

2025 Annual Reports of the Officers and Committees of the United Church of Dorset and East Rupert, U.C.C.



Mission Statement

The mission of this open and affirming Church is to instill in its congregation the consciousness of the presence of God in each individual person, to worship God, to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, to celebrate the Sacraments, and to teach and encourage the application of Christian values individually and collectively. The Church community strives to exemplify responsible stewardship of God's creation and to render loving service to all humankind in the search for righteousness, justice and peace.

Article 2, Constitution & By-Laws of the United Church of Dorset and East Rupert

W A R N I N G

The members of the United Church of Dorset and East Rupert are hereby warned to meet on Sunday, February 8, 2026, at approximately 11:30AM to transact the following business:

To act on the annual reports of the officers and committees of the church as presented.

To act on the proposed operating budget for 2026 as submitted by the trustees.

To elect church officers and committee members for 2026.

To consider any other business which may properly come before the body.

ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA

Al Lindsey
Rev. Dr. Mark McDonough

Call to Order
Opening Prayer
Memorial Moment for Deceased Church Members
Reading of the Call to the Meeting
Reading of the Minutes of the 2025 Annual Meeting

Report of the Administrator

Consideration of Reports as Prepared by:

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Discussion of and Actions on Proposed Operating Budget for 2026

Janet Chandler

Actions on the Nominations

New Business

EDIT TO BY-LAWS

Article1 Section1 Paragraph A

Members of all boards and committees shall be members (regular or associate) of the Church.

Change to read: Members of all boards and committees shall be members (regular or associate) of the Church OR NON-MEMBERS WHO ARE ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH. THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES SHALL BE MEMBERS (REGULAR OR ASSOCIATE). COMMITTEE AND BOARD CHAIRPERSONS SHALL BE MEMBERS (REGULAR OR ASSOCIATE).

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Closing Prayer

Rev. Dr. Mark McDonough

Minister's Annual Report

A few highlights from 2025:

First, thank you from Maggie and me for your continued welcome. We are enjoying our time with you, making friends, and getting involved in several activities and mission efforts, such as the rummage sales, bake sales, quilting group, and more. (And thanks to Tom for letting me sing in the choir.)

Much of my work this past year has been preparing for the search for the next settled pastor. We began early last year with the formation of the Transition Team who then spent several months interviewing members and friends of the church. Once the interviews were completed, a few members of the Search Committee for the transitional minister (Linda O'Leary, Elizabeth Karet, and Joel Ario) used the information from the interviews to complete the denomination's required church profile form. At the same time, the Cabinet began selecting members to serve on the Search Committee. As I write this, the profile is complete and ready to be approved by the Vermont Conference of the UCC, and the members of the Search Committee have been selected.

With the search about to begin, it became apparent that the web page needed updating, as one of the first things a potential candidate will do is research the church online. I asked Lee Romano, Liz Schafer, and Patrick Honan to update the web page. If you go to it you can see the wonderful improvements they have made. A big thank you to Lee, Liz, and Patrick for their expertise and creative energy.

Other work this past year included working with the Personnel Committee to restructure the church office after Jane's retirement to shift from a full-time administrator to a part-time office manager. The Personnel Committee hired Kimberly Perkins for that position and, between Kimberly and Leslie, the office is managing the busy church schedule capably and with good humor.

The Transition Team interviews made it clear that you want more young families. In pursuit of that goal, Paula Nassivera and Gretchen Lima proposed that Gretchen become the Christian Education Director—a part-time position overseeing children's, youth, and adult education offerings—and that Paula remain as the primary Sunday School teacher. The Trustees and Personnel Committee agreed and Gretchen began her new role a few months ago. I am pleased to report that we are seeing more young families in worship and more children in Sunday School.

Another highlight from this past year is the formation of the Truth and Justice Committee. It is good and right and part of our church history to take stands for justice for all. To learn more about the Truth and Justice efforts, please see the Mission Committee report.

And last but not least, I want to thank the staff: Rev. Skip, Tom, Kimberly, Leslie, Paula, and Gretchen, for all they do for this church. They are a pleasure to work with, and our weekly staff meetings include a lot of laughter. I also want to thank those whose efforts are largely unseen: Lynne and Pete for their custodial service to keep our building clean and welcoming, and our tech crew, Chris Lima, Patrick Honan, and Puck Bell, for making our services audible and available to those who join us for worship virtually.

Thank you all for an enjoyable and productive 2025. May 2026 be even better.

CLERK'S REPORT

TOTAL FULL AND ASSOCIATE MEMBERS 12/31/2024 **402**

Full Members as of 12/31/2025	127
Additions	0
Losses	8 Death 2 Transfer

TOTAL FULL MEMBERS AS OF 12/31/2025 **127**

Associate Members as of 12/31/2025	17
Additions	0
Losses	0

TOTAL ASSOCIATE MEMBERS AS OF 12/31/2025 **17**

TOTAL FULL AND ASSOCIATE MEMBERS 12/31/2025 **144**

WEDDINGS

Nicole Falvo and Ethan Nutting
Elizabeth Kelleher and William Sorenson III
Bridget Ring and Ryan Burger
Jennifer Cerone and Paul Bremel

MEMBER DEATHS

Louis Schultes (M)
Patricia Grip (M)
Sharon Stone (M)
Brian McKeon (M)
Richard (Dick) Grip (M)
James A Gray (M)
David Bumgardner (M)
Sherri Baker (M)

**THE UNITED CHURCH OF DORSET AND EAST RUPERT
MINUTES FOR THE 2024 ANNUAL MEETING
HELD FEBRUARY 9, 2025**

CALL TO ORDER-Lori Hong called the meeting to order at 11:35AM in the Pastor's Chapel with 37 people in attendance in person and on Zoom despite a 10-inch snowstorm the previous evening with 61 people in attendance. Interim Minister, Rev. Mark McDonough offered a prayer and led us in a moment of remembrance for those in our congregation who died in 2024 and read the Memorial List. Lori then read the warning for the final time.

MINUTES: Roger Squire made a motion, Steve Holman seconded, that we dispense with the reading of the minutes from the 2023 Annual Meeting and accept as presented. **Approved.**

MINISTER'S REPORT: Rev. Mark thanked everyone for the warm welcoming he and his wife, Maggie have received. He then introduced the Transition Team: Elizabeth Karet, Al Lindsey, Steve Holman, Annabel Lieu, Linda Drunsic, Joel Ario, Linda O'Leary, Henry Chandler and Derry Dickinson is an alternate.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT: Jane LoBrutto's report is at the end of the Annual Report.

READING OF THE COMMITTEE REPORTS: Lori went through the reports of each committee as presented in the Annual Report. Gretchen Lima pointed out that although there isn't specific mention in Paula Nassivera's report, Tom Salmon works with the Sunday School children each week. Ruth Stewart asked about the goals for the Communications Committee. Chris Lima responded that the focus right now is on the capability to stream services. He said that there is an amplifier already installed downstairs in the vestry and it will be activated soon in case there is a need in the instance of overflow for a large service which is needed occasionally. Chris reported that 16 households were watching the livestream today, more will watch after today and yet others watch regularly on GNAT. Keith Michl asked about waivers and liability regarding recording the general attendees at any worship. Lori reported that she had investigated this and it is considered a public forum so no specific permission is required. The parents of each child have signed a waiver on their behalf. Julie Citron suggested perhaps a disclaimer on the front of the bulletin. And Michelle Emery suggested that we supply directions for where to sit if they prefer not to be recorded. The office has taken over the card ministry. Thanks to Sue Hinkel who has been doing it for several years.

Janet Chandler, Treasurer gave an overview of her printed report, reviewing actual income and expenditures for 2024. She also reviewed our Investment Performance on page 21 Michelle Emery encouraged the use of the QR Code's inclusion in the bulletin weekly and suggested making it larger. Janet explained that this is a renewed effort that got dropped inadvertently. Janet then reviewed the proposed Operating Budget for 2025. She pointed out that two significant one-time expenditures include the church's gift to the Rev. Jim Gray of \$35,000 and manse repairs of \$43,000. This investment is fundamental to our church during this time of transition. She further reported that we are blessed with a generous congregation, and our finances are vibrant and healthy and this will help us attract a new minister. Ellen Maloney offered special thanks to Janet for her hard work on our behalf. A round of applause ensued.

Motion by Keith Michl to accept the proposed budget. Second by Elizabeth Karet. Approved.

NOMINATIONS: Linda O'Leary updated the written report.

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Motion by Al Lindsey to approve the amended list of nominees. 2nd by Joel Ario. Approved.

Motion by Ruth Stewart to accept the annual reports. Second by Steve Holman. Approved.

NEW BUSINESS:

Counseling Center-Steve Longley has been working out of the manse most recently. He is seeing 6 church related people for a total of 30 patients. He has presented a plan for the Cabinet to address.

New Directory-Ruth Stewart suggested that our church directory needed updating and she is willing to help accomplish that.

Vestry Acoustics- Lori Hong explained that the Cabinet and Trustees had been working on this issue since our last Annual meeting with it appearing on each monthly agenda. Various approaches have proven unsuccessful. Our most recent approach is to visit the Manchester Community Library since they have been able to resolve a similar issue in their building. It is still very much top on our minds and we are hoping to resolve it to everyone's liking. Adding new carpeting was discussed and others pointed out the tripping hazard it can create especially for those with mobility issues. **Linda made a motion that we authorize the Trustees to move forward with a resolution as soon as possible. 2nd by Michelle Emery. Approved.**

Rev. Mark offered a closing prayer. Meeting adjourned,

Respectfully submitted,

Linda O'Leary, Clerk

OFFICE ANNUAL REPORT 2025

2025 brought change to the Dorset Church office. Jane LoBrutto, Administrator for the past 26 years, retired at the end of May. Kimberly Perkins was hired as the part-time office manager. Working together, we have created new office hours, revamped the weekly bulletin, updated the church directory, and trained on new software, all while handling the day-to-day operations of the church. We continue to find our rhythm as we prepare for 2026 and the prospect of a new minister.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly Perkins and Leslie Mazzucco

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2025

The Stewardship Committee knew 2024-25 might be a challenging year. Our pastor of 27 years, Jim Gray, had just retired; a campaign for Jim's retirement purse was just completed; and the church community felt much uncertainty about what would come next. We set an optimistic goal of \$360,000, and raised \$312,000 from 85 church families. In 2025 we also received a significant gift from Diana and Michael Bickford to replace the aging organ. So, despite the challenges of change, our membership demonstrated their commitment to the church's financial health.

As we introduced the 2026 campaign, we encouraged members to pledge early so the Trustees would have the fullest possible information in planning the budget. As of early January, 88 families have pledged over \$306,000 towards our \$330,000 goal, putting us well ahead of last year's pace. We expect further pledges from 15 families who pledged last year, and we anticipate those funds will achieve the full goal.

We are most grateful for the congregation's response. The life we share in worship, fellowship, mission, and outreach is vital, and our impact within and beyond the church walls remains strong. May we uphold one another in this journey.

Respectfully submitted,

Joel Ario, Henry Chandler (chair), Jordan "Skip" Dickinson, Nora Larsen, Kit Wallace

SUNDAY SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT 2025

First of all, I want to express my gratitude for the leadership of Rev. Mark, the loving affirmation of CE Director Gretchen Lima, our wonderfully supportive congregation, my faithful classroom helpers, and all of the Sunday School families who prioritize God and the teachings of Jesus in our children's lives. I feel truly blessed to be given this opportunity to grow and share my faith with our church's children and their families.

2025 has been a year of big and positive changes. This fall we welcomed Gretchen Lima to our CE staff as our Christian Education Director. Gretchen joins us with a wealth of expertise and enthusiasm; she has been praying for and overseeing all aspects of our children and youth ministry and has already grown our program with several popular multigenerational community events. Gretchen is a gifted teacher and I'm excited that she'll share the teaching position with me—teaching classes when I'm away during midwinter and in July. This also gives our students the opportunity to experience another teaching style and perspective.

Another big change this year is that we now offer a year-round Sunday School program. This past summer we had several new families with young children join our classes and they have kept coming throughout the fall. Because the majority of students are now under seven years old, we're in the process of adjusting our lessons and activities accordingly. Both my student Shepherd Pada Bednar and adult assistant Ann Honan have eagerly jumped in to shepherd the youngest lambs!

Some of the highlights of 2025 include:

- Holding special classes on the meaning and importance of both baptism and communion and participating in the communion liturgy with Rev. Mark on World Communion Sunday
- Rehearsing and presenting a first-time Passion Prayer Walk on Palm Sunday with our children, teachers, and member Brian Hiller-DuPont. We had 10 participants in addition to Tom Salmon's beautiful musical accompaniment.
- Sunday School families and their children participating in our spring and fall CE Cafe during the church's rummage sales. Our fun and bustling cafes filled with good food are a wonderful celebration of community! The money raised supports our SS programs and nonprofit charities for children.
- Our Summer Sunday School, co-taught by Gretchen and me, served children every week with 30 children and adults combined over the summer months. As a result, we brought four new families into our fall program.
- Our Rally Sunday and Ministry Fair celebration on 9/7 with 10 children in attendance and a big turnout from our congregation, giving everyone an opportunity to learn about our committees and their work at the Ministry Fair during coffee hour
- Celebrating God with other cultures in SS with the Mexican observance of Dia de los Muertos and the Vellitas Festival with Lucien's mom and a zoom call to Bogota, Colombia.
- Our Living Nativity which was the culminating high point of the year with beautiful vocal soloists, multigenerational participation, a sweet and angelic SS cast with Mary and Joseph, shepherds, sheep, and angels, and a Special Guest Appearance of the Holy Spirit dove named Trinity!

In closing, I want to give a special shout-out to Leslie and Kimberly for all of their help in the office with special orders, making copies, finding supplies, and adding last-minute bulletin notices; and a special thank you to our gifted Music Director, Tom Salmon, for his time, talent, and good humor directing our monthly children's anthems and holiday specials.

Respectfully submitted,
Paula Mann Nassivera

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Committee Members

- **Gretchen Lima** – Co-Chair, Christian Educator, Youth Ministry Liaison (Appointed, Staff)
- **Paula Nassivera** – Co-Chair, Sunday School Coordinator (Ex Officio, Staff)
- **Ann Honan** – Church School Assistant (Stipend)
- **Ellen Leeds** – Adult Education / Second Hour Coordinator
- **Don Hiller-Dupont**

Pastor Mark McDonough – Pastor, Adult Education

Other

Pada Bednar – Nursery and Church School Assistant (Stipend)

Guiding Principles

The Greatest Commandment – Luke 10:27

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.”

The Great Commission – Matthew 28:18–20

“Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.’”

Our Church's Mission Statement -- See Mission Statement

It is the responsibility of Christian Education to oversee, plan, implement, and evaluate Christian education for all ages, from birth through death. We are guided by the Greatest Commandment and the Great Commission and our church's Mission Statement.

When we baptize a baby in our church, we are making a commitment to teach and share the love of Christ with that child and to support the parents and family in helping that child grow in faith. This includes learning about their faith so that, when ready, they may publicly confirm it through the Confirmation process.

We strive to provide resources through worship, educational opportunities, and service for all, so that we may grow closer to God and Jesus. We never stop learning and growing in our faith; we are lifelong learners.

Christian Education Responsibilities

Nursery – Infants

Our nursery is evolving as we work to determine what is practical and needed for our church community. We have not had a nursery for babies since 2016, but we are excited to explore options that will allow young families to participate more fully in church life. At present, parents are responsible for infants, and a rocking chair is available in the back of the sanctuary.

Toddlers – 2-4, preschool

We provide nursery bags for worship and are working to ensure they are updated weekly with engaging and helpful contents, so children feel comfortable and welcome during worship. In September, we added a bulletin announcement stating that babies and caregivers are invited, welcomed, and encouraged in worship.

Children aged Pre-K through Grade 7 are invited to join us downstairs for Church School following the children's message. Pada Bednar, who is gifted with young children, assists with very young participants, including children as young as two years old. Ann Honan assists with all age groups and supports Paula so she can focus on teaching the lesson.

Sunday School – Pre-K through Grade 7

We are so blessed to have Paula as our wonderful, creative, talented, and dedicated Sunday School leader. Gretchen Lima was hired in September to be our part-time (10 hours per week) Christian Educator. Gretchen will also teach Sunday school and keep Sunday school for 6 weeks while Paula and her husband are away for a much-needed respite. Paula has been a constant over the years, and she keeps us organized, informed, and moving forward. **Please see Paula's Annual Report for more details concerning Sunday School.**

Youth – 6th-12th grade

Our church has joined with other area churches—including Manchester FCC, Federated Church of East Arlington, Zion Episcopal, St. James, and St. Peter's Episcopal—in a regional youth group effort.

For the past three summers, we have collaborated for Summer Discovery Camp (Vacation Bible School), which has been a tremendous success and demonstrated that we are stronger together. None of the participating churches had enough youth to sustain individual youth groups, so Pastor Bill Boror of Manchester Congregational Church took the initiative to bring us together.

The Northshire youth group is called **F.I.R.E.** (Fantastic, Intelligent, Radical, Excellent). Credit for the name goes to Pada Bednar—go Pada, you rock! Youth group meetings have been held three times per month since September, with Gretchen attending seven of those meetings. At the moment Gretchen is also serving as the Youth Fellowship Liaison. She has met numerous times with the other leaders to dream, plan and implement youth ministry programming.

Gretchen has also been compiling rosters of youth who have not been regularly attending church and has reached out to them individually to connect and invite them into the life of the church. Although these youth and their families may not attend worship regularly, it is a joy to see them throughout the year at holiday worship services, special events, sharing musical talents in worship, and volunteering at our famous Rummage Sale. We are confident that many of them consider Dorset their church home.

Young Adults – Post High School

While we do not currently have an official Young Adult ministry, we have seen numerous young adults attending worship, sharing their gifts, singing in the choir, and assisting with technology during services. Gretchen has been compiling rosters of young adults from the past ten years and is exploring ways to reach out so they know they are remembered, prayed for, and always welcome—no matter where they are living. Dorset will always be their church home.

We also continue to strongly support our young adults through the Scholarship Program, which is invaluable.

Adult Education

Pastor Mark has done an outstanding job leading book studies and Bible studies, inspiring us to grow in faith. Please see Pastor Mark's report for further details.

Ellen Leeds has faithfully planned and organized Second Hour Education for over ten years, offering enriching and informative experiences. While Ellen has stepped down from coordinating

Second Hour classes, she is willing to remain on the Christian Education Committee as an appointed member and to support the next coordinator. If you feel called to serve in this role (approximately six offerings per year), please contact Gretchen. See Ellen Leeds's report for more information.

Senior Citizens, Homebound

We are grateful to offer devotional materials both electronically and in print, as well as livestreamed worship services so those unable to attend in person can remain connected. Since COVID, we have also offered book studies and Bible studies via Zoom and hybrid formats, allowing continued growth and connection. We are thankful for the technology that makes this possible.

Worship and Music Opportunities

Thank you to Pastor Mark for sharing a children's message during worship each week, and to Tom Salmon, who joins Sunday School weekly to lead music. Don Hiller-Dupont has also been a special guest, helping children and adults with music. Inclusion in worship and music is a vital part of faith development, and we look forward to expanding these opportunities.

Events Initiated and Implemented by Christian Education in 2025

- All-Church Epiphany Party and yearlong Epiphany "Star Word" journey
- Lenten education opportunities
- Two Rummage Sale concession stands/cafés
- All-Church Rally Sunday / Ministry Fair
- Community Christmas tree lighting and potluck
- Advent–Epiphany education using Illustrated Ministry; coordinated all-church Advent experience
- Christmas pageant (directed by Paula Nassivera and Lynn Welsh)
- Palm Sunday prayer presentation in worship (directed by Paula Nassivera)
- Children's story hour before the Easter egg hunt on the Dorset Green
- End-of-year school celebration and presentation of 3rd-grade Bibles
- Summer Sunday school for children (first time ever and a huge success)
- Hired Gretchen Lima as part-time Christian educator
- Launched **Truth and Justice** in partnership with the Mission Committee

MUSIC COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2025

The Music Committee met 5 times this year, once again holding the title of "most chill committee." Do not, however, let that fool you into thinking that the music program at the Dorset church was sitting around doing nothing!

Our biggest news this year was the generous donation by the Bickford family of a new organ! Installation took place in late March and early April, which gave Tom just enough time to get familiar with the organ for its debut on Palm Sunday, and pulling out all the stops for Easter. Tom has truly enjoyed playing this wonderful instrument and experiencing the warmth of sound it provides.

In addition to providing beautiful anthems and service music every week, Tom and various members of the choir have also participated in several community musical groups, including the Bennington County Community Chorus, Nordic Harmoni, the Interfaith Choir, the Israel Congregation Choir, the Dorset BBQ Quartet, the Washington County Band, and the Dorset Players.

Other events at the church included a mid-winter choir concert with a British Invasion theme, pairing the choral anthems of British composers with the songs of the Beatles; a Bach Marathon; a Harp Camp; special music by Eric and Iren Hangen; spooky music on Halloween (including the music director dressed in a bridal gown!); and a Sankta Lucia Celebration by the Nordic Harmoni.

The choir continues to grow, thanks to Tom's open-door policy of inviting participation at whatever level is doable for individual members. We are always glad to see our members return from their travels, and, at the same time, we appreciate our steady, stalwart core group that holds us together.

At the start of each season, Tom makes a schedule of anthems affectionately titled "Best Laid Plans." He is pleased to report that most of those plans have come to fruition. Every year, another piece or two from his "bucket list" makes it into circulation. In these uncertain times, the best way to make a better world is through artistic expression.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Salmon

DEACONATE ANNUAL REPORT 2025

The Deacons have been fully engaged this past year. Our group guides the worship services of our church. We serve communion, greet parishioners, arrange for ushers, and plan special services including Tenebrae, Easter, All Church Memorial, and Christmas Eve. We assist in baptisms and the annual installation of new church members. We help as ushers at church funerals. The Deacons continue to arrange pulpit coverage for the minister's vacations. We prepare several coffee hours during the year.

We greatly appreciate the leadership of Rev. Mark in our efforts.

The Deacons spent time reviewing emergency procedures involved with elevator malfunction.

Going forward, the Deacons intend to maintain information books that review procedures and policies. The hope is to make orientation of new members a simpler task. The group has compiled a physical information notebook that would include elevator information, fire blanket locations, communion and usher protocols, and Deacon schedules. We have set up a shared folder in Dropbox that contains this same information.

We wish to thank the ministry of Karl and Marietta White who have weekly worked as ushers. We also thank Keith Michl and Sid Staunton for their leadership as co-chairs of the Deaconate.

Respectfully submitted,

Keith Michl, co-chair of the Deaconate

HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Hospitality met seven times in 2025. We planned the weekly coffee hours, several funerals, and Memorial Day picnic. Thank you to everyone who helped by bringing food and helping with set-up and clean-up. It's greatly appreciated. Please consider signing up to host coffee hour with a friend!

Respectfully submitted,

Kris Harvey

MISSION COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Committee Chair: Richard Urso

Committee Members:

Janet Chandler, Rev. Skip Dickinson (Association Witness and Mission Committee representative), Michelle Emery, Sandi Hedman (Trustee Representative), Lisa May

Mission Committee had an active year. We discussed how we set the parameters for the distribution of the funds the church allocated to Missions for worthy causes. Historically, discussions were guided by local, national, and international need. Considering governmental cutbacks, we tweaked the considerations to focus on Urgent Care need, Transitional need, and Continuing Care need. We also focused more on local and national need, this in reaction to the unfortunate changes in administration funding. The list of recipient organizations is below.

Organization	Urgent Care	Transitional	Continued Care
Bennington County Multicultural Community Center (Afghan Refugees)	300		
Kelli Gaiotti (Walk Pittsburgh)	300		
Manchester Community Food Cupboard	300		
PAVE - Bennington	500		
PlebianHelpers (Phil Peterson)	300		
Vermont Food Bank	200		
Vermont Interfaith Power and Light	300		
UCC Disaster Fund (Vermont Conference)	300		
Bennington Coalition for the Homeless		500	
Dismas House		200	
Neighbor to Neighbor		200	
Bridge to Rutland		200	
Asian Rural Institute			200
Back Bay Mission (Biloxi, MS)			200
Global Ministries Missionary Elena Huegel in Chiapas, Mexico			200
Re-member (S. Dakota)			200
True Africa - sponsored AIDS orphan in Uganda			750
	5150	1100	1550

Three committees under Mission operate more or less autonomously:

Green Team – focuses on environmental issues and climate awareness—essentially how we can be better stewards of the environment.

EVENTS in 2025:

--YOUR RECYCLE QUESTIONS (a second hour program) led by Paula Kamperman of the Bennington County Regional Commission

--Bus Trip to Casella's MRF (Materials Recovery Facility) with a guided tour and explanation of the machinery (awesome), followed by a Q&A

Both events were very well attended.

ADVISORY ROLE:

--Continued work with the Trustees on weatherization grants, heating questions, and incentives

--Worked with church committees and members of the congregation with questions.

Ellen Maloney, Chair

Serrv – SERRV has been a fair-trade organization since the 1940's. They currently support artisans throughout the world to develop products that reflect local crafts and materials, teaching skills to those that need help. SERRV buys the goods up front from all the artisans, and we resell them in local church events. The profit buys more goods, and the rest is used as a kind of emergency fund. We donate to flood and fire situations, we help support a student in Africa, we donated to the fund to put running water in the Rupert Church, etc. This year has been a difficult year since I have been too ill to do any of the extensive prep and follow-through for our annual fair. The committee totally stepped up and took over everything! Many thanks and kudos to the wonderful committee of Robin Chandler, Cheryl Gasperetti, Jen Parent, and Helen Melhado.

Derry Dickinson, Chair

Truth & Justice Vermont – This is a new committee to respond to people feeling helplessness and frustration about the polarization in our country, and the actions that many feel are cruel, dehumanizing, and meant to divide us, and which go against the teaching of Christ. Many of these actions are also at odds with our Constitution which has evolved and served to guide this country for 250 years. The catalyst was a sermon given by Pastor Mark about the David & Goliath parable and how people throughout history have been called on to defend against the Goliaths of their time. We make every effort to remain nonpartisan but take a stand against policies that are against our values. There is a website www.truthjusticevt.org which offers resources, news, and event information. All points of view are welcomed for discussion.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Urso

CABINET ANNUAL REPORT 2025

The Cabinet is comprised of a representative from each of the Standing Committees in the church. The body determines administrative policy while the Deaconate determines worship policy and the Trustees determine financial policy. That being said, the Cabinet can and does make recommendations to both the Deaconate and Trustees and the reverse is also true. The Cabinet is a great sounding board for sharing information and discussing issues that come before the church.

There are three highlights in 2025: First, the Cabinet selected the Search Committee for finding and recruiting a “settled pastor.” This process included meeting with Rev. Paul Sangree from Vermont UCC for guidelines, writing and editing an extensive church profile (thanks to Linda O’Leary, Joe Ario, and Elizabeth Karet for their work), interviewing congregants, assimilating results, nominating potential committee members, and finally choosing the committee from that pool of candidates. Second, the huge success of the Truth and Justice movement coming out of the Missions Committee. This has been headed by Rich Urso who has the patience, kind demeanor, and communication skills to tackle such an important project for individuals, the church, and community. Third, the addition of Church Education Director to the Cabinet. Gretchen Lima’s professional credentials and boundless energy and enthusiasm have been a great addition to the Education Committee.

The Cabinet has been grateful for the presence and guidance of Rev. Mark at our meetings. His interest and participation in the welfare of our standing committees has been a welcome change.

Al Lindsey, Moderator

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT 2025

2025 was a good year for the technology side of the communications committee. We continue to stream on Sundays to over 10 people live from VT, NY and one family from NC. After the service is recorded, additional people go onto the recording so that on average there are between 30 and 40 views for each Sunday service. More if the kids are involved, it will spike to 50 to 60 views. Patrick Honan has been manning the video streaming, Richard Urso have been dabbling a bit in the streaming part as well in 2025 as a backup. Thank you Patrick and Richard!!

We also had several funerals that we recorded this year and a big thank you to Patrick for that as well. The last funeral at church there was a deacon trained in the sound system basics as the existing work instruction was followed without issue.

This year we said goodbye to CJ Honan on the sound board as he has been manning this since we started streaming. Good luck to CJ in his future endeavors and as always is welcome back with open arms. We said hello to Puck Bell who has been manning the sound board. Puck has experience in another life doing this, so the transition was very seamless from CJ to Puck. Thank you Puck!!

The communications committee is comprised of the technology piece and the communication piece. I have asked the session to divide this group into a Sunday streaming group, separate from the communications committee, to focus on each one more effectively.

Lastly, I would be remis if I did not ask for additional volunteers to work on the video and soundboard. Again we will train you until you cry uncle. As the streaming and recording continue to gain momentum in our normal daily offerings for Sundays, funerals and possibly weddings this rag tag bunch of volunteers will need your help to continue to support the growing need.

Thank you

Chris Lima

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP ANNUAL REPORT 2025

What happens when a vital organization doesn't have a president for a year? Well, when the group is our Fellowship, activities move forward seamlessly. At our Annual Meeting last year, no one was willing to take on the responsibilities inherent with this position, yet our momentum never wavered.

Under the guidance of our steering committee of Sandi Hedman, Candace Parks, Lynne Welsh, Cindy Safier, Patty DeNicola, and Linda O'Leary, our two Rummage Sales were incredibly profitable and the teamwork by our horde of volunteers was never more evident. And we were able to get good, usable items into the hands of people who need them, all while doing the ultimate recycling!

Robin Chandler has assumed responsibility for the organization of our two Food Sales. Again, the combined efforts of so many led to record-breaking sales.

Thank you to everyone who donated, sold, baked, and promoted these events. It does take a village!

Our quilters performed their magic once again and chose to gift their beautiful creation to Jane LoBrutto to honor her retirement after 25 years of service.

Due to inclement weather our 2025 Annual Meeting was held in January 2026 with the following slate of officers elected:

President-Linda O'Leary
Vice President-Robin Chandler
Secretary-Nora Larsen
Treasurer-Betsy Olson

Our fundraising efforts allowed us to donate 60% of our earnings from 2025 to the Dorset Church Operating Fund which amounted to \$18,345.77. Additionally, we were able to provide donations to the following organizations:

Dorset Fire Fighters-\$300
East Dorset Firefighters-\$300
Rupert Firefighters-\$300
Manchester Firefighters Annex Project-\$300
Northshire Rescue Squad-\$1,300
Minister's Discretionary Fund-\$2,500
Interfaith Emergency Fund-\$1,000
Community Food Cupboard-\$2,000
Rupert Food Pantry-\$500
Kids Summer Lunch-\$500
Meals on Wheels-\$500
Community Sharing-\$500
PAVE-\$300
Manchester Baptist Church Building Fund-\$500
Total Mission Giving-\$10,800

The Fellowship employs an open door policy; all are invited to attend any event or meeting, so know you are always welcome to participate.

Linda O'Leary, President



UNBUDGETED MISSIONS 2025



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DONATIONS 2025

\$200.00 OPERATION WALK PITTSBURGH
\$150.00 KENYA DRYLANDS EDUCATION FUND
\$150.00 BART ADAPTIVE SPORTS CENTER
\$150.00 KIDS SUMMER LUNCH PROGRAM
\$150.00 COMMUNITY FOOD CUPBOARD
\$500.00 NY AVENUE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

SUNDAY SCHOOL

\$50.00 NORTH MEADOW FARM
\$50.00 THE DORSET EQUINE RESCUE
\$50.00 COMMUNITY SHARING
\$50.00 THE DORSET PLAYERS, INC.
\$100.00 NY AVENUE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
\$100.00 DORSET FIRE DEPARTMENT
\$100.00 DORSET VILLAGE LIBRARY
\$100.00 KENYA DRYLAND EDUCATION FUND

FIVE-FOR-FIVE DONATIONS TO UCC THROUGH SEPARATE COLLECTIONS

\$641.00 ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING
\$340.00 BLANKET SUNDAY
\$350.00 STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH
\$465.00 NEIGHBORS IN NEED
\$1050.00 CHRISTMAS FUND

KIDS SUMMER LUNCH

\$16,595.00 DONATIONS FROM OUR PARISHIONERS

COMMUNITY SHARING PROJECT

\$8,175.00 DONATIONS FROM OUR PARISHIONERS

ANONYMOUS DISCRETIONARY ACCOUNT

\$ 10,000.00 EMERGENCY FUEL FUND

TOTAL AMOUNT OF UNBUDGETED MISSIONS

\$ 39,516.00



COMMUNITY SHARING PROJECT ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Community Sharing Project 2025 marched forward into another successful year of giving. We provided a more bountiful Christmas to 131 families living in Dorset, Danby, Rupert, Pawlet, and Wells. While our committee of Beth Eyre, Karen Allen, Jane LoBrutto, and Meg Mithoefer continue planning throughout the year, we are incredibly thankful for our extraordinary volunteers who turn our vestry into Santa's workshop as Distribution Day approaches. Huge thanks to Terri Hathaway, Susan Romano, Heidi Lynn, Sara Garay, Amanda Baer, and Mary Beth O'Donnell. We'd also like to give a shout-out to Leslie Mazzucco who keeps our finances in order. All of these women bring an organization and sense of humor that fills us with great joy and camaraderie as we efficiently sort hundreds of boots, toys, clothing items, food baskets, and Price Chopper gift cards in four days! We are so appreciative of our generous community who provide all the gifts.....making donations, purchasing angel tree items, donating toys, contributing food, helping on distribution day, and even bringing our team cookies, bagels, and lunch. It's really an awesome and magical week every year. We thank you all for supporting our mission to help our neighbors in need. May the joy of the Christmas spirit be with you today and every day in the year ahead. Cheers!

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Eyre

MEMBER AT LARGE ANNUAL REPORT 2025

As Member at Large I hold full voting privilege and attend Cabinet Meetings.

My primary function is to represent both the general interest of the Board, and those of the Members of our Congregation. The Member at Large provides strategic input, assists with projects, and lends expertise when needed. Without operational duties, I can assist where gaps arise throughout the year, and meet with church members to address their concerns and bring them to the Cabinet if I am not able to rectify them quickly.

It is a privilege and honor to serve as your Member at Large.

Lori Hong

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT 2025

The role of the Trustees is to manage the financial affairs of the Church in accordance with the mission of the Church. The year 2025 was part of an interim period between Rev. Jim Gray's retirement and the calling of a new settled minister, which could happen as early as mid-2026. In the meantime, we are blessed to have found Rev. Mark McDonough, who has proven to be a wonderful interim minister with the spiritual gifts and versatility to guide us through these turbulent times.

The Trustees worked closely with Rev. McDonough on several interim tasks, as well as our normal work on buildings and grounds, budget and personnel management, stewardship, investment strategy, and the myriad other tasks that help ensure our church continues to thrive as the spiritual home for an amazingly active church membership and as a nurturing supporter of our southern Vermont community.

Major projects this year included renovating the manse to get it ready for a new minister; revamping our administrative structure after our longtime and beloved administrator, Jane LoBrutto, accepted a call to become head pastor at a nearby church in mid-2025; and increasing staffing for Christian education, with special attention to the current and future youth of our church.

Most of our business was accomplished through our standing committees and included the following highlights:

Buildings and Grounds: Kit Wallace completed her term on Trustees in 2024, but she stayed on as B&G chair in 2025, where she skillfully managed the painting, energy updates, and other work on the manse; oversaw sound improvements in the vestry and other work on the church building; and organized the work teams to keep the grounds in good shape.

Personnel: Steve Holman ably led a busy committee that completed our Employee Handbook, including a new Health Savings Account option; hired a new part-time office manager, Kimberly Perkins; and doubled our Christian Education staffing by hiring a new part-time Christian education director, Gretchen Lima. Rev. Mark holds weekly staff meetings to ensure smooth implementation of the church's revamped administrative structure.

Treasurer: Our dedicated treasurer, Janet Chandler, worked effectively with the co-chairs to expedite our budget-planning process ahead of Stewardship Sunday in November, as well as keep the Trustees fully informed about revenues and spending on a monthly basis. She continually collaborates with our highly proficient bookkeeper, Leslie Mazzucco.

Stewardship: Henry Chandler began another stint as chair and championed an outreach effort to pledging members to better understand their hopes and expectations for our church. Our church is blessed to have more than a hundred faithful pledgers, who contribute two-thirds of our annual budget.

Investments: Phil Peterson chairs the Investment Committee, which works closely with the Trust Company of Vermont to ensure our endowment funds are well managed. One of Phil's priorities has been to develop transparent guidelines for appropriate use of endowment funds.

Scholarships: Led by Rich Grip, the committee used endowment funds to award \$3000 scholarships (plus some sweeteners) to 10 students to help with college expenses.

The Committee expresses its gratitude to so many members of the church who help in large and small ways to bolster the church's finances and ensure our buildings and grounds are cared for with loving kindness. We thank the outgoing Trustees (Joel Ario, Chris Lima, and Sandi Hedman) and the committee members who faithfully attend meetings and carry out the work described above.

We wish to recognize our dedicated staff and express our appreciation for their talents and service. Whether they are planning a worship service at a staff meeting, working on our educational programs, or inspiring us with music, we are blessed by their presence in our church.

In closing, we report that we have been the beneficiaries of many generous gifts above and beyond member pledges. While these are greatly appreciated, they in no way overshadow the gifts of the heart that so many give to this church every day. We were very fortunate to receive the gift of a new organ from Diana and Michael Bickford this year, which was dedicated in the spring with the following plaque: "May the joy of music strengthen your faith." We are indeed abundantly blessed.

Respectfully submitted,

Joel Ario and Linda O'Leary, Co-chairs, on behalf of the 2025 Trustees: Linda Drunsic, Jack Gilbert, Sandi Hedman, Nora Larsen, Ellen Leeds, Chris Lima, and Phil Peterson.

SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT FOR 2025

Benjamin Ario – New Mexico State University

Kaelin Downey – University of Connecticut

Mylee Downey – McGill University

Laura Emery – George Mason University

Ramsey Eyre – Harvard Law School

Iren Hangen-Vazquez – McGill University

Thunder Hunt – Vermont State University

Rowan Streeter Jalbert – Vermont State University

Ella Mazzucco – Community College of Vermont

Teri Salmon – Fordham University

Respectfully submitted,

The Scholarship Committee –

Dick Coss, Alex Gray, Richard Grip, Colleen LaChac, Linda O'Leary, Elizabeth Olson

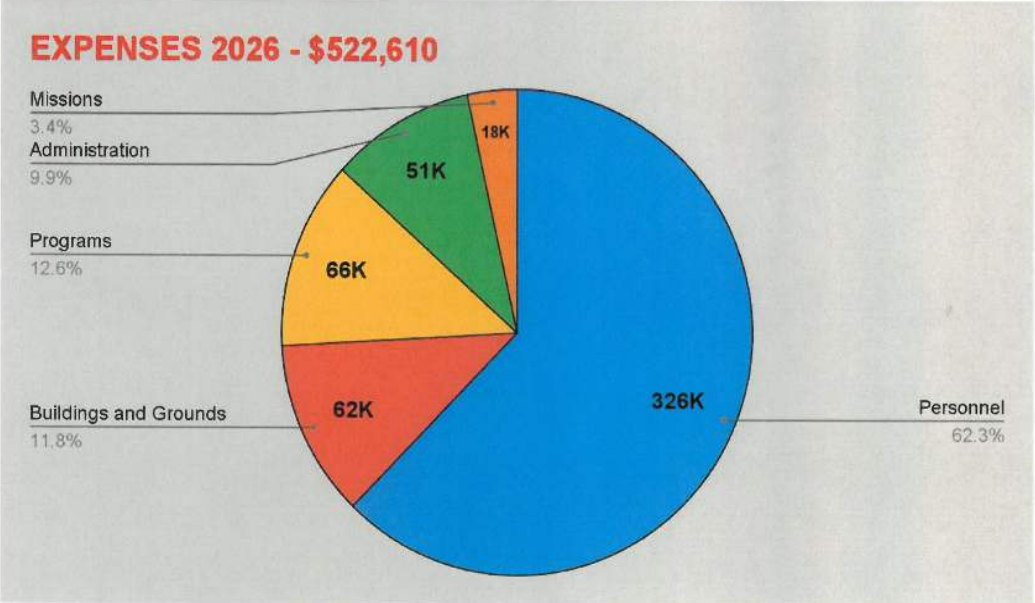
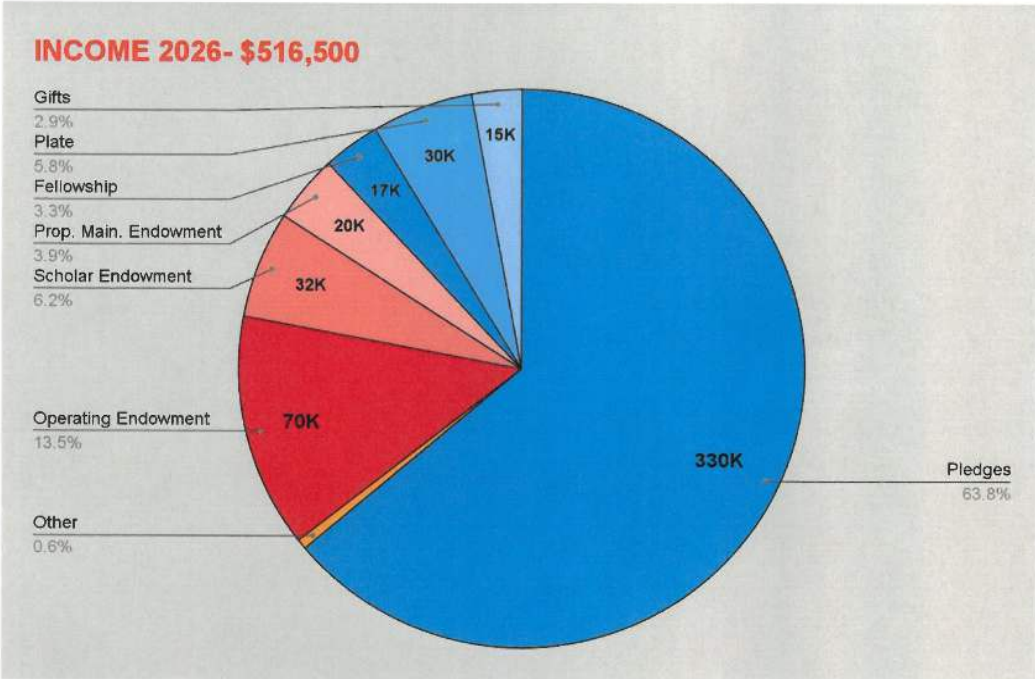
Treasurer's Report for 2025

We had a very busy and productive year, and we also faced some challenges. This was a transition year in the history of our congregation that brought some one-time costs and financial uncertainties. Thanks to the generosity of our members and friends, the responsible stewardship of our endowment funds by the Trust Company of Vermont, and the careful management of our budget by our Trustees, the Dorset Church is on solid financial footing at the end of 2025.

Proposed Operating Budget for 2026

\$516,500 □ **2026 Budget** □ **\$522,610**

The Proposed 2026 Budget shows a decrease in the income and expenses. On the income side, we anticipate a larger pledge income based on the amount of pledges received to date. As a result, transfers from the Operating Endowment will also be less. On the expenditure side, we will spend less on manse repair and on personnel costs. Program expenditures have increased for several reasons. Expenditures needed to support the search for our new pastor have been added. Additional money has been allocated to Christian education programs to support the new efforts by this committee to bring in new members.



Respectfully submitted,
 Janet Chandler
 UC DER Treasurer
 January 2026

