.

Finally, I want to express my thanks for the leadership of the Rev. Dale Hempen, who spelled me while I was on the sabbatical journey. Thank you, Dale, and welcome to New Hampshire! We rejoice to have you with us in your retirement. We look forward to your continued participation in the life of the New Hampshire Conference.

Friends, may God continue to inspire and equip us in our discipleship. May the New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ be a community where covenant connections are cherished, celebrated, and strengthened. May we ever be a source of blessing in God’s world.

Respectfully submitted,

Gary M. Schulte

The Rev. Mr. Gary M. Schulte, Conference Minister

1 http://www.nhcucc.org/Documents/Annual_Meeting/NHCUCC_Bylaws_Draft_5.pdf

1The Rev. Ruth Martz – Sanbornton
The Rev. David Norling – Haverhill
The Rev. Eliza Buchakjian-Tweedy – Rochester
The Rev. Michael Lowry – East Congregational – Concord
The Rev. Maureen Frescott – Amherst
The Rev. David Jadlocki – Rindge
The Rev. Judie Bryant – Mont Vernon
The Rev. Andrew MacLeod – Bristol
The Rev. Michael Bennett – Dover
The Rev. David Randlett – Boscawen
The Rev. Elizabeth Boisvert – Francetown
The Rev. Linda Hey – Temple

1The Rev. David Pearson – Webster
The Rev. Dr. David Smith – Gorham
The Rev. Dr. Alex Gondola - Milford
The Rev. Dr. Terri Young – First Congregational – Concord
The Rev. Michael McCutcheon - Kensington
The Rev. Carolyn Keilig – First Congregational - Salem
The Rev. Dr. Charles Barnes – Hillsboro
The Rev. Duke Gray - Newfields
The Rev. Christine Boardman - Exeter
The Rev. William Donoghue - Canterbury

1 http://www.nhcucc.org/CaringForCongregations/LocalChurchRevolvingLoanFund/

1 http://www.nhcucc.org/Resources/Grants&Scholarships/
Treasurer’s Report
Mike Gfroerer

After last year’s relatively upbeat and optimistic Report, this year unfortunately is mixed at best. The bad news is that we will finish 2012 with a substantial operating deficit after two years after relative fiscal equilibrium. The good news is that the revenue and expense factors at play in our current situation are clearly within our own control. Please read and heed.

Recap of 2011
As projected last October, even though our contributed revenue (OCWM and per capita dues) was down in comparison to prior years, we nevertheless managed to finish the calendar year with a modest surplus, despite a budgeted $45,000.00 operating deficit. At the end of the third quarter last year at 9/30/11, our YTD operating deficit was $32,000.00, which we overcame with what appears to be the usual end-of-the-year influx of dues and OCWM payments from our member churches. A similar scenario had wiped out an even larger third quarter deficit in 2010.

2012 Year-To-Date
The 2012 operating budget approved by the gathered conference last October included a projected $62,000.00 deficit on anticipated income of $1,279,360.00. However, our OCWM receipts have significantly lagged behind prior years so that even with the usual year-end “bump” we are projecting an OCWM shortfall of $30,000.00 if present trends continue.

Also, following last year’s Annual Meeting, the Conference Council decided after due deliberation to restructure the Outdoor Ministry Program. In order to so appropriately and effectively, we did not operate Horton Center this year and contracted with the Maine Conference to help reinvigorate the Program. This has resulted in a considerable administrative expense to the Conference without any offsetting camper revenue for 2012, and necessitated a revision of the 2012 budget with an operating deficit of $96,000.00 at year end, which is likely to be realized.

Because of our past (i.e., before 2010) operating deficits and this year’s likely shortfall, we have more frequently tapped our line of credit, resulting in $1,145.00 of interest expense YTD in 2012 versus $194.00 of interest expense for all of 2011. In order to repay the line of credit and to remedy our negative cash position, we have also recently liquidated $100,000.00 of our unrestricted investments, which has been contributed to our operating account.
Conclusion
In order to conclude on a more positive note and to emphasize the “good news” in my introductory comments, we can exercise some control over our current fiscal situation. The Conference Council, in amending the 2012 budget and in recommending the 2013 budget, expresses the belief that an extraordinary investment now in the Outdoor Ministries Program is prudent and consistent with our mission. We are also working to address and reverse the erosion in OCWM contributions from our member churches, which remain our primary source of revenue.

Respectfully submitted,
Michael G. Gfroerer, Treasurer

Commission for Congregational Life
Chair: Rev. Mark Rideout

What is our purpose? The Commission for Congregational Life (CCL) is responsible for the support and nurture of the ministries of the local church.

Generally speaking, the Commission for Congregational Life scope encompasses those things that go on "within" the church. This includes support for clergy and lay members of the church with training, advocacy, resources and funding. Each Commission member is generally a liaison to one of the sub-committees/working groups, providing a link for communication and support to the Commission. The individual groups do their own work; we provide support.

We nurture local church life as represented through a local church’s committees and boards. To this end, we have a liaison with the following committees/working groups of the NH Conference:

- Accessibility
- Clergy Convocation [October 22, 2012]
- Faith Formation, including Confirmation, Church Membership
- Christian Education, Safer Spaces
- Interim Ministry Group
- National Youth Event
- Inside-Outside Task Force-Pew Research Study
- Prepared to Serve [February, 2013]
- NH Conference Women’s Fellowship
CCL embraces new ideas as they emerge! Some that have surfaced include: a Confirmation Roundtable and unfolding conversations about church membership, Our Whole Lives (OWL) Human Sexuality Training and Curriculum, UCC Clergy and Life Partner Wellness Workshop, Church Administrator/Office Worker/Secretary Support Group, Confirmation Retreat, Chaplain Support Group,

At our meetings we also discuss applications for grants, receive updates and queries from the subcommittees/working groups and attend to our own responsibilities such as reviewing and making recommendations for Clergy Compensation Guidelines. We arrange and plan workshops around Planning for Advent/Christmas, as well as Lent/Easter. In September, Rev. Maren Tirabassi inspired and guided us in planning for Advent/Christmas.

We celebrate that Ann Desrochers is the CE Specialist for our NH Conference! Ann’s passion for Christian Education and Faith Formation is evident through the links and information found (and monthly newsletter) on the NH Conference website.

On another front, the Inside‐Outside Task Force has engaged a recent Pew Research Study about the health and vitality of “the church.” This group’s mission statement: “The purpose of this Task Force is to assist the churches of the NH Conference in confronting the reality of ministering in communities which are primarily unchurched, to assess their unique setting to inspire creative response, and to offer support as transformation evolves.” CCL is holding this work in prayer and supportive presence, as Task Force members do some behind the scenes work, study, and engagement.

In addition, we oversee and process applications for grants from several restricted funds. The fund names, number of approved applications, and amount of funds distributed include: Authorized Ministers Continuing Education Fund [5 grants, $2020.00 ], Lay Leadership Development Fund [1 grant, $1000.00], Strengthen the Church (STC) Youth Ministry Grants [5 grants, $4226.25]], and the Local Church Revolving Loan Fund [3 loans, $47,219.00].

Sincere thanks to the commission members, our Conference Ministers, and the dedicated folks who work in the conference office whose various ministries weave together to God’s glory and praise!
Commission on Witness and Action
Chair: Rev. Dr. Mary E. Westfall

The mission of the Commission for Witness and Action (CWA) is to witness publicly and visibly to the Gospel of Jesus Christ by:

- Assisting in leadership development that will foster covenantal relationships
- Providing resources that encourage individual and congregational participation in local, Conference, national and global work for peace and justice
- Encouraging reflection and empowering action around the Biblical mandate “to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with our God” (Micah 6:8)

The Commission has established Working Groups/Ministry Teams to carry out these areas of witness and action, and through these groups seeks to raise awareness on issues affecting individuals, communities and society, particularly those that might otherwise be forgotten or excluded. These working groups exist to prepare materials, conduct workshops and educational programs, serve as a resource for local churches interested in learning more or engaging in specific ministries of peace and justice, and continue to provide a public witness and encourage action throughout the NH Conference that is consistent with the biblical call to be peacemakers and justice-seekers.

Working Groups:

- **Economic Justice** educates pastors and congregations concerning the relationship between our faith and the economic structures of our society, so that all of us may effectively advocate for the just and equitable distribution of economic well-being throughout the state of NH and the world. Jesus’ own ministry reflects a deep commitment to economic justice and it is in that spirit that this work continues.

- **Spirituality and Earth Stewardship** engages individuals and congregations throughout the conference in the connections between our spiritual and religious life and the integrity and sustainability of creation. This work arises out of the recognition of the underlying moral roots of the environmental crises and the desire to help people of faith address related issues.

- **Peace with Justice** seeks to educate local churches about Just Peace theology. The 2003 Annual Meeting of the NH Conference, UCC, passed a resolution declaring the Conference to be a Just Peace Conference and encouraged local churches to do the same. This working group develops and promotes resources that help local churches embrace this commitment.
• **Open and Affirming** is charged with guiding and supporting congregations and other entities within the Conference in their journey towards becoming Open and Affirming, including advocacy for full welcome for all sexual minorities.

• **Ukama Partnership** promotes a deep sense of friendship (ukama) among the churches of the New Hampshire Conference and the United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe. Since 1996 this group has developed and maintained a relationship that has resulted in the “partnering” of dozens of local churches, the exchange of many gifts, and the welcoming of visitors from Zimbabwe, as well as NH travelers going there in order to widen the understanding and communication with these global partners in ministry.

• **Immigration Ministry** was established after the 2011 Annual Meeting and the adoption of a resolution to stand in solidarity with immigrants. This group works to provide resources to churches and individuals that will assist in raising awareness as to the realities for immigrants today, along with theological and biblical resources to strengthen the Conference capacity to work for justice and welcome for God’s people.

• **Congregation Health Ministry** is committed to the well-being of persons in a holistic way and seeks to bring together resources that support mind, body, spirit as part of a commitment to being God’s whole people.

**Additionally,** the Commission on Witness and Action provides financial and spiritual support for the ministry to the NH Women’s Prison in Goffstown NH, the NH Council of Churches and its statewide efforts in ecumenism, United Ministries in Higher Education as it works with college students and the Granite State Fair Tax Coalition and its commitment to a more just and equitable tax structure.

In the past year CWA has sought to fulfill its mission through on-going support of the working group/ministry teams and their efforts on education, outreach and activism. CWA was a key organizer in vigils and advocacy work that occurred in the spring 2011, regarding issues of economic justice and worker rights. Many collaborative relationships were created through this process and this work will continue through the fall of 2011 and into 2012. Additionally, the Commission has encouraged and supported the efforts to engage congregations in gaining greater awareness about the situation of immigrants in our own state, with speakers, trainings and resources.

The Commission on Witness and Action continues to look to scripture, the inspiration of our denomination, and the heartfelt convictions of individuals in our congregations to help move our Conference to increasingly effective work for peace, justice and the integrity of creation. May God’s guidance, wisdom and blessing be with us all.

*This report is a reprint from the 2011 Annual Reports.*
Our Church’s Wider Mission (OCWM)
Chair: Nora Larsen

After starting out the year with three members, our committee was up to full membership by June. The Rev. Gayle Whittemore, President-Elect, joined us as ex-officio member in March and Laura Sevigny, President has also dropped in on several meetings. Our goals continue to be making ourselves more visible to the Conference churches and to communicate the importance of Basic Support in funding the infra structure of the New Hampshire Conference and the national church. Our covenant calls us to support one another in all settings of the United Church of Christ. Basic Support represents almost 59% of the New Hampshire Conference’s projected budget for this year.

At Prepared to Serve, OCWM shared a table with Stewardship Development. There was a picture board of Conference activities funded by OCWM Basic Support. OCWM Leadership Brochures, an OCWM Contribution Range Chart - 2011 showing six local churches contribute 41% of Basic Support, and a handout about 5 for 5 Churches was available to attendees. Literature was given out to about 30 people who stopped by the display.

5 for 5 Churches are those churches who contribute Basic Support and participate in the four Special Mission offerings. The Special Mission offerings are Neighbors in Need (for Justice and Witness Ministries), the Christmas Fund (provides for retired clergy and lay employees), One Great Hour of Sharing (supports Church World Service for national and international emergencies), and Strengthen the Church (which provides for new church start-ups with 50% staying in New Hampshire). There were thirty-five 5 for 5 Churches in our Conference last year, an increase of 25% over 2010. Thru these five offerings, our local churches express their faith, love, compassion, and generosity and engage as partners in Christ’s ministry at the state, national, and international level. If you are interested in having your church become a 5 for 5 church, go to www.uccresources.com or call 1-800-325-7061 for promotional materials.

Basic Support was budgeted at $660,000 in the Revised 2012 Budget adopted at the 4/16/12 New Hampshire Conference Council and this put the projected deficit up to $96,526 from the $62,389 deficit approved at the 2011 Annual Meeting. Revenues have been slow in coming in. As of 9/17/12, revenue is $321,899, which is $28,114 behind last year at this time. Sixteen churches are behind 2011 giving with an accumulated deficit of $54,000. The good news is fifteen churches have increased their 2012 giving by $35,850. An appeal letter was sent in May to churches who had not been heard from in several years. The churches were asked to make a Basic Support pledge this year and the help of the NH Conference Stewardship Development Committee was offered. Three of the twenty-three churches contacted did request help from Stewardship Development.
and four have sent Basic Support. Telephone calls were made in late spring to twenty-six churches that had given Basic Support in 2011 and had not yet made either a pledge or a payment. Eight churches have responded to date. Calls were made in August to churches that had made a pledge, but had not yet sent money. Several have responded so far.

This year, most of the certificates for Basic Support and 5 for 5 were presented at the Spring Association meetings by OCWM with the help of several Council members. Churches were thanked for their contributions. The remaining certificates were delivered to the individual churches with our thanks.

During the spring, OCWM worked on a resolution to advocate for the importance of faithful giving to Basic Support and to encourage all local congregations in the NH Conference to give at least a tithe (10%) of their local expense budget. FYI, several churches already tithe or EXCEED this level. The resolution was passed unanimously at the August Conference Council. It has since been sent to all conference churches. Part of the reason for 2012 projected $96,526 deficit is due to a major investment in our future with the camping ministry, but is also due in many ways to economy related shortfalls in Our Church’s Wider Mission Basic Support. OCWM support is vital in funding the ministries of the NH Conference as well as national and international ministries. In September, OCWM sent a letter to the Friends of the Conference to thank them for their generous contributions this year and to ask them to act as advocates for OCWM in their local churches. OCWM will be presenting more information about the resolution at Annual Meeting. Are you in a church which added to the increase or did your church decrease in 2012? Maybe your church hasn’t given anything in several years. Will you support the OCWM resolution of 10% of your local expense as your goal and work toward achieving 10%? If the answer is yes, are you willing to work toward making that goal a reality in your church? WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Please urge your church to make a contribution to OCWM Basic Support this year and budget and increase your churches contributions for 2012. Please make a pledge for 2012 that is evidence of your faith, hope and love.

I would like to thank my committee – Ms. Deborah Bonell, Rev. Dr. Warren Bouton, Mr. David Henderson, Ms. Linda Maynard, and Rev. Kimberly McKeery as well as the Conference Ministers and staff for their support and guidance.

Respectfully submitted,

Nora G. Larsen, Chair
Outdoor Ministry Board Report  
Chair: Jonathan Gray

It is quiet on the summit of Pine Mountain this October under the stars. While it seems like Horton Center, our primary New Hampshire Conference Outdoor Ministry site, has been sleeping this year, in truth many people have been busy imagining what is possible and working toward new possibilities of energy, growth and faithful witness.

This has been the Transformational Year at Horton Center. The Outdoor Ministry Board said, good-bye to Robert Vodra, Director of Outdoor Ministries last November and began an exciting partnership with Maine Conference Outdoor Ministries bringing Bryan Breault, Director of Maine’s Outdoor Ministries, on board. This innovative, interstate collaboration between conferences has been fruitful. Mollie Landers, Associate Director of Outdoor Ministries was hired in June and will be onsite at Horton Center. The Outdoor Ministries Board is thrilled with Bryan’s depth of experience and Mollie’s vision for Horton Center’s future. Their collegiality is a model for the spiritual transformation that is central to the work of the Outdoor Ministry Board.

Spiritual Transformation? Yes, that is at the heart of it, but first let me share some of the other transformations.

**Physical Transformation** is well underway. The Outdoor Ministry Board even held a meeting on the mountain early this year with some hardy souls sleeping over when they could see their breaths for the cold. Under the direction of Merle Cole, the primary caretaker for Horton Center, the significant construction talents of Gil and Frank and the willingness-to-work of other board members, a wide range of volunteer work camps of different ages, and youth group visitors grounds have been cleared, structural work completed on the old Lodge and Alpha, near miraculous renovations on Hope accomplished and even a new camp store begun. Clutter has been de-cluttered and a treasure trove of historical photographs and memorabilia preserved. These will eventually be available online.

**A Mental Transformation** with the guidance of the Conference Council, will result in Horton Center becoming American Camp Association (ACA) certified. There is a formidable list of expectations to be met and ongoing guidelines to follow, but we are determined that Horton Center will not be the kind of camp to just get by – we will re-open in 2013 as the safest and most nurturing Outdoor Ministries site possible. It will look like new rules and feel like many details, but each camper’s experience will be on a sure a foundation just like the “new” Old Lodge.
The Spiritual Transformation of Horton Center places covenant at the center of everything. A profound relationship between Pine Mountain and every New Hampshire Conference church is the ultimate goal of the mutuality between conferences, among those who will stay in the cabins or canoe or hike hut to hut, those who send prayers and financial support, those who are friends and Horton Center family from many years of camping history. The camp family has deep roots. We say goodbye to Board members who have completed their terms. The Board would like to honor Billy Brown who has shared his wisdom with the Board for the past six years and has reached his term limit. Also, a fond farewell to Phyllis Evelyn and Clark Thyng, their terms are over, but, like everyone else who has ever been at Horton Center they are part of the ongoing covenant of faithfulness.

The “Soul” of Horton Center is the new Deans / Counselors / Staff structure. Deans are volunteers and members of New Hampshire Conference churches who will lead each weekly camp, recruiting volunteer counselors to lead in programming and help provide twenty-four hour adult supervision. Our incredible summer camp Staff will have separate lodging so that they have a space away from campers and do not get “burnt out” by the long busy season. Deans, counselors, staff and campers will develop deep relationships and a covenant of mutual care.

The Outdoor Ministries Board is grateful to the New Hampshire Conference for the incredible gift of this Transformational Year. The new camp schedule brochure will soon be available on-line. You or someone from your church will be sleeping under the stars next summer and probably dreaming or imagining, like Jacob, about a ladder to heaven. It will look a lot like Chapel Rock!

Peace!

Jonathan Gray
Outdoor Ministries Board Chair

Stewardship Development Committee
Chair: Bernie Burditt

The Stewardship Development Committee’s mission is to assist churches of the New Hampshire Conference to grow faithful stewards by providing educational opportunities and resources for their lay members and clergy. We continued this year to train and make available the Stewardship Resource Team, a group of volunteers with a demonstrated passion for Christian stewardship, who are willing to work with the local church to enhance their stewardship ministry. The SRT team member starts by listening
to the history of the congregation, considering the unique character of their ministry and what goals they have established. At the invitation of the local church leadership, they make a commitment to “walk together” in the work of growing faithful stewards in that community of faith.

The major events the committee sponsored and staffed included “9th Annual Clergy Gathering”, two workshops at “Prepared to Serve 2012” and a follow-up gathering for individuals interested in the Stewardship Resource Team. We also have representation on the Northeast Ecumenical Stewardship Council which is planning their biennial two day stewardship Event in March 2013.

Clergy Day 2012 was held on Wednesday, February 29 many of our pastors gathered for worship and a workshop presented by Rev. Paul B. Nickerson titled “Connecting with your Community and Reaching New People.” We received many positive comments on both the worship and the presentation.

We look at “Prepared to Serve” to be the Conference’s key educational opportunity and were pleased that along with the two workshops we presented there were many other opportunities for clergy and laity alike to development their understanding and best practices in all areas of stewardship.

The NESC two day event, “Liberating Generosity: because generosity is liberating” scheduled for Friday and Saturday, March 15 & 16th, 2013 will feature twenty workshops, inspiring worship and keynote address by UCC pastor Mike Piazza. The 2011 event was well attended by both lay and clergy from the New Hampshire Conference, who reported that both worship and workshops were very helpful and a good investment of time.

The Stewardship Development Committee continues to coordinate with the OCWM Committee and shares their concern over the lack of growth in OCWM basic support. We affirmed the importance of the Pastor in interpreting the local church’s covenantal responsibilities regarding basic mission support. We seek to help inform our fellow members in our local churches of the value of OCWM support and better communicate the mission of the New Hampshire Conference. We support the resolution brought forward by the OCWM Committee, A Resolution to increase Our Church’s Wider Mission Basic Support.

The entire committee has been involved in developing the SRT; however I would like to give special thanks for the efforts of Rev. David Keller and also Mat Van Wagner for his hours of driving and spirit of generosity. These continue to be challenging times when it
comes to funding our ministries at all levels, but the generosity of the team, pastors and church members we have met continue to encourage and inspire us.

It has been a pleasure working with every member of the committee which included Rev. Jim Chaloner, Rev. David Keller, Rev. Steve Silver, Phil Warren and Sylvia Sleeper. I want to acknowledge their many contributions along with those of our Conference Minister, Rev. Gary Schulte.

Bernie Burditt, SDC Chair

**Report of the Ukama Advisory Board**  
**Kim McKerley, Local Church & Global Ministries Coordinator**

It is a joy to share this brief recap of the life of our Ukama Partnership. Our prayer is that next year you will experience the wonder of Ukama in the flesh, as we hope to have a delegation from Zimbabwe at the 2013 Annual Meeting. Stay tuned!

A wonderful crowd attended our Annual Ukama Fair in November, 2011 with Zimbabwe native Douglas Rogers who discussed his memoir, The Last Resort. Another well-attended Ukama Fair was held in September, 2012 with keynote address by Don and Maryjane Westra, Global Ministries Missionaries in Zimbabwe. The Westras spent the month of September in New Hampshire speaking about their work at Mt. Selinda Mission Station.

During the year we had a number of opportunities to be with our partners, both here and in Zimbabwe. In June, the Rev. Dr. Menson Mpofu visited New Hampshire ahead of a Global Chaplains conference at Yale University. Rev. Mpofu is a former Ukama Chairperson in the UCCZ and a long-time advisor to our partnership. He visited many local churches during his stay. The Rev. Fungayi Mutsumbei, the immediate past Chair of the Ukama Committee in Zimbabwe, is now a student at Andover Newton Theological School in Massachusetts. We look forward to more visits with him in the next two years. Members from two local churches, Plymouth and Wakefield, traveled to Zimbabwe during the year.

In February we presented a workshop entitled “Real People, Real Stories” at the Prepared to Serve event. We continued to tell the story of Ukama through displays and conversations at a variety of conference gatherings and in visits to local churches. Our Ukama Advisory Board is committed to deepening connections between churches.
There were changes in leadership in the UCCZ this year. In May, the Rev. Richard Gomendo was elected as Chair of the Ukama Committee. The Rev. Ephraim Ngadziore was elected president of UCCZ in April and will be installed in November. A small delegation from the NH Conference will attend the installation service.

There were changes in New Hampshire, too. Long-time Ukama Advisory Board Chair Erik Hobbie stepped down in September and Vice-Chair Kathy Blair assumed the role of Chair. The Board is grateful to Erik for his passion for and commitment to Ukama.

Forty-three churches are now part of our Ukama circle. We hope to add to that number this year as there are churches in Zimbabwe still waiting for a New Hampshire partner. Please be in touch with me to learn how you can become an Ukama Church.

We invite your prayers for our beloved “hama” (family) in Zimbabwe.

Rev. Kimberly S. McKerley
Local Church – Global Ministries Coordinator

NH UCC Women’s Fellowship
Esther Murray

Excellent, well-attended programs this year has generated some interest in the state organization. More women have joined the state board, while not all can be active at every board meeting, we have women who are willing to take part in the state activities by registering women at state functions, making nametags, doing publicity, taking over and editing our biannual newsletter, working on programming, etc. What wonderful news that God has blessed us with.

Last Fall, we hosted a two-day retreat at Brookwoods in Alton, NH on beautiful Lake Winnespesaukee. Our theme was “Inspired by Women, Past and Present” where we looked at the lives of women from the Bible to contemporary women today. Joann Snow Duncanson, author, storyteller, poet, humorist and public speaker was one of our leaders. The Rev. Joyce Lovejoy a retired UCC pastor was our spiritual leader. This retreat was based on the passage from 2 Timothy 1:5-6a where Paul writes to Timothy “I am reminded of your sincere faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you. For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you...” This retreat was well attended and well received by the women in attendance.
This Spring we celebrated our Spring Forum at the First Church UCC in Concord. The theme was “Caring for the Less Fortunate = The Mary and Martha’s in all of us. Our speakers were Meghan Brady who spoke on Meals on Wheels, Terry Blake, the director of the Cold Weather Shelter for the homeless at First and South Churches in Concord and NH Representative Mary Jane Wallner talked on how the NH Budget has hurt those less fortunate in our midst.

Seven outstanding churchwomen from various churches in our Conference were recognized at the Spring Forum.

Our Fall Field Meeting held October 10 in Greenland had the theme :Body, Mind, and Spirit.” Our Speakers were the Rev. Dr, Emily Geoghegan who talked on “Staying Centered in a Distracted World” and Ruth Smith, NH Farm Bureau educator, talked to us on “Mindful and Faithful Eating.”

**Personnel Committee**

**Chair: Don Lyon**

The Personnel Committee has continued to be available to provide direction and support in matters affecting the Conference Employees.

Since the last Annual Meeting of the Conference the Employee Handbook has been updated and released. A major change has been made to the benefits package in recognition of the fact we now have employees eligible for Medicare. The changes provide a significant savings for the Conference without any reduction in coverage for the employee.

A review of our Life Insurance benefits has recently been completed and recommendation prepared for Conference Minister and Council approval when Gary returns from sabbatical. By moving coverage there is a significant reduction in the cost to the Conference without changes is coverage.

Continual review of the benefits package offered Conference employees is necessary with the changing availability of coverage and associated costs.

The biennial Performance Review of the Conference Minister was completed with input from several members of the Conference. There was also participation by representatives of the larger church who have had the opportunity to work with Gary.
With the return of Gary from his sabbatical, the results will be reviewed with him and then presented to the Conference Council. It was an excellent review.

Again, there were no staff changes during the year. The Personnel Committee continues to periodically meet with members of the staff to give them a chance to make suggestions and let us know how things are going. The attitude of the staff continues to be very favorable.

Blessings and Peace.

Rev. Craig Cowing, Rev. Ruth Gallot, Don Lyon, Ch.
Rev. Carol Meredith, Rev. Richard Wierwille

Report of the Consolidated Investment Fund
Chair: Don Hill

The Investment Committee oversees the Consolidated Investment Fund (CIF) which is the vehicle for investing NHCUCC endowment assets and is also open to local churches and affiliated organizations as an investment option. Since April of 2005, assets have been invested with United Church Funds (UCF), a national ministry of the United Church of Christ. As of June 30, 2012, total CIF assets exceeded $34 million, with the NHCUCC’s endowment assets representing approximately XX% of the total and the balance representing investments from XXX local churches and X affiliated organizations.

Performance in 2011 reflected disappointing market results for equities, partially offset by better than anticipated fixed income returns. The one-year rate of return as of December 31 was -1.33%. (All performance figures given are net of fees.) The abysmal 2008 market results “rolled out” of the three year performance results and the average rate of return improved for this period jumped to 10.09%. 2008 continued to drag down performance over longer time periods, with a five-year average annual rate of return of 1.45%. While these results are disappointing compared to investment objectives and anticipated long-term results, they are broadly consistent with market benchmarks. Anyone tempted to abandon investment markets for the security of guaranteed protection of principal should remember that such investments also guarantee the loss of purchasing power over time due to inflation. There are no risk-free investment options. Results through June 30, 2012 reflect the same market factors, with performance over one-, three-, and five years of -0.29%, 10.43%, and 1.44% respectively.

The Investment Committee lost “traction” in 2009 with the loss of committee members. The committee was reconstituted in 2010 and early in 2010 the NHCUCC reached an agreement with the Connecticut Conference for Charlie Kuchenbrod, Associate
Conference Minister for Endowment Ministries, to provide staff support to the Investment Committee.

The Investment Committee meets on a quarterly basis. Committee members include Don Hill, Chair, Mike Gfroerer, Ken Gould, Joe Jacobs, Bob Moses, Laura Sevigny and Norma Willard. A major accomplishment for 2011 was the development of a revised Investment Policy, which was adopted by the Governing Council in September of 2011. The policy is posted on the Conference’s web site and can be found at http://www.nhcucc.org/ConferenceMinistries/ConsolidatedInvestmentFund/.

Since the adoption of the new policy, the Committee has been focused on carefully monitoring the performance of UCF as our Partner Organization and further developing the relationship, particularly with regard to reporting as outlined in the Investment Policy. In the second half of 2011, UCF revised equity allocations to reflect world market weights, which resulted in a significant increase in international holdings.

The Committee has noted in recent meetings that long-term performance has been lagging key benchmarks by modest, but fairly consistent amounts, for a sustained period of time. In May, the Committee met with Dave Klassen, United Church Funds new Chief Investment Officer. The Committee was impressed with Dave’s understanding and appreciation of the concerns articulated by the Committee, with his commitment to improving performance, and with the strategies he is evaluating. The Committee will continue to monitor CIF performance against policy goals while also educating themselves about possible alternatives to UCF. The goal is to make well informed decisions and no deadlines for action have been established. CIF performance exceeded its overall benchmark for the first six months of 2012, a positive development.

The Committee is considering how it can best support the needs of local churches and welcomes any input.

For the Committee,

Don Hill, Chair

**Prudential Committee**  
Chair: Rev. David Jadlocki

The Prudential Committee oversees the use of the Ministerial Relief Fund, (MRF), by authorizing the use of income money for three programs

1. Medicare Supplemental Insurance contributions for eligible ministers and their spouses or domestic partners;
2. Monetary loans / grants to ministers who request them and demonstrate need for them;
3. Emergency grants to ministers who need emergency financial assistance.

For information about the eligibility criteria for participation in the Medicare Supplementary Insurance program contact one of the Conference ministers, the Conference Financial office or a member of the Prudential Committee.

The Prudential Committee meets quarterly to review assistance requests and facilitate the management of the MRF. In 2012, the committee met on January 9, April 16, July 16, and October 12. We also held a special meeting on March 12 to discuss and develop modifications for the disbursement of the Medicare supplemental insurance contributions. The 2012 Annual Retired Clergy Luncheon was held on October 12 at Grappone Center in Concord. The Prudential Committee sponsors this annual luncheon, with tremendous support from Conference staff.

The Ministerial Relief Fund has been adversely impacted by the turbulent economic conditions of the past years, and as a result the resources available for distribution have decreased. The Prudential Committee is committed to ensuring the long term availability of assistance to the clergy who have faithfully served the people of New Hampshire, and therefore recognized the need to modify the Medicare supplemental insurance contribution. Beginning in January 2013, this contribution will be distributed in a tiered structure based upon income. All participants in the program have been updated as to the changes that will take effect in January 2013, and the Prudential Committee remains committed to providing assistance grants to any participant for whom this required change of practice presents a hardship. In addition to modification of the Medicare supplemental insurance contribution, the Prudential Committee updated and revised the policies governing the use and distribution of the Ministerial Relief Fund, and presented the updated policies to the Conference Council for their feedback and endorsement.

If you are an ordained clergy in good standing and serving in the New Hampshire Conference or a retired UCC clergy, and you have a financial emergency with which the Prudential Committee may be of assistance, please contact Conference Minister Rev. Gary Schulte or Associate Conference Minister Rev. Richard Slater who can put you in contact with the Prudential Committee.