

# Old Steeple Community Church

United Church of Christ

656 Main Road, Aquebogue, NY 11931

## 2019 Annual Reports

Date of Meeting: January 26, 2020



AQUEBOGUE, N.Y.

Organized March 26, 1758

*“Arise, shine; for your light has come ...”*

Isaiah 60:1



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# **ANNUAL MEETING and JANUARY COMMUNITY BOARD MEETING**

January 27, 2019

Moderator Donna Doroszka opened the meeting at 11:55 AM, greeting everyone and thanking all of the volunteers that she mentioned (or not!) in her annual report. Rev. Anton offered an opening prayer and thanked the Hospitality Committee and all those who brought dishes for the delicious luncheon that preceded the meeting. Rick Reeve read the call. Those present were: John Andresen, Nancy and Edgar Goodale, Gerry Hegner, Gail Yeager, Kathy Stapon, Fay Young, Keith Young, Guy and Barbara Fein, Rev. Janet Wright, Heather Barnett, Rick Reeve, Donna Doroszka, Jeannine Martin, Jack Kratoville, Sandy Reeve, Amy Cosgrove, Paulette Sherman, Carol Lee, Robert and Andrea Hanulec, Bob and Helen Fraser, Kathy Eberle, David and Liz Wines, Rev. Anton and Henza DeWet, and Jean Lapinski.

The October 21, 2018, Annual Budget Meeting minutes were approved, with a motion by Edgar and second by Rick.

Donna appointed Robert Hanulec and Keith Young as tellers.

The 2018 Annual Reports were reviewed. Three people made comments on the reports:

Guy expressed his appreciation to members of the choir, who give their time and talent every Thursday evening and Sunday morning, and those present gave a round of applause.

Rick thanked those 'behind the scenes' people who keep the church going throughout the year.

Rev. Janet gave thanks to those who donate food and/or time to Maureen's Haven.

The Annual Reports were approved by the group, with a motion by Guy and seconded by Rev. Janet.

Election of new officers:

Rev. Janet presented the proposed slate of officers on behalf of the Nominating Committee, thanking Gail Yeager and John Andresen, who have finished their Council responsibilities. Tom Behr and Rev. Janet are proposed in their place, with Bob Fraser joining Liz Wines as delegates. Kathy Eberle has offered to serve as auditor. There were no nominations from the floor. Rev. Janet moved and Guy seconded approval of the slate of officers as presented by the Nominating Committee. Those present cast their vote, and ballots were collected by the tellers.

There were several items of New Business:

There was a discussion of the new By-Laws, proposed by the By-Laws Committee. Rev. Anton shared a visual of Old Steeple's governance as now practiced and as reflected in the proposed By-Laws. Jack moved and Gerry seconded the approval of the proposed By-Laws, and the members present cast their votes.

Donna reviewed the upcoming Lenten services: Ash Wednesday (3/6) at the First Congregational Church; Maundy Thursday (4/18) at Old Steeple; Good Friday (4/19) at Baiting Hollow; and Easter Sunday (4/21) at Indian Island. The Wednesday Lenten services will be announced in the newsletter.

Donna also shared dates for this spring's Farmers' Services: 4/28, 5/5 and 5/12. She asked for volunteers to host a service.

Tellers Keith and Robert shared the results of voting for the slate of officers and the proposed By-Laws. 27 members voted, and they approved both the slate of officers and the proposed By-laws unanimously. Donna dismissed the tellers, with thanks.

Rev. Anton expressed his gratitude for the Old Steeple community, thanking the church leadership (especially Donna, who shares her time and talents so generously), the many volunteers who complete countless tasks to keep things running smoothly, and those who are no longer able to work for the church but who grace us with their presence. On behalf of the group, Sandy thanked Rev. Anton for his leadership, citing the development of the new By-Laws in particular.

The next Community Board meeting is scheduled for February 17th. The meeting was adjourned at 12:20 PM, with a motion by Robert and second by Sandy. Rev. Janet let the group in a closing circle prayer.

Respectfully submitted, Jean Lapinski

# **Old Steeple Community Church Annual Budget / Congregational Meeting for Budget Vote**

**Sunday, October 20, 2019**

The meeting was called to order by the Moderator, Donna Doroszka, at 10:50 am in the sanctuary of the church. Those in attendance were Everett Rosset, Maria Heagy, Liz Wines, Kathy Stapon, Ann Priapi, Virginia Taylor, Jack Kratoville, Donna Czajkowski, Sandy Reeve, Carrie Gratton, Barbara Fein, Guy Fein, Edgar Goodale, Nancy Goodale, Tom Behr, Cheryl Behr, Amy Cosgrove, Paulette Sherman, Carol Lee, Fay Young, Keith Young, Raymond Atkins, Donna Atkins, Henza DeWet, Pastor Anton DeWet, Robert Hanulec, Andrea Hanulec, Garret Moore, Jack Donahue, Carol Donahue, Donna Doroszka and Rev. Janet Wright. Three non-voting guests were also in attendance — Gail Evans, Linda Sabatella and James Sabatella.

The Call and purpose of the meeting was read by the Moderator. She appointed two tellers to count the votes: Andrea and Robert Hanulec. The budget prepared by the Council was presented. The Moderator, Donna Doroszka, asked if there were any questions on the items listed in the budget for 2020. There were no questions from the assembly.

Raymond Atkins made a motion to accept the budget. The motion was seconded by Robert Hanulec. The tellers distributed the ballots for the vote.

The Moderator made several announcements while the ballots were distributed and collected:

1. The Annual Christmas Auction and Luncheon will be on Saturday, December 7th. Volunteers are needed to help prepare the baskets for the auction. Volunteers are also needed to assist in the set up before the event and for the clean-up at the closing of the event. It is requested that all the membership donate to this event either by preparing a basket, offering a gift certificate or a donation of cash.
2. The Fall Clean Up day will be Saturday, October 26th at 8:30 am. Volunteers are needed to assist in the projects around and in the church building. Some of the tasks are taking down the fence by the kitchen door, putting up the storm windows, weeding the gardens, etc. Please come and help to "spruce up" our building and grounds.
3. Harvest Services will take place at the homes of our membership. The dates are November 3, November 10 and November 17. They are early morning Worship services that begin at 7 am and are followed by breakfast together. The first Service will be at the home of Liz and David Wines on Sound Avenue. Volunteers are needed for the other two Sunday mornings.

The tellers collected the ballots and counted the results. They reported that there were 30 affirmative votes and there were no negative votes. The budget passed. The tellers were dismissed with the appreciation of the assembly.

The Moderator asked if there was any other business that the membership wished to discuss. As there was no other business brought forward, Raymond Atkins moved that the meeting be adjourned. Robert Hanulec seconded the motion and it passed. The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 am.

Respectfully Submitted, Rev. Janet Wright, Clerk

## Minister's Report

To summarize a year in ministry is a challenge.

It's been a good year! I have enjoyed working with the members of the church, seeking to fulfill our vision of being a faith community honoring the teachings of Jesus. That is a quite a mouthful.

Through the acts and interactions I have experienced here at OSC, I have been reminded what a privilege it is to be part of the Body of Christ.

By welcoming new members this year, we have been reminded that others find sanctuary among us.

By being here for the families of those who have lost loved ones, we have expressed our solidarity with them in times of grief through the rituals of worship and caring.

By visiting the sick, sending cards of encouragement or calling them, we have expressed our concerns for friends in practical ways.

By connecting with our home-bound folk, we have remembered them and their needs, honoring their place in our midst.

By meeting to plan the work of the church, by serving in leadership roles, by volunteering and by supporting the ministries of the church financially, we have invested ourselves in the ministry of Old Steeple Church.

By reaching out to others through our food distribution programs, by speaking up for the marginalized or sending our special offerings to support the ministry of others "in the field", we have demonstrated compassion and concern for those who have fallen by the wayside or have been overwhelmed by life itself.

By worshipping and sharing the sacraments regularly, we have stayed true to our mission to love God through our rituals of reading, prayer, song and thanksgiving.

The question remains. What would God have us do in 2020? What will we do to strengthen our focus on the path Jesus left us to follow?

May we continue growing in compassion, keep on learning to be more forgiving, and find new practical ways to participate in the quest for biblical justice.

Finally, our thanks to staff members who have been our partners in ministry. You are part of this church's life and your services are not taken for granted.

Wishing upon you the love of God and the courage of Christ.

With love and with a prayer for a more peaceful 2020.



## Moderator's Annual Report

Old Steeple Community church has had another busy and rewarding year. This has been my third and final year as your moderator. In some ways I will miss the activity and other ways I am looking forward to being a regular parishioner. You will still see me around here. I'm not going anywhere, I plan on helping all that I can. Old Steeple is very important to me.

I want to recognize and thank all of the members of the Church Council:

Janet Wright	Clerk – Faith Formation-Maureen's Haven
Jean Lapinski	Financial Secretary
Edgar Goodale	Treasurer
Tom Behr	Worship
Sandra Reeve	Outreach
Rick Reeve	Building and Grounds
Donna Atkins	Caring
Keith Young	Welcoming

I want to especially thank Rev Anton DeWet and his lovely wife, Henza for again guiding me through another year and Gail Evans for all of her prompt reminders. You all helped to make me look good.

There are many others that are behind the scenes that need recognition. Laura VanHouten for keeping our books, Paulette Sherman for keeping the Outreach on track, and our Sunshine team Jean Lapinski, Amy Cosgrove and Andrea Hanulec. It is so important to make sure that members that cannot come to worship for one reason or another, feel that we have not forgotten them. Thanks to Robert Hanulec, Joe Doroszka, and Kevin Goodale for helping with the Buildings and Grounds and Heather Barret for teaching our youngsters in Sunday School. I would be remiss for not mentioning our Coffee Hour/Hospitality Committees, Ginny Taylor, Jeannine Martin, Gail Yeager, Nancy Goodale and Kathy Stapon. Food seems to play an important role in our congregation. Thank you also to Bob and Lorraine Link for keeping the church clean and bright.

Our Fundraisers were very successful again this year. I want to put out a big thanks to everyone that worked on the Chicken BBQ. It takes many helping hands to put on that event and we appreciate each and every one of you. The chicken was done just right thanks to Edgar and crew and from where I was situated everyone seemed to leave with a smile on their face. Thanks also to everyone for helping to make our Christmas Chinese Auction and Green sale a huge success. We had great baskets this year and it seemed to be enjoyed by all. Special thanks to Barbara Fein for again donating a beautiful handmade quilt.

There are so many other events that deserve to be mentioned. Thanks to our hosts, the early morning Farmer and Harvest services and 7:00 am Easter service at Indian Island are always great, Blessing of the Animals is a favorite, and Christmas Caroling to some of our members that cannot make it to worship was new this year.

Thank you to all that have stepped up to help make Old Steeple Community church a strong and viable entity in the community and our hearts. As you can see from my report a church is only a building, without its people and their time and talents we would be nothing. Thank you all for your love and support.

Lovingly and Respectfully Submitted,  
Donna Doroszka, Moderator

## Clerk's Report

Membership as of January 1, 2019 164

New Members 5

Deaths / Transfers 2

Membership as of December 31, 2019 167

There were no member weddings or baptisms during 2019.

Funeral record for 2019:

(1) The Funeral Service for Lenard N. Makowski was held on May 3, 2019, at Old Steeple Community Church's sanctuary. Rev. Dr. Anton DeWet officiated. Lenny, who died on April 29, 2019, was buried in the Calverton National Cemetery. (12/6/1947 – 4/29/2019)

(2) The Funeral Service for Jesse Robinson (Bobby) Goodale III was held on December 8, 2019, at Old Steeple Community Church's sanctuary. Rev. Dr. Anton DeWet officiated. Bobby, who died on November 28, 2019, was buried in the Aquebogue cemetery. (12/15/1946 - 11/28/2019)

## Treasurer's Report

The financial health of Old Steeple Community Church continues to remain very solid. During the year of 2019 we recovered all of the selloff that occurred in the last quarter of 2018 and added to the gain. Our combined balances increased on a net basis of over 300K. Our endowment and memorial fund supported our operations and charitable giving by \$80,000 and \$4300 respectively. One of the largest expenditures we had this year was the replacement of the sanctuary carpet and painting both interior and exterior portions of the church in the amount of approximately \$30,000, replacement of the front railing, upgraded carbon monoxide security system and some continued expenses with the septic system at the parsonage all of which was unbudgeted.

Our congregation has again showed their unending financial support of the church by exceeding our budgeted contributions by \$4000, we truly are blessed to have such a loving group of people. Below is a snapshot of our balances as of 12/31/2018 and 2019

	12/31/2018	12/31/2019
Endowment/memorial fund	\$2,132,383	\$2,449,036
Checking	\$16,386	\$3,917
Total	\$2,148,769	\$2,452,953 + \$304,184

Edgar Goodale, Treasurer

# Nominating Committee Report

Ballot of Officers for 2020

## **9-Person Council:**

- 1 yr     **Jean Lapinski** – Moderator
- 1 yr     Rick Reeve – Buildings & Grounds
- 1 yr     Sandra Reeve – Outreach
- 1 yr     Keith Young – Welcoming
- 2 yrs    Rev. Janet Wright – Faith Formation/Clerk
- 2 yrs    Tom Behr – Worship Ministry
- 3 yrs    **Edgar Goodale** – Treasurer
- 3 yrs    **(TBD)** – Financial Secretary
- 3 yrs    **(TBD)** – Caring Ministries

## **Nominations Team**

(to be appointed by the Council in February and will consist of three members)

## **Pastor/Parish Committee**

(consists of one member selected by the Pastor, one member each from Council and congregation)

## **Auditor**

(to be appointed by the Council in February)

## **Suffolk Association Delegates**

Liz Wines  
Bob Frasier

## **NY UCC Conference Delegate**

**(TBD)**

(Only names in bold print are being voted on.)

## **Suffolk Association Delegate Report**

Pastor Anton DeWet and delegates Janet Wright, Liz Wines and Bob Fraser were Old Steeple's representatives at the Fall Association meeting in Sayville. The meeting started with a worship service led by the church's Pastor Ray Bagnuolo, and their choir. A business meeting followed where the minutes of the Spring Association meeting were approved and the representatives of the different boards gave their reports and the association churches shared their news. The new Westhampton Presbyterian minister and a representative from their leadership were also at the meeting.

Following the business meeting was the program in which the New York Conference staff of the United Church of Christ introduced themselves to the members, they had all travelled down from upstate new York for the weekend and each member would be preaching in a different church on Sunday morning. Each staff member talked about their roles, video conferences and supply minister training, congregational vitality, youth ministry, communications, liaison officers, mission groups, continuing education, anti-racism, and search and call. Each person talked about what excited them and there was a question period following. At the end of the meeting a lunch was provided by the members of the Sayville Church.

Rev. Dr. Marjorie Purnine, Assoc. Conference Minister for Leadership Development preached at Old Steeple Church the Sunday after the meeting. Appreciation was expressed for our loyal support to the United Church of Christ, through OCWM (Our Church's Wider Mission), NIN (Neighbors in Need), Strengthening the Church, (OGHS) One Great Hour of Sharing, and Veterans of the Cross.

Respectfully Submitted, Liz Wines

## **Worship Report**

We would like to thank all those who helped out with worship and made it so rewarding. Some of the things could not be done without your help, such as ushering, communion, altar arrangements, music, cleaning, setting up for different seasons and of course showing up to worship.

I'm grateful to help Reverend Anton with Sunday worship and have great back-up by Rev. Janet Wright and Rev. Jack Donohue when Rev Anton is away.

If anyone would like to get involved or has ideas let me know.  
God Bless.

Respectfully submitted, Tom Behr

## Caring Ministries Report

Thank you to the Sunshine committee for all their caring thoughts throughout the year. (See the Sunshine Committee Report)

### **Homebound contacts:**

Rev. Anton has been making contact and/or visiting members and friends who have been unable to attend Sunday worship. Christmas centerpieces were delivered to some of our home bound members and a group of about 15 carolers visited some of our members to spread some Christmas cheer. Poinsettias were delivered where we went caroling.

### **Prayer List:**

I have been working with Gail and Rev. Anton to keep the prayer list up to date. Please notify Gail in the office if anyone is to be added or removed from the list.

### **Prayer Shawl Ministry:**

The Prayer Shawl ministry continues to meet on the 3rd Wednesday of each month. We have had anywhere from three to ten people in attendance.

Preemie hats were delivered to Stony Brook University Hospital. Prayer shawls are available for people who are mourning, sick, going through hard times, celebrations, births and other happy occasions. If you are in need of this special ministry, please notify any member of the group. New members are always welcome.

Respectfully submitted,  
Donna Mae Atkins

## Building & Grounds Report

The Council had a productive year. The usual upkeep for the parsonage and church was completed.

Our barbecue in July was another success – we sold all 600 tickets, and the total we took in before expenses was \$10,704.

The cesspool problem at the parsonage was fixed. It needed a lot more work than expected. Thanks to Kevin Goodale for organizing the project.

The sanctuary was carpeted, painted, ceiling and walls wiped down, pews touched up, choir curtain replaced, and new flooring in the entry ways. Thanks to Edgar Goodale for organizing this large project.

Verizon is in the process of obtaining permits to be our third cell tenant.

Our Christmas Bazaar was also a success – we raised over \$6,000.

Jim Suydam has completed the replacement of the front railings.

Thanks to **everyone** who helped on these projects. The help of the members of Old Steeple is what keeps us moving forward.

Respectfully submitted, Rick Reeve and Robert Hanulec

## **Outreach Report**

Outreach started off the New Year with January, February and March as "Souper Bowl" months. Donations of either canned soups or money were dedicated to benefit the "Bread and More Kitchen" at the First Congregational Church and St. John's Food Pantry.

April and May were dedicated to "Blanket Sunday" for Church World Service (CWS). \$350 was collected for this worthy cause.

June was dedicated by congratulating our high school graduates with gift cards and a reception at Coffee Hour.

July and August, the rush was on for school supplies for three local schools. Backpacks and school supplies were delivered to these schools and were received with much thanks.

September the quest was for the addresses of our young people at college to send them \$10 gift card for "Trick or Treat".

October and November began our collection of food and money for the upcoming holiday of Thanksgiving which was delivered to the Food Pantry.

December's collection was of clothing, toys, books and gift cards to add to the Food Pantry's holiday gift baskets.

With your generosity, Old Steeple contributed to Our Churches Wider Mission (first Sunday of each month), Church World Service Blanket Sunday, Strengthen the Church, Neighbors in Need, Veterans of the Cross, and the Church World Service CROP Walk. We have received a commendation for honoring our commitment. (Please see Financial Page for amounts collected.)

We encourage everyone in our congregation to contribute every Sunday to the "call" for non-perishable food all year 'round.

Thank you, Old Steeple people, for always rising to the occasion, of graciously giving to those less fortunate.

## **Sunshine Committee**

In 2019, more than 700 greetings were sent to Old Steeple's members and friends in the form of cards and notes, e-mails, phone calls, gift cards, and flowers. Many messages recognized happy occasions: welcoming new members; congratulations on weddings, births, academics/graduations, retirements, and birthdays; holiday wishes; Sunday School invitations; and clergy appreciation. And notes of comfort were sent to those during illnesses, surgeries, and losses. Thinking of you cards were mailed monthly to our homebound and to those who needed some cheer. Thank you notes were sent to recognize military service – both past and present, and to the many in Old Steeple's family for their time and talents shared with the church and our missions.

It is our pleasure to serve on the Sunshine Committee, spreading comfort and joy to our Old Steeple family and friends throughout the year. Please continue to share with us the names of those who could use a card or note by e-mailing Amy at [acosgrove@optonline.net](mailto:acosgrove@optonline.net) or Jean at [jlapin224@yahoo.com](mailto:jlapin224@yahoo.com).

We received four more Veteran's autobiographies for our Old Steeple "Archives": Ben Pileski, Tom Keenan, Ernie Olsen (through daughter Andrea) and Matthew Atkins. Thank you all for sharing your experiences and thank you for your service!

Sunshine Committee  
Amy Cosgrove, Andrea Hanulec, Jean Lapinski

## Maureen's Haven Report

Old Steeple Community Church's support of the Maureen's Haven Ministry continues. This Ministry was begun under the leadership of Justine Wells in the Old Grange Hall on Sound Avenue. At that time, the church supplied a person to stay overnight with the guests after serving the evening meal and be on hand to serve breakfast the next day before sending the guests off with a bagged lunch. The church now rents space at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church on Route 25, because we do not have space for all the supplies needed to fulfill the requirements for this ministry. Over the last year the program was changed to include the month of April, which is often changeable and may be cold.

Old Steeple Church supports Maureen's Haven with various members donating parts of the evening meal and hard boiled eggs for breakfast. We work in coordination with a crew from Riverhead Building Supply that assists serving the evening meal, and the Peconic Community School children who make sandwiches for the bagged lunches. A volunteer from Our Redeemer Lutheran Church stays with the guests overnight on most evenings or paid personnel from Maureen's Haven will step in when necessary. We are fortunate to have such a wonderful community effort in this ministry.

Our guests are provided a hot meal which consists of soup, side dishes of potatoes or rice, vegetables, meat, dessert, coffee and tea, and are greeted with popcorn and ice tea or soda. We supplement the sandwiches with a boxed drink, fruit, snack and cookies or candy for their lunch. Breakfast generally consists of bagels (with cream cheese and jam or butter), hot oatmeal, cold cereal, juice, hard boiled eggs, and lots of hot coffee.

Our sincere appreciation goes to Maura Daly who launders all the sheets and pillowcases, and will also launder any blankets that are inadvertently mixed in with the sheets. When this enormous pile of laundry is done, Maura matches the sheet sets back up and packs them in plastic bags that are distributed to the guests. This is a huge job that Maura does without complaint twice a month. Thank you Maura!

There are between 9 and 16 guests in the evening depending on the weather. This year we have had mostly men, but there have been a few women as well. They are offered kits made up by Amy Cosgrove that furnish them with soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, washcloths, shampoo and conditioner, shaving cream and razors. Often there are donations of socks and underwear, which are greatly needed by this population. Thank you Amy for keeping us supplied!

I am forever grateful to the volunteers from Riverhead Building Supply: Tracy Kappenberg and family, Nancy Lauben, Victoria Pace, Valerie Paladino and Christine Valente; and also Jonathan Contreras and Heather Barrett and family, for without their faithful service the job would be overwhelming.

It is only through the generosity of members and friends of Old Steeple Community Church that this ministry continues to serve the less fortunate in our community. The gifts of money to purchase the supplies necessary to maintain this project, the gifts of prepared foods, the gifts of toiletries and other personal items given demonstrates the compassion and concern for those around us who are in need. This caring for one another is an important part of our Christian faith. There are so many to thank for providing food that I hesitate to mention them all, but you know who you are and so does our God and I thank you. Thank you to one and all!

It is an honor and privilege to serve as the Coordinator of this valuable ministry. I thank you all for this experience.

Janet Wright, Coordinator, Maureen's Haven

## Faith Formation Report

Faith Formation or Christian Education is an important part of our faith. Our gatherings of membership in worship or book discussions or providing Sunday School instruction are a crucial part in the development of our faith.

This year Old Steeple Community Church has embarked on a regular Sunday School program which takes place on the first and third Sundays of each month. Heather Barrett has prepared a calendar of study about the "Super Hero Prophets" of the Old Testament. The students are learning about Adam and Eve, Noah, Joseph (the one with the coat of many colors), Moses and Joshua - with a short break to share in the joy of the birth of Jesus. The size of the group varies from Sunday to Sunday, but it is hoped that parents and grandparents will find the value in having their children participate in learning more about our faith through the faithful prophets in our Bible.

Pastor Anton provides leadership for the book discussion group. Several members gather each Friday at 10:30 am in the Coffee Hour area to discuss various books. It has proven to be a wonderful opportunity to share thoughts about how our faith may be influenced by the written words outside of the Bible. One hour is shared and enjoyed by all. This group is open to all and all are encouraged to join.

Pastor Anton has also launched a Saturday Morning Men's Breakfast for the men to get together and share their thoughts. Just another way to share our Christian faith with each other. All men are invited to this group on Saturday mornings. Check the bulletin for times and places.

Our gratitude goes out to Pastor Anton for his encouragement to further our Christian education in all directions!

Donna Doroszka, Rev. Janet Wright

## Welcoming Ministries

Below is a description of activities / projects that were worked on during 2019 as part of the Welcoming Ministries function of the Church:

▶ The Church Web Site was overhauled, and the new site was previously implemented (2018). Gail continues to keep the site up to date and looking professional and organized. Thanks again to Gail for all of her work getting the new site up and running and learning the various aspects related to maintaining and updating the site. Also, thanks to Gail for her patience in getting my involvement in the Web site started so that we have a second person knowledgeable about web site maintenance and updates.

▶ Advertising for the Christmas Eve Service continues as in the past (newspaper advertisement). Radio advertisement with WLNG was discontinued during 2019 due to the perception that it was not effective means of advertising and getting the message out. We will continue to look for cost-effective and efficient alternative advertising options in 2020.

▶ Two new sets of letters (one Red and one Black) were purchased for the lighted Church sign. These replace some of the very old letters and also allow for creative use of two colors without need to mix colors when unnecessary.

▶ Our sign vendor will hopefully be looking into some potential weathering and maintenance issues with the new sign and will make recommendations on keeping the new sign in good shape.

▶ Other areas which will need to be given attention to by Welcoming Ministries during 2020:

- Inviting and attracting visitors
- Welcoming and invitation to coffee hour
- Integrating new members so they feel connected and are willing to participate
- Removal of old hanging sign, or possibly moving to a different location

Respectfully submitted, Keith Young

# **Annual Meeting of the New York Conference**

**May 17-18, 2019**

**Poughkeepsie, New York**

I took advantage of a Continuing Education opportunity on Thursday, May 16, preceding the opening of the Conference on Friday. There were several topics of interest and I chose to go to the Boundary Awareness Training for the Thursday sessions. Other topics were "Healthy Church", Sexual Harassment, "Safe Church and Beyond", "Global Child Sex Trafficking" and Refugee Displacement Ministry. I was able to catch the presentations on Global Child Sex Trafficking and Refugee Displacement Ministry. These issues are presented in the news only briefly and without depth of information. It was disturbing to learn about the violence and hopelessness that is a part of these issues. If anyone would like any further information, I will be glad to share it with you.

Thursday evening the delegates gathered to see the film "On the Basis of Sex" — about the life of Ruth Bader Ginsberg. A lively discussion followed the film.

The Continuing Education sessions resumed again Friday morning after breakfast until 11:00 am, when we assembled for the closing worship service of the education institute part of the Conference. The first Plenary session began at 2 pm with the business of introductions, approvals of agenda, rules and procedures, welcoming of guests, introduction of Conference Staff, presentation of the new UCCNY Website and the State of the Conference given by our conference minister, Rev. David Gaewski. Through a disciplined budget and seeking ways of doing more with less, the conference is in a better fiscal position than it was one year ago. The building purchased in DeWitt a few years ago is under review to seek the best way to serve the church. There may be some changes in the next year. Much excitement was expressed about the new UCCNY Website and the hopes that churches throughout the conference will be able to utilize a similar set up in our local churches.

After a brief break, our National President - Rev. John Dorhauer — shared information concerning the UCC across the nation and Canada. The General Synod will take place in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in June. Later after dinner, Rev. Dorhauer was our Keynote speaker and preached in the Opening Worship Service. There was a reception following the service for those who could keep on going. I needed a good night's rest.

Saturday morning began with breakfast, registration and the second Plenary session. At this time our Ecumenical Partners from Germany were introduced and brought greetings. A couple from the UK spoke and invited any interested persons to join in the Annual retreat to walk called "St. Cuthbert's Way" along the Scottish border in the month of July. The Financial reports, Treasurer's report and the 2019 budget were presented. The budget passed nearly unanimously. All annual reports from various committees were given.

The Resolution entitled "Let Justice Roll Down Declaring Support for the Green New Deal and Affirming the Intersectionality of Climate Justice with all Justice Issues" was presented. There was a time for discussion and it appeared that no negative comments were offered, therefore it was moved and seconded that this resolution be accepted. The vote was taken that the motion passed. This resolution will be presented to the General Synod in June. If anyone would like to see the complete resolution, please let me know and I will share it with you.

Moderators and Vice-Moderators of the Associations in New York gathered for luncheon to share stories and ideas.

The third Plenary began at 1:30 with awards given for those who work on Global Ministries. At this time the Governance Board gave their report. The Nominating committee presented the slate of officers and they were voted upon and duly installed. An invitation to the 57th Annual State Conference was given. It will be in Buffalo, New York on June 5-6, 2020.

The business portion of the Conference closed and the Closing Worship service was held at the First Congregational Church of Poughkeepsie, a short two blocks away from the hotel.

It was a fully packed meeting of the many churches within New York State. A great deal of information was shared about the state of our conference and the health of the church. The State Conference is a time for all those who work within local church ministries to see the power of the Holy Spirit move through the hearts and hands of Christ's disciples. We should not forget that we are stronger together, affecting the lives of others and motivating others to discover the peace and love of our God through Christ Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

I thank Old Steeple Community Church for sending me as the delegate. It is important that our church have representation at these business meetings to gain knowledge and understanding of the strength of the wider church. My hope is that others within Old Steeple church will take the opportunity to attend a State Conference to learn and build relationships with other churches within our conference. I assure you, you won't regret it!

Respectfully Submitted, Rev. Janet Wright

# 2020 Church Year Activities

## January

- ◆ Annual Meeting and potluck luncheon January 26 (usually the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday, but this year the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday collides with MLK Day)
- ◆ The "Call" gets put in the January newsletter, and in bulletins the last three Sundays
- ◆ Contact Andrea to order palms for Palm Sunday
- ◆ What/when/where are Martin Luther Sunday events?
- ◆ Canned soup for Souper Bowl - OUTREACH

## February

- ◆ Canned soup for Souper Bowl - OUTREACH
- ◆ When/where are Ash Wednesday, Lenten, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday services?
- ◆ Ash Wednesday service on February 26

## March

- ◆ One Great Hour of Sharing offering (OGHS – UCC) - OUTREACH
- ◆ Newspaper ad inviting all to our Palm Sunday, Holy Week, and Easter Sunday services
- ◆ Farmer's Services - get dates and locations
- ◆ Pastor does an Easter stewardship letter, and include the Easter offering envelope

## April

- ◆ Send out message/put in bulletins about bringing Easter flowers in memory of loved ones and getting names to Gail – deadline April 5th
- ◆ Easter Sunday Community Sunrise Service April 12th – Gail advertises for this
- ◆ Teacher Recognition Sunday set by - OUTREACH
- ◆ Registration for NY Conference annual meeting
- ◆ Suffolk Association meeting
- ◆ Farmer's Services - get dates and locations
- ◆ Church World Service Kit collection? - OUTREACH

## May

- ◆ Suffolk Association meeting 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday
- ◆ Last Sunday for Sunday School is the 'Sunday School' Sunday before Memorial Day – this year it's May 17th
- ◆ Mother's Day/Blanket Sunday – Church World Service (CWS) - OUTREACH
- ◆ Set date for BBQ organization meeting
- ◆ Order annual paper goods supply
- ◆ Send out email to get names of graduates

## June

- ◆ Confirmation (students for next year)
- ◆ The budget is coming up – begin thinking about budget concerns
- ◆ Strengthen the Church offering (UCC) - OUTREACH

## July

- ◆ Chicken BBQ
- ◆ The budget is coming up – begin thinking about budget concerns
- ◆ Covenant Share – NY Conference, UCC offering (none in 2019)
- ◆ Back to School supplies - OUTREACH

## August

- ◆ Advertise in newspapers and on news sites when Sunday School begins
- ◆ Back to School supplies - OUTREACH

## September

- ◆ Sunday School begins September 20th (the first "Sunday School Sunday after Labor Day) (and runs through June)
- ◆ Budget preparation
- ◆ Get CROP Walk date and walkers and advertise in papers and etc.

- ◆ Farmer's Services - get dates and locations – advertise in papers
- ◆ Order stationery, envelopes, inserts for Stewardship Budget in October
- ◆ Maureen's Haven - OUTREACH
- ◆ Scholarship Benefit Concert September 13th

### **October**

- ◆ Stewardship letter gets done by Moderator and emailed/snail-mailed
- ◆ Blessing of the Animals October 3rd
- ◆ Get fall clean-up date – Gail do a flyer to email out
- ◆ Halloween Gift Cards for college students – need names
- ◆ when does Maureen's Haven begin (weather dependent)
- ◆ Farmers Services
- ◆ CROP Walk / Neighbors in Need - OUTREACH
- ◆ Budget Vote
- ◆ Thank you/Stewardship Luncheon the Sunday after Budget Vote

### **November**

- ◆ Suffolk Association Meeting usually 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday
- ◆ Community Thanksgiving service
- ◆ send out information about Christmas Bazaar
- ◆ need candles for Christmas Eve?
- ◆ notice about Christmas Wreaths & Flowers
- ◆ Pajamas and books (age appropriate) - OUTREACH

### **December**

- ◆ Christmas Bazaar the 5th
- ◆ Prepare sanctuary for Advent and Christmas
- ◆ Annual Reports coming due
- ◆ Christmas Fund / Veterans of the Cross offering on Christmas Eve
- ◆ Mittens / Scarves / Gloves collection and cash offering - OUTREACH

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### *Continuing ...*

- ◆ Community Board (all members) meeting after Worship every 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday
- ◆ Children's Sunday School 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays from September through June
- ◆ OCWM – UCC offering every 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month