

Dear Friends,

We begin the year 2017 with a renewed spirit of hope and joy. Our joy is in knowing Christ as our Lord and Savior. Every obstacle we face, whether individually or as a church family, is met with the peace of knowing that no matter what happens we are God's beloved children. We are all truly grateful to God for the gifts that we receive in our lives; again, both individually and as a church family. It is in the midst of our joy and gratitude that we must look seriously at the financial situation of our church. We are swiftly approaching a time of financial crisis within our church.

Southwick Congregational Church is in need. I and your fellow church members invite you to enter more deeply into the practice of gratitude by making a pledge of financial support to our common life and ministries. Your commitment in response to God's blessings makes a tangible impact on our worship, community life, and outreach to our neighbors.

Stewardship is the prayerful work of managing our time, talent and treasure to bring about God's kingdom on earth. Our church believes that stewardship is a part of our spiritual journey and our relationship with God. A pledge is your commitment to make a financial gift that supports the mission of SCC. Pledging is a response to God's call and abundance in our own lives: it is a statement of thanksgiving.

Annual pledges support everything we do and are at SCC — from paying clergy to supporting our outreach ministries to making possible our liturgical, education and music offerings. In order to know what we can do each year, we need to receive pledge commitments on which to develop an annual budget.

Weekly offerings are indeed a blessing and we are thankful for them. But if for some reason you are not able to attend church, we not only miss your presence but we miss your gift to the church. Please consider speaking to anyone from our finance committee about setting up a direct monthly deposit from your bank account.

God has blessed our church and our congregation, together we celebrate that blessing with a gift of thanksgiving.

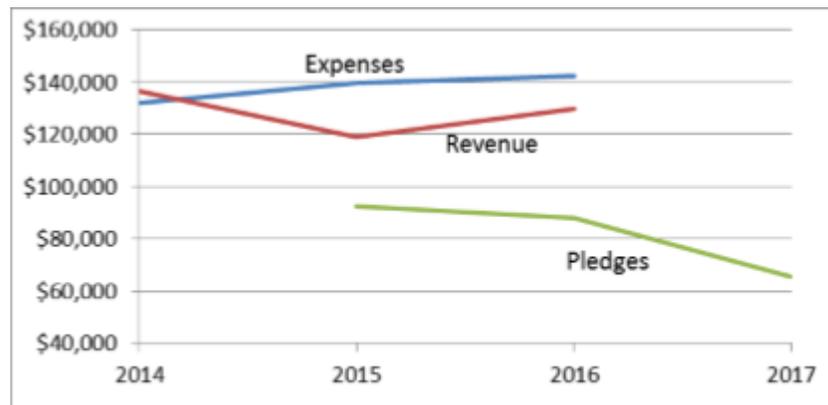
Yours in Christ,

Pastor Bart

Stewardship News

Stewardship pledges constitute the most important source of operating revenue for our church. Also providing revenue are fundraisers which contribute an average of \$7000/year, plus revenue from the thrift shop, facility and parsonage rentals that yield about \$13,000 annually.

Through November 2016, expenses averaged \$398/day while revenue averaged \$348/day. The difference of \$50/day projects a year-end deficit of over \$18,000. Shown below is the distressing trend between expenses and pledges in recent years. Philanthropic giving in this Christmas Season is most welcome.



Bell Choir News!

- What? The Annual Holiday Bell Concert
When? Sunday, January 8, 2017
Time? 1:30 PM
Where? The Church Sanctuary
How Much? That's up to you. This is a free will donation.

The money donated helps support the bell program.
A 'meet the ringers' tea and cookie reception will follow the concert.
Mark your calendars; invite friends; we'll entertain you all.

“Souper” Sunday - January 29th

For those who can, bring a pot of your favorite homemade soup to church that morning (with name and ingredients listed). Some friends will ladle it up into small & large containers for sale after church. Bring a friend!



Fundraising News

To All Church Members,

It's that time of year, when we the committees are preparing budgets for the coming year. As we discussed at last month's meeting, quite simply put, our INCOME is NOT covering the costs of running and maintaining our church. December had 2 very successful fundraisers, YEAH! But our cold winter is upon us, so we have to think hard, dig deep and continue that momentum. For January we have the Handbell Concert, which supports the Bell program/budget with a free will donation. Also for January “Souper” Sunday, come bring your friends, the more the merrier!

Holiday Cookie Sale

New Fellowship hall was filled with a visual feast and tantalizing aromas for the annual Holiday Cookie sale on December 10. Special thanks to the three dozen bakers who produced over 150 pounds of cookies which found new homes and in return added \$1250 to the church's coffers. Mark your calendars, the next opportunity to garner sumptuous Holiday Cookies will be in December 2017.





JANUARY 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 New Year's Day Com munion Service 10 AM Coffee Hour 11 AM O.A. Mtg. 3:30 PM	2 Office CLOSED	3 Office Open 9-1 Boy Scouts Mtg. 6:30-8:00 PM Bells 6:30 PM	4 Office Open 9-1 Cub Scouts Mtg. 6:30-7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal 7 PM	5 Office Open 9-1	6 Office Open 9-1 Henrietta's Thrift Shop Open 9-1 O.A. Mtg 6-7 PM A.A. Mtg 7:30 PM	7 Henrietta's Thrift Shop Open 9-1
8 Worship Service 10 AM Youth Group 10:15 Coffee Hour 11 AM Annual Hand bell Concert 1:30 PM O.A. Mtg. 3:30 PM	9 Office Open 9-1 Music Together Begins 10 AM	10 Office Open 9-1 Boy Scouts Mtg. 6:30-8:00 PM Bells 6:30 PM	11 Office Open 9-1 Cub Scouts Mtg. 6:30-7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal 7 PM	12 Office Open 9-1 Committee Mtgs. 7 PM All-Church Mtg. 8 PM (Open)*	13 Office Open 9-1 Henrietta's Thrift Shop Open 9-1 O.A. Mtg 6-7 PM A.A. Mtg 7:30 PM	14 Henrietta's Thrift Shop Open 9-1
15 Worship Service 10 AM Coffee Hour 11 AM O.A. Mtg. 3:30 PM	16 Martin Luther King Jr. Day Office CLOSED Music Together Class 10 AM	17 Office Open 9-1 American Inn Service 6:30 PM Boy Scouts Mtg. 6:30-8:00 PM Bells 6:30 PM	18 Office Open 9-1 Cub Scouts Mtg. 6:30-7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal 7 PM	19 Office Open 9-1	20 Office Open 9-1 Henrietta's Thrift Shop Open 9-1 O.A. Mtg 6-7 PM A.A. Mtg 7:30 PM	21 Henrietta's Thrift Shop Open 9-1
22 Worship Service 10 AM Youth Group 10:15 Coffee Hour 11 AM Health Workshop 11:30 PM O.A. Mtg. 3:30 PM	23 Office Open 9-1 Music Together Class 10 AM	24 Office Open 9-1 Boy Scouts Mtg. 6:30-8:00 PM Bells 6:30 PM	25 Office Open 9-1 Cub Scouts Mtg. 6:30-7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal 7 PM	26 Office Open 9-1	27 Office Open 9-1 Henrietta's Thrift Shop Open 9-1 O.A. Mtg 6-7 PM A.A. Mtg 7:30 PM	28 Henrietta's Thrift Shop Open 9-1
29 Worship Service 10 AM <i>Souper Sunday</i> 11 AM Coffee Hour 11 AM O.A. Mtg. 3:30 PM	30 Office Open 9-1 Music Together Class 10 AM	31 Office Open 9-1 Boy Scouts Mtg. 6:30-8:00 PM Bells 6:30 PM				

*Please note January's Coffee Hour is OPEN—there will be a sign up sheet by the coffee pot in Old Fellowship Hall.

Stewardship Drive 2017

The total pledged to date is \$65,405 or approximately half that needed for the annual operating budget. Please add your name to the list, should you notice it missing. Pledges to the annual Stewardship drive have been received from:

Sally Andrade

Patty Banasik

Roy Benson

Dave Breton

Lynn Coach

Dennis Day

Matt Egerton

Jennifer Cotto

Shirl Hamilton

Chris Hodges

Arlene Hughes

Erma Kellogg

Patricia Martin

Melanie Nitsch

Virginia Orson

Jim Parent

Mike Pitoniak

Diane Rood

Shirley Stewart

Louise Tagliavini

Penny Vincent

Patti Wood

Mary Alice Avato

Eleanor Bates

Joan Boissonnault

Emilia Brzoska

Roxanne Cook

Madeliene Dowd

Russ Fox

Elethea Goodkin

George Harvey

Joan Holmes

Connie Johnson

Nancy Lewis

Nancy McNulty

Evelyn O'Mara

Ann Ottalagana

Margot Pete

June Rathay

Robin Sklarski

Jeanne Stromgren

Jane Thompson

George Wheeler

Lee Zinnack

James Babinski

Herb Beman

Marian Bradford

Sandi Casalet

Mary Currier

Joyce Dudgeon

Bob Franzen

Janice Hall

Susanne Hayes

David Howes

Bob Keeney

Robert Lempke

Sally Merlo

Ted Orson

Virgil Paggen

Mike Pietruska

Charles Rood III

Bob Stevens

Beth Studer

Dawn Turgeon

Selwyn Williams

Please Notify the Church Office if.....



- You have a change of address.
- Your phone number has changed.
- Your email address has changed.
- You would like to make a change to the Prayer List.

All Church Committee Meeting

December 8, 2016

Moderator David Breton called the meeting to order at 7:55 pm. A motion was made to accept the minutes of last month's All-Church Committee Meeting which was seconded and passed unanimously. Pastor Bart then opened the meeting with a prayer.

Minister's Report

Pastor Bart and Valerie will be hosting an open house at their home on 12/30/16 from 3-8 pm. All are invited so please come by for some holiday visiting. Dec 12th is New Member Sunday and we will be accepting two new members into the congregation. Pastor Bart thanked all who helped in the success of the Holly Bazaar and the Advent Workshop and reminded everyone about the cookie sale on December 10th. The Advent "Scrooge" Bible Study is going well. There was discussion about the Thursday evening services.

Pastoral Relations Committee

Roxanne Cook reported no meetings lately but hoped to schedule one after the New Year.

Christian Education

No report.

Mission-Outreach

Patty Banasik reported 2 members present. The Adopt-a-Family for Christmas is going well – approx. 9 families. The Mitten Tree is up and the Sock Box for the Westfield Shelter will be in the Narthex. Patty thanked everyone who helped

with the Thanksgiving Dinner which had a profit of \$1,290. She is planning a Corned Beef & Cabbage Supper in March.

Treasurer's Report

Ted Orson reported that pledges are showing at this point about \$30,000 less than at this time last year so he urged everyone to please send in their pledges. 2017 will be a very challenging year financially for this church if this trend continues. He hopes the church plans to really make January and the New Year very focused on our financial situation.

Nominating Committee

Patti Wood wants to let everyone know we need more members/volunteers on all committees.

Finance Committee

Beth Studer reported 4 members present. They talked about stewardship and the membership list a great deal and trying to trim the current list. The Church is having connectivity issues and Elaina will be investigating this with CBS. This summer while Pastor Bart is on sabbatical Beth's mother will fill in as our ordained minister during Communion Sundays. There was discussion about adjusting our Administrative Assistant's title to Office Manager.

Fundraising

Patti Wood reported that there are currently fundraisers planned for February, March, and April. They are considering one for Superbowl Sunday. Patti is still working on obtaining the funds we are owed from the clothing drive and is optimistic this will happen soon.

Board of Deacons

Rob Lempke reported 4 members present. They discussed the need to work on the membership rolls along with the Finance Committee. Last year the church reported 207 active members but they feel now the actual number is much lower. Getting a more accurate role would save the church membership dues to the UCC. Roxanne Cook let the Deacons know the shut-in Christmas plants will be available this Sunday, 12/11, for delivery. The committee decided to cut in half the church's subscription to the "Upper Room" which is available in the Narthex. They discussed and decided against having a collection at the American Inn services.

Memorial Gifts

No report.

Buildings and Grounds

Eric Nitsch reported 2 members present. They have had no recent projects this past month with nothing coming up in the near future.

Flower Committee

Roxanne Cook stated that the altar pieces are covered for the month of December.

Music Committee

Melanie Nitsch reported 2 members present. Their committee had coffee hour this evening and for the month of December. The Sanctuary piano was recently tuned.

The voice & bell choirs will both be singing/playing at the

Christmas Eve service. On Christmas Day the voice choir will not be singing this year, Patti Wood will be playing a piece on handbells, and the voice choir will be back singing on New Year's Day. It was mentioned for all to try to attend the Hockanum Valley Ringer's handbell concert this Sunday, 12/11, at 3 pm at East Granby Congregational Church as it will be a real treat. Our own Gold Dome Ringers will have their annual handbell concert on 1/8/16 at 1:30 PM.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Melanie Nitsch, Clerk

Executive Board Meeting—December 8, 2016

The meeting was called to order at 8:46 p.m. There was again general discussion about the Thursday evening services with Pastor Bart. There was discussion about a performance evaluation for our Administrative Assistant. Pastor Bart made a motion to accept as new members Joe and Donna Sullivan. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Melanie Nitsch, Clerk

Happy January Birthday

<i>Janice Hall</i>	<i>January 1</i>
<i>Shirl Hamilton</i>	<i>January 4</i>
<i>Patty Banasik</i>	<i>January 12</i>
<i>Ellie Bates</i>	<i>January 20</i>
<i>Buddy Vecchio</i>	<i>January 30</i>

To All:

I would like to thank the Church for the lovely cyclamen and card. The colors on the flowers are so vibrant!
Happy holidays to all!

~ Mary Alice Avato

