New Hampshire Conference
United Church of Christ

Annual Reports - 2016

Conference President ....................... Mr. Neal Cass
Conference Minister ......................... Rev. Gary M. Schulte
Conference Treasurer ....................... Mr. John W. Herbert
Christian Formation Ministry .............. Mr. Robert Grabill
Clergy Support Ministry .................... Rev. Deborah Knowlton
Finance Ministry ............................ Mr. Matt Van Wagner
Justice and Witness Ministry .............. Rev. Gray Fitzgerald
Local Church Support Ministry ............ Rev. Holly Tomilson
Wider Church Relations Ministry ......... Ms. Janet Kohlmorgen
It is an honor to serve as the Conference President, and to have the opportunity to work with so many wonderful people who are carrying out ministry on behalf of the New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ both here in New Hampshire and throughout the world. As you read the other reports in this packet you quickly learn that the work of the Conference is a strong presence and is changing lives as it lives out the gospel through its ministry.

As President, I chair the Board of Directors which meets five times per year, and the Executive Committee, comprised of the Officers of the Conference, which meets monthly. The Directors adopted the following mission statement to guide its work throughout the year:

The Board of Directors is called to be stewards of the New Hampshire Conference, United Church of Christ and its ministries, while building the commitment of our churches to the whole United Church of Christ for the greater glory of God and God's creation. Our priorities this year are: continued strengthening of Horton Center, facing financial challenges in creative and faithful ways, communicating clearly, and remaining mindful of our covenant with our local churches.

We strive to use this statement in all the decisions that are made.

The Board of Directors is responsible for the financial health of the Conference. Keeping in the forefront the ministry that the budget numbers represent, much time and energy has had to go into Conference finances. The reality is that we ended 2015 with a $58,000 deficit which carried over into 2016. A Deficit Task Force was appointed by the Board. This group recommended cuts to the 2016 budgets and adjusted income to obtainable numbers. We consistently spend under our budget, but revenue has run behind predictions. 2016 is showing to be a more solid year with revenue coming in much more consistently. Thank you to the churches that have pledged to Our Churches Wider Mission (OCWM) and are making consistent contributions, and to those who have supported the Friends of the Conference Fund which is coming in ahead of last year. I am looking forward to the work of our Finance Ministry in the next year as it works to strengthen OCWM in the coming year.

There has also been a focus this year on the future of the Conference, and in a broad sense, the church. There is on-going visioning of the Conference of the future as well as the role of church in years ahead. Also planning for the future, and to meet current needs, the Directors created a Capital Campaign Exploratory Committee to “explore” the possibility of a capital campaign. This committee has met diligently throughout the summer and will be providing the Annual Meeting with an update.

Several other items deserve a note in this report. The Board once again met jointly with the Havenwood-Heritage Heights Board of Directors to renew the covenant we share. Their Board joined our meeting at the Conference Center, shared a meal and celebrated our joint histories.

After much thought and prayerful consideration, the Directors voted to support the Investment Mission Group’s recommendation to move the Consolidated Investment Fund from being managed by the United Church Funds to the Connecticut Conference Fund. The Conference received an excellent audit report for 2015 confirming that our finances are well managed.
We are blessed by the leadership of Conference Minister Gary Schulte and the talented, dedicated staff who serve the Conference. Thank you to them who are few in number, but carry out the work for many. We are also blessed by willing volunteers who generously offer their time and talent to the ministry of the Conference. Thank you!

Grace and Peace,

Neal Cass, Conference President
New Hampshire Conference, United Church of Christ

**Conference Minister’s Annual Report – 2016**

In this report I want to testify to the importance of the setting where I am called to serve: The New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ. A Conference of the United Church of Christ is a significant setting of the Church of Jesus Christ with a unique purpose and identity. Ours is one of the 38 Conferences across the United Church of Christ. We are “in the middle,” between the local churches/associations and the national setting of the United Church of Christ. We exist to foster dialogue and discussion, consultation and conversation, to strengthen the covenantal ties that hold us together.

The New Hampshire Conference seeks to honor our relationships with the 135 local churches—we seek to engage with each church uniquely, supporting it in its ministry and mission. We had some 500 participants in Prepared To Serve last February. This is an amazing gathering for assisting our churches in their growth as communities of Christ’s disciples. We sponsored a variety of events and workshops throughout the year to encourage clergy and laity in their ministries. Your Conference ministerial staff works closely with the seven Association Committees on Church and Ministry to care for local churches and authorized ministers. The Search & Call process is important ministry that brings us into a special relationship with our local churches as they move through seasons of pastoral transition. There are currently 32 churches in some stage of pastoral transition. Eleven pastors were called to ministries here in the past year.

Our Conference Center in Pembroke continues to be a wonderful gathering place. It is the churches’ building, and we are always glad to make it available to churches for retreats and planning sessions. The Conference Center is here as a resource for the church.

In the past year, our Investment Mission Group made a recommendation to invest the Consolidated Investment Fund (CIF) with a new manager. The CIF is now included in the Consolidated Trust Funds of the Connecticut Conference, United Church of Christ. This recommendation was approved by the Conference Board of Directors in January. The process reflects careful and prudent oversight of the CIF, which remains an excellent option for our local churches. Investing in the CIF may be helpful because it broadens the responsibility for investment and endowment management without placing undue risk on your own congregants.

This year, 2016, marks the 20th Anniversary of our Global Mission Partnership with the United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe. Sadly, many congregations in Zimbabwe continue to wait for a church with which to partner in the New Hampshire Conference. The partnership is about mutual sharing of
the faith, hope, and love that are ours in Christ. We learn from each other, pray for each other, and befriend one another. What a gift Ukama has been to our Conference!

The New Hampshire Conference is here to give public testimony and witness at the intersection of the sacred and the secular. While we do not speak for any particular political party, we seek to be practitioners of faith’s mandate: To do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with our God (Micah 6:8).

I am grateful for the gifts and the prayers that sustain this setting of the Church. The further one moves from the local church, the more difficult it becomes to fund the ministry to which we are called. This year has been challenging since it began with a serious deficit of $58,435 that was carried forward into 2016. We have managed carefully and well, only accessing our line of credit once for a brief period in the spring. The churches have given faithfully to Our Church’s Wider Mission Basic Support throughout the year. Our Friends of the New Hampshire Conference have provided nearly $30,000 to help fund the Conference. Such support is about more than money—it is about the heart connections that unite us in Christ to one another.

We continue to experience new growth in our Outdoor Ministries program. Lives are being changed. This spring, as I sat atop Chapel Rock during the open house, a little child asked that I pray for his future: “Pray that I will have a good life.” The words touched my heart; my eyes filled with tears; and I pray daily for that child. This ministry is God’s gift to children, youth, families, and congregations. I am sad as I write, for Rev. Mollie Landers Hatt has announced her need to resign and relocate to Colorado. She is following her call and will be leaving our staff at the end of November. Mollie’s spirit and vision have guided Horton Center since 2012. We are stronger today and better prepared for the future because Mollie served among us.

We have some staff challenges as I write this report. We are hoping to hire a new Office Administrator soon—perhaps by the Annual Meeting. A search for a new Director of Outdoor Ministries is beginning immediately. Our staff is small but engaged. I give thanks for my colleague, Rev. Richard Slater; Rev. Mollie Landers Hatt; Rev. Michele Bagby Allan; Ms. Cindy Bradley; Ms. Ann Desrochers; Ms. Lydia Frasca; Ms. Helen McGlashan; and Mr. Rueben Rajala.

Finally, I give thanks to God for the family near and far that has supported me as I have pursued the call of Christ. I am blessed in so many ways, grateful for the love of Debby and Matthew and others who offer solace and hope.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Gary M. Schulte, Conference Minister
New Hampshire Conference, United Church of Christ
The New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ is alive and well. The Ministries continue their work and the Conference staff continues to serve our member churches. But the budget results are not so positive.

In the 2015 Budget we planned on a $29,939 deficit for the year. During the year the Conference Ministries were very careful with their expenses. None went over their budget. The staff hours were reduced and they stayed within their budget. Horton Center missed their break-even budget but did better than 2014. But after all the positive results, we finished the year with a $58,435 budget loss when you compare actual revenue and actual expenses. That is almost twice what we planned. This is startling but less dramatic when you consider that we forwarded over a quarter of a million dollars to the national church for their operating expenses and work throughout the world.

For 2016, we again planned for a budget deficit but we will again miss the expected result. At the end of August, two-thirds of the way thru the year, we are already $47,751 in the red. This will probably get better by the end of the year, but it's not going to be what we had hoped. We’ve cut the expenses as much as we can. We really need a balanced budget. We need to take a hard look at the revenue and expenses in our Mission Income and Spending Plan.

Respectfully submitted,

John W. Herbert, Treasurer
New Hampshire Conference, United Church of Christ

The third year of our ministry has seen several personnel changes, disappointment in one aspect of Campus Ministry, and the celebration of successes in several of our mission groups. Our work is strengthened by the presence and expertise of NHCUCC staff members Ann Desrochers and Rev. Mollie Landers Hatt.

This past year saw the closing of the Campus Ministry chapter in Keene, due to a decision by the KSU administration. We are working to support the successful ongoing ministries at Plymouth State University and the University of New Hampshire, and looking for ways in which we can continue to have a presence in Keene, especially now that the Keene UCC church has called a new Senior Pastor.

Our support of the work of the Outdoor Ministries Group and the programs at Horton Center has provided many gratifying moments. Enrollment continues to climb across the board at Horton Center, and more and more congregations are rediscovering the value of outdoor ministry for campers of all ages. Rev. Mollie Landers Hatt instituted several new sessions this year, including the popular Arts on the Mountain. Our partnerships with both Vermont and Maine have been fruitful. We collaborated with Vermont to help fill the void created by the closure of their camp, and continue our shared work with Pilgrim Lodge in Maine, sharing training opportunities for Deans and Staff, and working together during the Best of Both Worlds week.

A year’s worth of preparation resulted in an exciting trip to the National Youth Event in Florida this past July. The New Hampshire Delegation, with three adult advisors, had the opportunity to worship,
learn and socialize with hundreds of youth delegates from across the country. We look forward to finding ways to share this experience with youth across the state, and plan for future events leading up to the next NYE.

Plans are well underway for our fourth Confirmation Retreat in October. This will be the third year we have held this at Horton Center, and the second that we are using an expanded three-day format. We were delighted last year to have Confirmands from both Maine and New Hampshire attend, and will continue to offer this to Confirmation classes across the region. Our focus is on providing an understanding of the UCC in various setting, 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.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Grabill, Chairperson of Christian Formation Ministry
New Hampshire Conference, United Church of Christ

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**Clergy Support Ministry Annual Report – 2016**

It has been a privilege and a welcome surprise to serve as Chair of the Clergy Support Ministry this past year. In so many ways, the Conference, meaning we, on behalf of one another and in the name of Christ, are ministering to each other and furthering the growth of faith in a myriad of ways. Below are the updates from the several mission groups that the Clergy Support Ministries shepherds:

**Clergy Convocation Mission Group**

Andrew MacLeod

Since the 2015 Clergy Convocation in October, the planning committee has: received a large amount of positive and useful feedback and suggestions from 2015 participants; successfully moved Convocation about one month earlier for 2016 (no longer up against Annual Meeting); welcomed several new members who are enthusiastically planning Convocation 2016 AND 2017 (we already have our presenter booked).

**The Prudential Mission Group**

David Jadlocki

The Prudential Committee Mission Group is responsible for the oversight and administration of the Ministerial Relief Fund. Throughout the year, the Prudential Mission Group supports active and retired clergy through our financial support programs as well as our annual retired clergy lunch (held in the fall). Retired clergy who have served churches in NH for 10 years or more, and whose last call was to a NH Conference UCC church, are eligible for a Medicare Supplemental Insurance grant from the Ministerial Relief Fund. In addition, active or retired clergy who are facing a financial hardship and are in need of support from the Conference are encouraged to seek an assistance grant from the Prudential Mission Group. As stewards of the generosity demonstrated by those who came before us, the members of the Prudential Mission Group are honored to support and serve the authorized
ministers of the NH Conference and their spouses through the gifts and blessings of the Ministerial Relief Fund.

**The New Hampshire School of Ministry**  
Rebecca Maccini

The New Hampshire School of Ministry focused on maintaining ties with the New York School of Ministry, connecting with other regional schools of ministry around the country, and developing continuing education for authorized ministers. Continuing education possibilities for authorized ministers when the continuing education requirements come into play in 2017 have been shared in the NHCUCC Weekly News. A pastoral care webinar course, taught by David Reynolds, is also being developed for 2017. The NHSOM also took over developing and putting on boundary awareness training. Advanced Boundary Training workshop was put on in the spring. Basic Boundary Training workshop will be held in the fall.

**Pastoral Leadership Groups**  
David Reynolds

The Pastoral Leadership Development Groups (PLDG) for 2015-2016 ended in June which means that the first year of the current three-year contract has been completed. The partnership between the NH Conference and PCS began in 2008 and has agreed in the current Memorandum of Understanding to go through 2018. Four of the facilitators have been with the PLDG from the beginning and some of the participants have continued in the program from the beginning.

The PLDGs have done very well this year. Six groups are active, including the newer one near the North Country that Meg Hess leads. In the year-end evaluations, the facilitators’ leadership was one of the highest rated categories. These colleagues are considered some of the finest in the country for providing leadership for various groups. Each group has its own personality and approach, but all have the common elements of check-in, presentation, centering, and didactic.

Groups
- Merrimack - Rev. Dr. William Brown, 6 participants
- Merrimack, North – Rev. Dr. Margaret Hess, 5 participants
- Hillsboro - Rev. Dr. Margaret Hess, 6 participants
- Grafton/Orange - Rev. Charles Lindner, 4 participants
- Carroll/Strafford - Rev. Dr. David Reynolds, 6 participants
- Rockingham - Rev. Dr. Mark Watts, 4 participants

**Clergy Spouse Support Group**  
Bob James

In February, this mission presented a workshop at Prepared to Serve entitled *Clergy Spouses and Partners Speak Up!* The presenters were: Stacy Baker, Liz Greenberg, Debbie Leavitt, Don Tirabassi, and Bob James. It drew seven enthusiastic participants. The Mission Group also sponsored a table at which several pieces of educational material were shared. On June 18, the group held a Clergy Spouse and Partner Get Together at the home of Liz Greenberg in Derry. We provided lunch, childcare, and had a very satisfying discussion. Six CS/CP’s attended. The group decided to have a display table at the NHCUCC Annual Meeting in October and present another workshop at the 2017 Prepared to Serve. The Mission Group currently has a network of 17 spouses and partners. Stacy Baker started a Facebook page called *Spouses and Significant Others of UCC Clergy* that has 33 active members from several states. It is a “secret” FB group open only to clergy spouses and
partners. Bob is also writing a blog, entitled: **Supportforclergyspousesandpartners.com**. Nine articles on various aspects of the clergy spouse experience have been posted with over 1300 views.

**Newly Called Group**

Billy Brown continues to facilitate three clergy groups in the NH Conference. One is the "Newly Called" group for clergy who have been recently (within two years) called to new positions in the Conference. Monthly meetings use a case conference and professional sharing format over a ten month cycle from Sept to June. His second group is part of the Leadership Development Group also meeting on the same schedule; monthly Sept –June and third, is a long standing group of senior pastors in NH that meet twice a month Sept - June.

**Clergy Days** (Planned by Clergy Support Group/Run by David B. Reynolds)

A new model was designed for Clergy Days this year. Rather than a one-day event at Pembroke, three days were offered in various regions of the state that allowed for smaller groups and more in-depth conversation. The theme was: “clergy at the cross roads of cultural, theological and personal change”. David Reynolds facilitated and his reflections include the thoughts below: The (new) “Clergy Days” can serve as a model for the NH Conference. It can invite us to hold the polarities (what is and what is becoming) in tension long enough to discern the new directions in which churches may be led - or as St. Benedict said in *The Rule*, it is good to listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches. I recommend the CSM and Conference continue to create opportunities in existing committees and ministries (e.g., New Thing Task Force) for new practices of worship, prayer, and discernment together. This can be done at Prepared to Serve, Annual Meeting, other Clergy Days, and many other venues.

Finally, we had the privilege of disbursing funds from the Authorized Ministers Continuing Education Fund for several pastors across the Conference for a myriad of amazing renewal and educational experiences and have a small subgroup ready to review the Clergy Compensation Guidelines as well as an emerging Mission group who will work with Churches and Clergy on matters related to Pastor Parish Relations Committees.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Deborah Knowlton, Chairperson of Clergy Support Ministry
New Hampshire Conference, United Church of Christ

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**Finance Ministry Annual Report – 2016**

After an eight year hiatus, I rejoined the work of our NH Conference as chair of the Finance Ministry this year, as we also welcomed two new members onto the ministry. This has been a rebuilding year for the Finance Ministry and after a slow start, I feel we have been building momentum to energetically address the challenges of inspiring generosity towards Our Church’s Wider Mission (OCWM) throughout our New Hampshire Conference.

Of primary significance this year, our Ministry worked with the Budget Committee for the 2016 and 2017 Mission Income and Spending Plans (MISP). Our ministry has agreed to the Budget Committee’s recommendations for the 2017 MISP, with optimism that our work over the coming year
will result in greater generosity to benefit both the NH and national settings of our church than the plan currently calls for.

A major focus of our ministry this year has been to identify more effective ways to communicate all the programs that Our Church’s Wider Mission supports and the importance of generous OCWM support. We believe that money follows mission and as long as we can find the best way to communicate our mission, we can trust in God’s Holy Spirit to inspire us all to generosity beyond our imaginings.

To this end we are exploring new ways to build new relationships and to strengthen existing relationships across NH. To reach new audiences, we are exploring social media, particularly Facebook to lift up and recognize the generosity of individual churches, promote awareness of our connectedness to other NH Conference communities and to broadcast OCWM news and events to a wider audience.

We have started a new initiative, “Why I Give” a short, but sweet segment in the weekly conference newsletter to share personal testimonies meant to inspire generosity. It is our hope that over the weeks and months, we’ll have ministers and congregants from across the conference weighing in with their own inspirations.

Last year, chair Art Urie started an outreach effort to show thankfulness and gratitude via personal calls made by a dedicated team of volunteers and this year, we are building on that effort to find new ways to express our gratitude and to involve more individuals from around the state in Conference mission. The members of our finance ministry are also making personal outreach to local churches in support of annual pledges and OCWM giving.

We are energized for the challenges ahead in the coming year.

Respectfully submitted,

Matt Van Wagner, Chairperson of Finance Ministry
New Hampshire Conference, United Church of Christ


The Justice Witness Ministry is the umbrella over six mission groups: ONA Concerns, Racial Justice, Peace with Justice Advocates, Economic Justice, Spirituality and Earth Stewardship, and Immigration. These groups are the prophetic branch of the NH conference.

The Open and Affirming Mission Group teaches, leads, and challenges us to be transformed around LBGTQ issues. They continue to give leadership to churches going through the ONA process. They gave a very successful conference/training around these issues. When the tragedy in Orlando took place, churches they had inspired held vigils and spoke in solidarity with the people going through that crisis. As the transgender issue has come more to the forefront, they have given leadership in this area also.

The Racial Justice Mission Group was formed this year. The theme and focus of the 2015 Annual Meeting of the NH Conference, the murder of nine African Americans at Bible Study in Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, SC, and the Black Lives Matter movement created a call to
action for several members in other mission groups. They planned a workshop for Prepared to Serve, “Let’s Heed the Call to Be Faith-Filled Interrupters of Racism.” Names and contact information were collected of people who wanted to participate in a new mission group focused on interrupting racism.

**Peace with Justice Advocates** was formed at the beginning of the Iraq War with the purpose of opposing that war. During its early years, its work centered around two things, opposition to the war and growing in Christian nonviolence. Now the group has three foci, 1) Militarism in our culture. 2) Supporting the Palestinian/Israeli resolution passed by our Conference two years ago. This second focus also includes confronting Islamophobia. 3) The third focus is the promotion of Just Peace churches.

**The Economic Justice** works with other concerned citizens and groups to create economic justice for the weaker, poorer, more vulnerable members of society. They have been very active at the State House in supporting health care, Medicaid, higher minimum wage, developing a moral budget, and opposing right to work (for less) laws. Among other things, when bills related to these and similar issues come up, this group joins with others in the State House witnessing with signs, prayers and songs.

As the **Spirituality and Earth Stewardship Mission** group, we recognize we are facing a global environmental challenge, and that the church is greatly needed to respond with vision, education, action, and compassion. Our goal as a mission group has been to raise awareness among clergy, laity and congregations, as to this crisis, as well as the opportunity it provides to envision new ways of living on our planet home. In the past years we have held a variety of workshops at Prepared to Serve and the Annual Meeting, hosted a regional ecumenical event on faith and climate change, have offered frequent articles in the Weekly News on a range of environmental topics, and have sought to equip local congregations with ideas and tools for reducing energy costs and becoming “greener.”

**Immigration Mission Group** started when members of the Maranatha Indonesian UCC church began to be detained and shipped back to Indonesia after having lived in this country for 15-20 years. They began fighting to keep these people here but many have been sent back. Now the work also includes working with other immigrants who have been classified as illegal, particularly from Latin America. They also work with refugees, and asylum seekers. They have a visitation program for detention centers in Dover and also visit people being detained in Boston. They work to support families when family members have been sent back to their country of origin but their family remains here.

This year JWM also added a **Speaker/Preachers Bureau** made up of people who can preach or present on subjects related to the different mission groups and on similar types of topics. At present we have presenters on global warming, the opioid crisis, the Israel Palestine resolution including a picture of Palestinian Life under Israeli Occupation, the Compassionate Listening Project, a comparison of the Forced Removal of American Native Tribes and Palestinian Arabs, a transgender person whose presentation is entitled, Learning to Live Truthfully to One’s Self and with Others, and a presentation on the women’s prison ministry. The presenters, a short biography of their background, and a short description of their presentations is on the Justice Witness Ministry page of the NHCUCC website. Your church is invited to contact the presenters directly and to invite them to lead worship, offer an after church program, or present a workshop for your congregation.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Gray Fitzgerald, Chairperson of Justice and Witness Ministry
New Hampshire Conference, United Church of Christ
Since January 2016 Local Church Support Ministry approved grant funding for 13 churches. Through the Strengthen the Church Youth Ministry Grant the Conference helped support four churches attend the UCC National Youth Event at Walt Disney World in Orlando, FL, July 26-30, 2016. This event is held every four years and is centered on faith, leadership, service and social justice. The following churches received this assistance that totaled $2,310: United Church of Christ, North Hampton; First Parish Church, Congregational, United Church of Christ, East Derry; South Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, Concord; and the Federated Church of Marlborough.

This grant also supported two youth trips this year. The First Church in Nashua, United Church of Christ took a group of 20 youth and adults to Nicaragua in April 2016. They participated in an education program for the children of Jinotega, Nicaragua. First Congregational Church of Pelham, United Church of Christ took 20 youth on a trip to Broadleaf Ranch in New Brunswick, Canada to participate in a program designed to strengthen the bonds of the church’s youth group through team building and challenging activities designed to strengthen their faith, improve individual self-esteem, learn good communication skills and conflict resolution. The grant provided $3,500 to assist with these trips.

Ten churches attended the Conference supported workshop, “How To Reach New People” with church coach Paul Nickerson. Following the workshop, Paul Nickerson was available for coaching. Seven of those ten churches requested $1,000 from the Lay Leadership Development Grant to assist these churches to engage in the coaching: First Church Congregational, United Church of Christ, Rochester; Brookside Congregational Church, Manchester; Atkinson Congregational Church, United Church of Christ; United Church of Christ, North Hampton; Deering Community Church, United Church of Christ, Deering; First Congregational Church of Walpole, United Church of Christ; and Congregational Christian Church, United Church of Christ, Franklin.

Mission Group:

A New Thing Task Force has been working on a Leadership training project for both clergy and lay people to begin in January 2017.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Holly Tomilson, Chairperson of Local Church Support Ministry
Local Church Support Ministry

The Wider Church Relations Ministry has been very active this year. We have been working closely with our mission groups. This year a new mission group was formed called the Syrian Refugee Mission Group.

Disaster Response Mission Group- Many of our meetings this year were working on a NH Conference Disaster Response Protocol, which was accepted by the Board of Directors. We have
included the protocol in the NH Annual Meeting packet with the hopes that every church will have a copy and will spend time discussing it and understand how the Conference will support them if a disaster occurs in their community. It is also our hope that individual churches will adopt a Disaster Response Protocol so that we are all prepared if a disaster strikes. We recognize that some churches are the only church in a community whereas some communities have several ecumenical and interfaith communities so we initiated a dialogue with the NH Council of Churches to encourage different faith communities to talk with one another and decide how each community of faith would respond in a disaster so that duplication of services would be kept to a minimum. We plan to have a display table at the Annual Meeting so stop by and learn how and why your church should be interested or concerned about disasters. It would be nice to have representatives from all over NH. If you are interested in learning more please e-mail Jan Howe at pnjhowe@comcast.net.

General Synod Mission Group- We are planning to send a delegation to General Synod in Baltimore, Maryland in 2017.

New Church Start Mission Group- We have successfully completed the course Church Planting 1.0 from the Center for Progressive Renewal and received our certificate. We have been exploring two possible plans of starting a new church in New Hampshire.

Syrian Refugee Mission Group- Our first mission was to advocate that New Hampshire accept Syrian Refugees and to encourage our churches to advocate as well. A letter was written to Governor Hassan requesting she support admitting Syrian refugees into NH. We staffed a table and held two double workshops at Prepared to Serve, Islam and the Experience of an American Muslim- Dr. Salman Malik and Understanding Our Immigrant and Refugee Neighbors – Eva Castillo and Amy Marchildon. In April we sponsored two events: a workshop for the Women’s Fellowship Spring Gathering on the long process of being granted refugee status and the resettlement experience – Laconia. We also held an interfaith event called Building Bridges for Syrian Refugees. Speakers included: Becky Sakellariou, a volunteer with refugees arriving on the island of Lesbos, Greece, Imam Mohamed Ibrahim, Director of the Islamic Society of the Seacoast Area, and Rev. Don Anderson, Director of the RI Council of Churches with recent experience in advocating for and resettling three refugee families. We are in contact with Clare Chapman, Director of the NH Council of Churches. Joyce Ray met with the Concord Interfaith Council in June to explain our mission.

Ukama Mission Group- This year we have been inviting Ukama Partnership Churches to host Regional Educational Nights as a way of educating local churches and also fostering relationships between Ukama Partnership Churches. The first took place in Chester in April and was on the 2016 Shared Water/Food Security Project and the Ukama Covenant. The second took place on June 22nd at the Church of Christ at Dartmouth College. The featured speaker was Rev. Edward Matuvhunye, former President of the UCCZ, who spoke on the topic of the history of the UCCZ. The third is tentatively scheduled for September at the Jackson Church with the topic of creating a meaningful “Ukama Sunday” worship service. This year marks the 20th anniversary of the forming of the Ukama Partnership. The United Christ Church in Keene will be sending a container Shipment of humanitarian supplies to Zimbabwe. We have raised more than $12,000 for the sponsoring of a borehole at Dimiri Primary School with funds beyond those needed for the borehole to be used for purchasing and distribution of maize during this difficult time of drought and economic insecurity. The Ukama Mission Group plans to send a delegation to the Installation of Rev. E. T. C. Ngadziore as President this November. The Ukama Mission Group is also planning to host a delegation from
Zimbabwe in October of 2017. If local churches are interested in hosting a delegate, they are invited to contact Rev. Michelle Bagby Allan (revallan@uccnorthhampton.com).

**Women’s Fellowship Mission Group** - This year our retreats and gatherings have been well received. The Fall Gathering was held at the Woodbound Inn in Rindge, NH and the theme was “Sharing Our Stories.” The Spring Gathering was held at the Laconia Congregational Church and the theme was “Women’s Roles on Social Justice Issues.” We worked on getting church “liaisons” to spread the word of our mission group events throughout their churches. Some churches are interested in “How to Start a Women’s Fellowship.” Our Board would like to help churches start a women’s group and needs more members to achieve this. Anyone interested is asked to contact a member of our board. We continue to support Thamar, a child from Haiti.

We are thankful that we have been blessed to have had so many wonderful opportunities to serve.

Respectfully Submitted,

Janet Kohlmorgen, Chairperson of Wider Church Relations Ministry
New Hampshire Conference, United Church of Christ