

MID-COAST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

IN TOPSHAM, MAINE

GOD
IS
GOOD!



**ANNUAL REPORT
REVIEWING THE YEAR 2022**

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING JAN. 29, 2023

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Thank you to all the contributors to this year’s Annual Report!

PASTOR'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2022

During the year 2022, Personnel and Session worked with me to review all the tasks and concerns for which I am responsible as the Pastor of Mid-Coast Presbyterian Church, including recognition of the impact of having no formal administrative support.

This report is presented using the eight pastoral responsibilities agreed upon in the Fall of 2022.

1. CONTINUE TO DISCERN, WITH THE SESSION, WHAT GOD IS CALLING MID-COAST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH TO IN THIS TIME AS WELL AS IN THE FUTURE

In reviewing the past few years, I would characterize 2020 as “the year of survival” as we tried to keep the congregation connected and provide accessible worship to as many as possible. I would characterize 2021 as “the year of problem-solving” as we went back and forth between in-person and online worship, learning how to manage meetings and other events, and to lead and minister to a congregation in flux. I would characterize 2022 as “the year of adjustment” as we adapted to changes and found new ways of being together in a variety of circumstances. Over these past 3 years, I’ve acquired responsibility for many tasks others would have been doing pre-2020. In the process, I’ve become isolated in the day-to-day functioning as your pastor. I thank God daily for the help and support of Audrey who has become more than an “office angel” and “chair of worship” but has become a sounding board and colleague in ministry. It is my hope 2023 will be a year of moving forward in new and different ways of working together. As the Session and Board of Deacons meet February 4 for the Officers’ Retreat, we will be discerning how best to adjust and flourish in the future.

2. MAINTAIN REGULAR AND THEOLOGICALLY SOUND WORSHIP

As you will read in the report of the Worship Team, the worship life of this congregation has been rich and varied with many ways to engage in worship—from Sunday worship to special services (in person, online, or recorded) to studies and conversations that extend worship beyond Sunday morning. I’ve enjoyed the prayer, research, and many hours of preparation put in for each sermon series over the past year and I look forward to returning to the lectionary and the communal reflection it allows – both with colleagues and with you. As you will also learn, some special events were poorly attended in no small part because of lack of publicity in the wider community. It would be helpful to know why more MCPC’ers don’t attend either. We are in desperate need of someone to help coordinate publicity of upcoming events and worship opportunities. We’ve always tried to be a beacon of hope in our community but if no one knows the light is on, it is hard for them to access the hope...*how might you help? What ideas do you have?*

Additionally, Paul may well have attained saint-status with all the hours of managing online worship as well as the stress of internet or equipment failures. Thankfully, he’s had help from John Wilkerson and Jim Feather, but there is a huge need for more folks to learn the process and provide much needed respite for Paul! *Are you ready and willing to help Paul?*

3. PASTORAL CARE – CORPORATE AND INDIVIDUAL

What is pastoral care? Many of you have come to MCPC from large, multi-staff congregations with full administrative help and expectations for visitation vary (especially among New Englanders who figure if the pastor visits, they are dying – so I’ve heard). With HIPAA guarding patient privacy, hospitals no longer call when a member enters the hospital, so I rely on either hearing from you or someone who knows you’ve had an emergency or are ill. Please don’t worry about bothering me—I want to know! If you can’t get ahold of me, please be in touch with a Deacon or your Shepherd about Pastoral Care needs—this is why the Deacons keep in touch with you.

It may be difficult to realize just how much technology has changed pastoral care, especially in the last couple of years. I recently estimated receiving 725 church related emails a month with about 145 responses sent in a month. Individual pastoral care includes hospital visits, grief counseling, funeral planning (including related columbarium services). Corporate pastoral care includes addressing societal issues and disasters as they happen, whether by a church-wide email or in sermons. A few specifics from June 2022—When *Roe v. Wade* was overturned many of us were dumbfounded and I shared what I hoped was a brief and helpful reflection. On the more techie side, I sent a “Spam Alert/Warning” email when many members were receiving potentially harmful email spam.

4. EXEMPLIFY A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE – SPIRITUALLY, PHYSICALLY, AND EMOTIONALLY

Ideally, I would be a role model for healthy living – maintaining boundaries between personal and congregational care; eating and exercising for physical wellbeing; attending to annual checkups and other related appointments; taking regular days off as well as time for vacation and study leave. I am not always successful at much of this, and occasionally, it has taken a “reset” of extended time off to renew the rhythms of a healthy lifestyle. This year, 2023, will be time for sabbatical leave as I entered my 14th year of service here on July 15, 2022.

5. SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONGREGATION

Much of this happens in our regular worship practices together, but it also includes providing education and opportunities for further “Spiritual Transformation which is the process by which Christ is formed in us – for the glory of God, for the abundance of our own lives, and for the sake of others”. Learning more about the Passion Play of Oberammergau with you and then bringing back my experience of it is one such example. *What else would you like to see or do?*

6. COMMUNITY AND DENOMINATIONAL CONNECTIONS

I work with several organizations, in our community and the Presbytery, and describe the work below. Many of the groups have multiple meetings each month, mostly via Zoom. While technology has allowed us all to connect in new ways, electronic meeting attendance is often more taxing than attending in person.

I am in my final year as President of the Brunswick Area Interfaith Council (BAIC) meeting with other local faith leaders and sharing resources for the good of the community. Through BAIC we were invited to engage in Sacred Ground (“a film- and readings-based dialogue series on race, grounded in faith”) and participate in the Tedford Housing Capital Campaign for building a new facility in Cook’s Corner. BAIC also allows many voices to join in expressing

how God's love is stronger than communal conflicts, exemplified by our presence at the June 4 Brunswick Art Walk which coincided with Brunswick's first Pride Event. Many young people stopped at BAIC's table to draw and post personal messages of love and acceptance through art and poetry.

I also served on the PNNE-Leadership Commission in the following ways: planning Presbytery meetings; working with a Task Force rewriting our Presbytery's Child Protection Policy; developing and working with a new Subcommittee on Outreach – Interpretation and Engagement (previously known as the "Mission Committee"); working with members of COM to select an anti-racism training for officers of the Presbytery; and reviewing the Book of Order Amendments from General Assembly.

I have been trained as a facilitator for Sacred Ground and soon will be co-facilitating a group at Thornton Oaks. I hope my training in Sacred Ground will also be of service to PNNE's ongoing anti-racism work. I was the lead speaker for the Presbyterian Women of PNNE's spring retreat. And MCPC hosted the first CHANS Hospice Memorial Service in three years. The value of this, even though it takes time, is that we benefit from shared wisdom and resources, and participation provides this solo pastor with much needed companionship and collegiality, especially lacking in a region with so few Presbyterian associates.

7. MAINTAIN COMMUNICATION BETWEEN COMMITTEES AND BOARDS

I attend most meetings of Deacons, Building & Property Committee, Worship Team, Personnel Committee, and the Bright Start Board. In some ways, I serve as an "air traffic controller" keeping committees informed about each other's needs and activities. I am also the "institutional memory" for MCPC, having worked with assorted committees over 14 years, which means I have the broadest historical knowledge of each group's work. Some of the hardest work this year was working with the Bright Start Board to find a new director. After many fruitless months, we were on the brink of a heartbreaking decision to close this beloved child education center when God sent us just the right person. What a joy it has been to witness new life and energy at Bright Start!

8. ADMINISTRATION

In this general and broad area, I often receive bills that need forwarding and building usage requests; manage technology for various meetings and funerals; finalize and distribute weekly worship bulletins, and funeral bulletins as well; occasionally order, receive, or organize supplies; and communicate with vendors/PNNE/COM/committee and team leaders; and send important information church-wide. These communications are much of what generates my hundreds of monthly emails. We also rely on various technologies at church, and I often deal with fussy equipment, including malfunctioning printers and copier jams. My biggest administrative victory in 2022? After months of correspondence, I negotiated a balance of \$470.48 down to less than \$20 for charges to the columbarium to the columbarium which included follow-up on lost plaques and returning their mistakes!

I am grateful to serve this very generous and active congregation! Read on and marvel at all we have accomplished in 2022 and may 2023 be a year of joyful collaboration for the Glory of God!

Pastor Diane

REPORT OF THE SESSION

Book of Order (The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church USA) G-2.0301

Ruling Elder Defined: As there were in Old Testament times elders for the government of the people, so the New Testament church provided persons with particular gifts to share in the discernment of God's Spirit and governance of God's people. Accordingly, congregations should elect persons of wisdom and maturity of faith, having demonstrated skills in leadership and being compassionate in spirit. Ruling elders are so named not because they "lord it over" the congregation (Matt. 20:25), but because they are chosen by the congregation to discern and measure its fidelity to the Word of God, and to strengthen and nurture its faith and life. Ruling elders, together with teaching elders [Minister of Word & Sacrament], exercise leadership, government, spiritual discernment, and discipline and have responsibilities for the life of a congregation as well as the whole church, including ecumenical relationships.

Six elders, chosen by the congregation, constitute the membership of the Session of Mid-Coast Presbyterian Church, as moderated by the pastor. Session meets each month for study and prayer, to receive reports of the ministries of MCPC, and to plan for the worship and life of the congregation.

KEY SESSION ITEMS OF 2022:

- Elected MCPC Treasurer and Clerk of Session.
- Approved the 2022 Budget.
- Approved OMNIBUS MOTION authorizing: the celebration of the Lord's Supper, the annual review of the financial records and insurance policies by the Finance Committee, and the preparation and filing of the General Assembly Statistical Report by the Clerk, and other official functions.
- Examination and Installation of Deacons and Elders.
- Received the recertification as an Earth Care Congregation from PC(USA).
- Received new member.
- Approved expenditure to make the necessary roofing replacements with Building Reserve Funds supplemented by the Employee Retention Tax Credit (ERTC).
- Approved the purchase of a new computer for the office.
- Approved the ERTC division between MCPC and Bright Start according to the amounts reimbursed for wages during the COVID pandemic (\$4,880.84 to Bright Start and \$11,102.85 to MCPC's Nurturing Spiritual Gifts Fund.)
- Approved the purchase of three personal amplifiers for worshippers using Memorial Gifts Funds.
- Approved 2023 Pumpkin Patch and donation of \$500 from 2022 sales to Wabanaki REACH.

BOARD OF DEACONS

Book of Order (The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church USA) G-2.0201

Deacon Defined: The ministry of deacon as set forth in Scripture is one of compassion, witness, and service, sharing in the redeeming love of Jesus Christ for the poor, the hungry, the sick, the lost, the friendless, the oppressed, those burdened by unjust policies or structures, or anyone in distress. Persons of spiritual character, honest repute, exemplary lives, brotherly and sisterly love, sincere compassion, and sound judgment should be chosen for this ministry.

The Board of Deacons continues to be the hands and feet of Jesus as they serve the congregation, community, and beyond. The following is the work of 2022.

Congregational Care:

- The Shepherds continue to stay in contact with the congregation on a regular basis.
- Worship attendance is recorded every Sunday.
- Prayer Shawl ministry provides support during difficult times for recipients of the shawls.
- Christmas cards were sent to members unable to worship in person on a regular basis.
- Cards of celebration (including Birthday cards) and condolence were also sent.
- Blueberry bread was given as a welcome gift to visitors.
- Sponsored after-church Ice Cream Social (July) and Potluck Lunch (October).

Community Support:

- Financial support for gasoline, food, housing, and utilities was provided for individuals in need.
- Gloves and mittens were collected with help from congregation for distribution by local nonprofits.
- Food for the Mid Coast Hunger Prevention Program was collected with a different type of non-perishable food item requested each month.
- Monthly singing with residents of Coastal Shores—a ministry begun in the Fall.
- School Supplies were collected for the Sudanese Fellowship

Outreach: Through your financial donations to the Deacons Fund, contributions were made to:

- Camp Postcard
- Mission at the Eastward Capital Campaign
- Maine Council of Churches
- Maine Immigration and Refugee Services
- Brunswick Student Aid
- Warm Thy Neighbor
- The Gathering Place
- Sudanese Fellowship of Portland

We are grateful to the congregation for their contributions to the Deacons' Fund and donations to various collections during 2022, all of which allow us to be the hands and feet of Jesus.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee is responsible for discerning, through thoughtful dialogue and prayerful consideration, members gifted with the knowledge and experience to nominate for election to Session, the Board of Deacons, and the upcoming year's nominating committee. It is in recognition of Christ's calling each of us into such service that we are pleased to present the following slate of nominations for the year 2022. The Nominating Committee is comprised of a Ruling Elder/Chair (Serving Elder elected by Session), a Deacon (Serving Deacon elected by the Board), two Members at Large (elected by the congregation) and Pastor Diane Hoppe Hugo, Ex Officio.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

The Personnel Committee is responsible for the oversight and support of the staff at Mid-Coast Presbyterian Church.

As requested by the committee, Session provided a priority list of pastoral responsibilities. This list was compared with a pastoral tasks list generated by the Pastor, so the committee has a better understanding of the day-to-day reality of what it takes to do all the functions that a pastor does. The task list has been used as a blueprint to streamline/off-load some of the tasks that end up on the Pastor's plate. The committee is also working on revising the job description for the pastor to better reflect the realities and time commitment of the position.

Guidelines for the Personnel Committee were completed and submitted to Session as requested.

WORSHIP

We Have a Choir!!! Many thanks to Jan and Becky for getting it off the ground, as well as all the planning and administration of a choir, and to Paul for directing. Children's Sabbath heard their first anthem, they have helped us learn new songs, and opened each Sunday in Advent with a verse from *Of the Father's Love Begotten*. It is most welcoming of newcomers—if you would like to join the singing, please speak with any of the members.

The big undertaking of 2022 was compiling for the Session written procedures for all the responsibilities of the Worship Team. Included in that document was this definition: *The Worship Team is a Committee of Session, responsible for worship and associated activities at MCPC*. And there is much that happens within that! **If you are interested in being a part of supporting the Worship Team—whether helping with a**

**WE GATHER IN
WORSHIP TO GLORIFY
GOD, WHO IS PRESENT
AND ACTIVE AMONG US.**
(PCUSA Directory for Worship)
The Worship Team at MCPC works to provide and oversee opportunities for individual and congregational worship, devotions, and spiritual development.

specific project (perhaps flowers at Christmas & Easter or adorning the Sanctuary) or planning a special service (such as Children’s Sabbath or Ash Wednesday) or helping on Sunday morning as a greeter or liturgist or such—please let us know! We would also welcome new folks to the Worship Team itself.

We are committed to providing hybrid worship services, allowing the congregation to join in worship either in the Sanctuary or Online. Online worship includes Zoom and Facebook Live, though for small services such as Maundy Thursday and Good Friday we have used Facebook only. The beauty in this is not only the multiple ways of accessing worship, but also the online worship to fall back on should the need arise. With a Covid resurgence early in the year, we returned to online-only for January 9 through February 13, 2022. It is also helpful on snow days! An Online Greeter welcomes worshippers and invites them to share their joys and concerns via Chat/Comments.

Our post-Covid practice of providing a collection box at the rear of the Sanctuary instead of “passing the plate” each week continues, broadening worship’s time of offering to include all that we bring to God each week. Communion continues to be served to the worshippers in their seats.

To simplify worship preparation for Pastor Diane, and to honor our Earth Care commitment, we continued with “standard bulletins”, used repeatedly over a four-to-six-week liturgical period. Rather than confessional and other prayers changing every week, we hope using a standard bulletin over several weeks brings a deeper sense of engagement with the liturgy for the worshippers. In 2022 a weekly supplement provided specifics of a Sunday’s service (hymns, scripture, etc.). Due to the number of unique services in October and November, as well as Advent in 2022, we didn’t use a standard bulletin in those time frames. We did learn that the primary downside to the standard bulletin was having to juggle it and the supplement to follow the service. As we move into 2023 and return to using standard bulletins, we will not use a supplement but will post the service’s hymns at the front of the Sanctuary.

2022, as the year always does, started with **Epiphany** and the random distribution of Epiphany Star Words to everyone, a word to think about in the coming year. (Do you remember yours?) We celebrated Christ’s Baptism and then moved through the Ordinary Time that followed.

During **Lent** (*March 3 – April 16*) the Sanctuary was adorned with traditional purple paraments and banners, as well as the Jerusalem Cross. We undertook a 6-week look at the Passion of Christ through Ron Fuquay’s *The Passion Play*, exploring the meaning of the Oberammergau Passion Play—a passion play that has been performed every 10 years from 1634 to 1674 and each decadal year since 1680 by the inhabitants of the village of Oberammergau, Germany. The book helped us take a deeper look at Christ’s Passion, both in worship and in weekly **Lenten Conversations**. (More on that follows this Worship report.) This was a powerful experience for Lent. Worship’s Lenten Intercessions in 2022

focused on *Prayers on Health, for Wholeness and Wellbeing*. **Maundy Thursday Worship** included Communion and a Foot Washing, & **Good Friday Worship** was a Tenebrae Service.

Easter (April 17) rang with Alleluia's in a flower-adorned Sanctuary (thanks to the congregation for the potted, flowering plants!) as we heard of *Easter Wonders and Miracles*, welcomed George Huggins into membership, and greeted his wife, the Rev. Kay Huggins, now a member of PNNE and our Committee on Ministry (COM) Liaison. The next Sunday we continued to celebrate the resurrection, though from a different angle: **Holy Humor**, because, as Tertullian said, the resurrection "is by all means to be believed because it is absurd." Spring, and Summer, brought several guest preachers from the congregation, as well as **Presbyterian Women's Sunday** (May 22) which looked at the life of Mary, the mother of Jesus.

We celebrated the **Trio of Holy Sundays—Ascension, Pentecost, Trinity**, and Pastor Diane began a *Season of Prophets* delving into the lives of several prophets—Elijah & Elisha, Amos, Micah, Hosea, Habakkuk, Haggai, Malachi, and a nod to John the Baptist! **Presbyterian Men's Sunday, Welcome the Stranger**, was July 31 this year.

Christian Vocation Sunday (September 4) focused on *Reflecting on our Faith: Called by God*. We were blessed to have Dottie & Paul share the story of their missionary work. The Lacys shared more about their mission work in a post-service presentation and time of prayer. We also celebrated the gifts of Buckley and Becky, our AMAZING accompanists who have volunteered their services for many years.

In October we adorned the Sanctuary with symbols of Fall, including pumpkins from MCPC's Pumpkin Patch. On **World Communion Sunday** (October 2) Rev. Kay led worship and preached *From A Servant's Perspective*. Next, Bob preached *Lord, Teach Us To Pray As You Do* (October 9). For our annual Children's Sabbath the message was *Strength In Tender Hearts* (October 16) and we bid a fond farewell to outgoing Bright Start Director as we welcomed the new Director. We celebrated **MCPC's 35th Anniversary** through a *Message in Scripture & Memory—Remembering How We Got Here* (October 23) and continued the celebration with a potluck afterwards. On **Reformation and All Saints Sundays** Pastor Diane drew from her Study Leave trip to Germany & Switzerland to remind us that *Reformation Never Ends* and about the *Saints of the Reformation*. (October 30 & November 6) The Saints of MCPC were also remembered with dedications and roses on All Saints Sunday. Rev preached *More Than Meets the Eye* and blessed the Tartans at the annual MCPC/St. Andrew's Society **Kirkin' of the Tartans**. (November 13) Christ the King Sunday brought the liturgical year to a close. (November 20)

For Advent the sanctuary was adorned with the Star Cross, pine swags with blue bows, and a gorgeous Chrismon tree. The communion table held a row of Advent candles as well as individual characters of the Nativity as they were explored in the sermons. **Advent** involved shifting a bit from MCPC's tradition of singing mostly Advent hymns while saving Christmas carols and hymns for Christmas and Epiphany. Pastor Diane preached the sermon series *Come Sing the Story of Christmas* in which we looked at various parts of the

Nativity through related hymns, expanding our understanding of the theology and history behind all the carols and hymns. Each Sunday worship was followed by **Advent Conversations**, a time to further discuss the hymns and carols related to that day's worship. (More on the Conversations follows this Worship report.) We celebrated the birth of the Christ child on **Christmas Eve**, and worshipped online **Christmas (Sun)Day**.

In 2022 we had an **Advent Quiet Day** (*Tuesday, December 13*) timed as an Advent Reset to invite folks to take a pause in the middle of the busyness. We offered self-guided reflections on Advent scriptures with related drawings and quiet space in the Sanctuary. (Further details follow this Worship report.)

In 2022 we were blessed with guest preachers Bob, Barrie, and Kay. Several Preachers from the Pew both filled the pulpit and led worship in 2022, including Ruth, John, Joanna, Balinda, Jim, and Audrey. PW Sunday and Men's Sunday involved many of the congregation in leading our worship. God is Good!

And we are most grateful for our volunteer accompanists Buckley and Becky; for those speaking on special Sundays, for all who serve as a liturgist, greeter, or communion server; for the hybrid worship team and for Joanna (and her subs) for opening up the building for worship every week!

A special thanks to Mary Ellen for her 5 years of service on the Worship Team, stepping away in May to respond to other calls to serve. Further thanks to her for still occasionally helping us out! (Those Advent pine boughs always look lovely!)

LENTEN CONVERSATIONS 2022 – THE PASSION PLAY OF OBERAMMERGAU

For Lent, Pastor Diane preached the sermon series following Ron Fuquay's study *The Passion Play*, a look at the Passion of Christ through Oberammergau's *Passion Play*. Following worship each Sunday, **Lenten Conversations** provided a wonderful opportunity to discuss the sermon as well as our own faith. We learned about *The Power of a Vow*, *The Importance of Community*, *The Role of Ritual*, *Living the Story*, *Telling a Better Story*, and *The Power of the Cross*. In addition, supplementary material was posted on a bulletin board each week, and Fuquay's book was made available to the congregation if they wished to get a copy for their own reading. **The Passion Play series**—sermon, book, and post-worship conversation—was cohesive, educational, and moving.

ADVENT CONVERSATIONS 2022 – COME SING THE STORY OF CHRISTMAS

To offer the opportunity for the congregation to dig deeper into Pastor Diane's sermon series *Come Sing the Story of Christmas*, **Advent Conversations** were held following worship. Many worshippers gathered in the West Room for a closer look at, and conversation about, the hymns related to the day's service, including the stories they tell and the stories of how they came to be. Across the series we learned more about the songs of Bethlehem, Angels, Shepherds, Mary & Joseph, Baby Jesus, and the Magi. The series was very well received.

ADVENT QUIET DAY—AN ADVENT RESET

The 2022 Advent Quiet Day (previously referred to as the Advent Day of Prayer) was held December 13—midway through Advent to offer a time to stop and reset in what can be a very hectic time. It was held from 2 to 6 PM, hoping to include Bright Start folks as well as MCPC'ers. Its self-guided meditations centered around Advent Doodles. Set up in the Sanctuary, there were 4 stations each with a doodled artwork and accompanying scripture, prayer, and reflection questions. There was an art table for any who wanted to spend a little time doodling, drawing, or writing. There was also a children's corner with a nativity, books, and coloring. Attendance was poor, but the Worship Team is looking at how to address that. The stations were left up for the following Sunday. Meditations were based on *Advent Doodles* by Lisa E.S. Roberts and prepared by the Worship Team.

COFFEE HOUR

As Paul said in his letter to the Hebrews, we should “not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing so some have entertained angels without knowing it.” In 2022 we were able to maintain our traditional 5-team rotation for Coffee Hour. We are proud of offering healthy and nourishing snacks along with coffee and tea; raw vegetables and fruit are always on the table along with sweet treats. Recently we have welcomed more visitors to MCPC, and coffee hour is a wonderful way to greet and get to know them.

PROPERTY COMMITTEE

The Property Committee is charged with responsibility for the care, maintenance, operation, repairs, and improvements of the whole of the MCPC grounds. This includes 4.1 acres of property; 12,000⁺ ft² building, exterior and interior; all utilities, exterior and interior; all life safety systems operations and mandatory inspections and testing; and building security. 2022 proved to be yet another very busy, and at times challenging, year for the Property Committee.

Our grounds include the entrance/exit driveway, paved parking lot, lawns, our sacred Columbarium, fenced playground, and wooded areas, brook, and fenced retention pond. Great thanks to so many who volunteer their skills and time to maintain and improve the appearance by raking and pruning at our annual Spring and Fall cleanup events. Many work all summer mowing, trimming, pruning, and cutting brush to keep our grounds in peak condition, and in winter shoveling entries/exits, sanding, and spreading ice melt. Pavement crack filling and pavement sealing are projects we are planning for the coming year.

Having accomplished quite a few exterior major projects in recent years, we were able in 2022 to address the aging and deteriorating roofing shingles on the office/classroom wing and bell tower. Although this wing was only 18 years old, the roof shingles were becoming badly deteriorated, brittle, and breaking off. This was a very expensive project which was

paid for from the Building Reserve account. Other minor repairs to the exterior were also accomplished in 2022. Recently we encountered window leaks at the Sanctuary East window head and the base of the bell tower into the Loft, stairway, and West Room which will be addressed in the spring.

The building interior saw no major projects or improvements. Projects have been identified, discussed, and are being planned, most notably the Sanctuary sound system. We have met with a consultant and have received his recommendations and estimated cost options. It is our intention to evaluate our options and begin upgrading equipment. We are also planning a project to upgrade our public restrooms, replacing toilet fixtures and partitions, lavatories and countertops, and new flooring, wall, and ceiling finishes.

We have two Sufficient Fire Sprinkler System Inspections and Tests being scheduled for the Spring. Exterior emergency exit door platforms/ramps, as were built into the courtyard and playground, are planned to ensure safe exiting at three additional doors.

The Property Committee wishes to express our thanks for all the help and support of the people in the congregation to keep our church building functional, safe, and welcoming. I wish to thank each member of this committee, including our pastor, for their unfailing support, attendance, and consistently excellent work in keeping our property and God's house of worship open, operational, and safe for the work and worship of God's ministry and mission here in this community and beyond.

BUILDING USE

After a year of quiet and another year of little activity, our building is once again full of voices and faces! The most obvious is that Bright Start Child Care Center is open and bringing a wonderful energy to our building. We also shared our space with several community groups.

We were pleased to host the first CHANS (Community Health and Nursing Services) Hospice Memorial Service they have been able to hold since Covid began.

Thank you for supporting this building use in so many ways, for your financial support *and* for the work you do to help to maintain this space. May those who come in this sacred space know that they are loved and cared for here.

COLUMBARIUM COMMITTEE

The Columbarium at MCPC is a place of rest on sacred grounds. In the serenity of its intimate area, family and friends may gather for remembrance, meditation, and prayer amidst the community of faith. Wherever we have come from, MCPC has become our home and we are glad to have our loved ones nearby as they are as dear to us as our own family.

In 2022, Bill, who joined the communion of saints April 22, 2022, was inurned in the Columbarium.

Responsibility for the grounds surrounding the Columbarium is shared jointly by the Columbarium and Property Committees. In addition to maintaining the Columbarium's beautiful gardens, the committee responsibilities include management of documentation, record keeping, and physical preparation of the columbarium for an inurnment when needed.

Please know that there are columbarium niches available for purchase, contact the church office for more information.

MEN'S FAITH STUDY & BREAKFAST

The men of MCPC (and friends) continued to meet monthly for a ZOOM "virtual breakfast" and study. Despite not being able to enjoy personal interactions, we continued sharing joys and concerns followed by participating in lively, Christian-oriented studies. While we missed the delicious morning breakfasts at the Brunswick Broadway Deli, ZOOM allowed our reach to extend far and wide as well as individual participants' homes locally.

Fourteen men have participated in one or more Saturday mornings during 2022, and all have enjoyed each other's company and insights. We continue to wrestle with putting our understanding of faith into practice in our lives and the life of the congregation.

Different men over the course of the year have led the lively and challenging discussions, and we are thankful for their leadership. The year 2022 began with a continuation of our November 2021 study on Indigenous Peoples Among Us. Other topics in 2022 included Afghan Refugees; Women of Faith; God, Father or Mother; How to Minister According to Paul; The Silent 100 Years; The Lord's Prayer – And Lead Us Not Into Temptation; Perspectives on Reproductive Rights and Perspectives on War. The year finished with poignant a study of Jesus' Words to Describe Himself.

Our time together always gives us the opportunity to find ways of supporting the various needs of the congregation. What fun and sense of accomplishment the men of MCPC (Study folks AND others) experienced from conducting the July 31 Men's Sunday Worship Service to serving hot drinks and sandwiches at the PW Christmas Fair and providing "manpower" on various set-up occasions.

We would love to expand the group and topics for 2023. Geography no longer limits participation. We look forward to eventually returning to gathering at the Broadway Deli once the risks from Covid have subsided, but be assured that Zoom access will continue. Come join us from 9 to 10:30 AM on the third Saturday of the month. What a good way to get to know each other and expand our understanding of living faithfully in our time.

CHILDREN’S & YOUTH MINISTRIES AT MCPC

MCPC continues to minister to children and youth in our area in a special way. Stewardship of our building and grounds lets us offer safe space to several groups of young people. Bright Start is the most notable, and it is a joy to hear children’s voices in the building and echoing around the playground again! Midcoast Youth Theater held auditions and Girl Scout troops are meeting here. We do not charge non-profits for the use of our building, though each of them makes a contribution to help offset the costs associated with building use.

THE CONNECTIONAL CHURCH

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA)

The PCUSA is a connectional church—linked from local congregations (MCPC) to regional Presbyteries (Presbytery of Northern New England/PNNE) to Synods (Synod of the Northeast) to the national church (PCUSA). The connectionalism of the church allows us to support one another with prayer, the sharing of ideas, coming together in ministry, working on things that affect us all, and responding to churches in need.

MCPC continues to be directly involved in PNNE, with several members serving on presbytery committees. Pastor Diane – PNNE Leadership Commission; Paul– Nominating Committee; Dick– Outreach subcommittee & Committee for Preparation for Ministry; Rev. Kay– Commission on Ministry (Chair) & Leadership Commission; and George is the PNNE webmaster. Presbyterian Women (PW) stands as another excellent example of our connectionalism (the MCPC PW report is below).

As do all PCUSA congregations, we also share financial support for the upper levels of the church through Per Capita, a financial amount based on membership numbers of a congregation. For 2023, PNNE has kept this amount at \$50 per member; MCPC invites its members to specifically contribute toward this expense, please mark this contribution “Per Capita”.

A MATTHEW 25 CONGREGATION

Being a Matthew 25 Congregation is a call to “actively engage in the world around us, so our faith comes alive and we wake up to new possibilities” and “recognize Christ’s urgent call to be a church of action, where God’s love, justice and mercy shine forth and are contagious. And we rejoice how our re-energized faith can unite all Presbyterians for a common and holy purpose: our common identity to do mission.” The three areas of focus in being a Matthew 25 Congregation are Congregational Vitality, Systemic Poverty, and Structural Racism.

In 2022 several MCPC folks participated in *Sacred Ground*, a film-based dialogue series on race. Hosted by St Paul’s Episcopal Church in Brunswick, Sacred Ground has discussion groups led by trained facilitators to provide for safe and impactful conversation. It is a 10-session program, allowing the time needed to truly get into a real and honest conversation. This program is ongoing, visit stpaulsmaine.org/learning-sacred-ground-new for more information.

As in past years, MCPC continues to respond to the call of Matthew 25 in many ways:

Congregational Vitality is evident in the way this congregation continues to care for one another, engage in ministry together, and worship as community, whether in the Sanctuary or online through the pandemic.

Systemic Poverty and **Structural Racism** continue to call us to action in many ways. The Pumpkin Patch's support of Native American Tribes of Maine and the Southwest United States. The congregation's support of local agencies including The Gathering Place, Mid Coast Hunger Prevention, Tedford Shelter, and Habitat for Humanity. Our Alternative Christmas Market highlighted ways to shift the focus of Christmas to ways we can support work around the world that addresses poverty.

AN EARTH CARE CONGREGATION

MCPC first became an Earth Care congregation in the spring of 2017. The Earth Care Congregation program is part of the Presbyterian Hunger Program. The PCUSA believes that hunger, poverty, and environmental destruction are linked areas of concern. Further, in 1990 the General Assembly of the PCUSA adopted *Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice*, which calls our denomination to engage in the tasks of restoring God's creation. The "Call to Restore the Creation" recognizes and accepts restoring God's creation as a central concern of the church, to be incorporated into its life and mission at every level. This is a long-term effort—for cherishing God's creation enhances the ability of the church to achieve its other goals.

Early in 2022, we again submitted the Earth Care (EC) Congregation recertification written summary on-line, assessing how MCPC integrated EC practices into all facets of congregational life during 2022 including worship, education, facilities, and outreach. On March 9, 2022, we were notified by PCUSA that MCPC was successfully re-certified, our 6th year of EC certification! MCPC is one of 292 EC certified congregations in the PCUSA.

Pastor Diane continues to periodically incorporate EC ideas into worship in her sermons, hymns, and prayers. Bright Start continues to hold outdoor classes, take part in kitchen composting, and help harvest and snack on the veggies grown in the raised garden beds. In 2022, those raised beds were relocated just outside the Bright Start classroom windows. This provided for easier observation and participation in the planting, weeding, and harvesting process. (Editor's note: Special thanks to Dick & Shirley for moving and rebuilding the gardens!) EC friendly products are used in lawncare and MCPC cleaning whenever feasible. Recycling, minimizing the use of bottled water & paper products, and encouraging carpooling for church-related events continues.

The major EC bulletin board topic this year was to emphasize the basis for, and key points of, PCUSA's *Climate Care Challenge* (more at www.pcusa.org/climatecarechallenge). We are grateful for Mary Ellen's help with the artwork & displays for the EC bulletin boards!

If you have specific ideas or suggestions about ways we can improve our environmental stewardship, please let us know.

Psalm 24:1 The earth is the LORD's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN (PW)

To further our commitment, “to build an inclusive caring community of women that strengthens the Presbyterian Church (USA)”, the PW of Mid-Coast Presbyterian Church (MCPC) welcomes women who attend the church whether they are a member, a friend or just an occasional visitor. All are invited to participate in any activity sponsored by the group.

The MCPC PW has a Coordinating Team which meets as needed to determine the programs for the year as well as any outreach efforts to be undertaken. It also determines how any money that is raised through these programs will be spent. The coordinating team welcomes new additions to the team and anyone who is interested should speak to one of the women currently serving on the team. We also welcome any ideas for new programs or outreach.

After two years of restricted activities due to the pandemic things began to return to normal this year. The First Thursday lunches were held at various restaurants around the area and were very well attended. Best of all the Christmas Fair, which is our major fund raiser, was held inside in Fellowship Hall on our regular date, the second weekend in November. The Christmas Tea, which had become a Christmas Party for the entire congregation, evolved once more into a Christmas Brunch following a Sunday service in December. The Fall Fashion Fling was held in the Spring. Little by little, our PW activities are being re-instituted. As a special project in 2022, several women gathered monthly to learn about Chrismon symbology and make these beautiful ornaments for a Sanctuary Christmas tree.

To our joy, the Presbytery-wide PW retreat also took place again after being postponed for two years. Women from churches all over the Presbytery came together at the Calumet Retreat Center in Ossipee, New Hampshire for prayer, singing, study and fellowship. Women from MCPC were in charge of planning. As leader, Pastor Diane introduced the group to *Praying All the Day Long – The Divine Hours*. The retreat went very well and received excellent comments on the evaluations. The retreat for 2023 will be led by the women from New Hampshire and Northern Massachusetts. It will be again held at Calumet on Mother's Day Weekend. You won't want to miss it so save the date.

MCPC PW makes financial donations to the Presbytery PW every year, a portion of which they keep, a portion goes to the Synod and the rest goes to the national organization to support its efforts. The Birthday Offerings also pass through PNNE PW to national. This year we provided gift cards for the Christmas celebration at The Gathering Place. Other money was held in reserve to buy a new freezer for the kitchen, but it now appears the old one can be rehabilitated so the coordinating team will meet to determine what other local nonprofits to support.

SPECIAL OFFERINGS

MCPC continues to receive Special Offerings which connect us with ministries of the larger church: One Great Hour of Sharing, Pentecost, Peace & Global Witness, and Christmas

Joy. Both the Pentecost and Peace & Global Witness Special Offerings specify that a portion is to be retained by the congregation and used locally. The local portion for Pentecost (40%) went to the Midcoast Youth Center; the local portion of Peace & Global Witness (25%) went to Maine Immigrant and Refugee Services (MEIRS). Giving opportunities that support the Special Offering ministries are also available year-round through the Giving Catalog (www.presbyteriangifts.org). Financial details are in the Treasurer's Report.

SUDANESE PRESBYTERIAN FELLOWSHIP OF PORTLAND

The following is an overview of the Ministry of the Sudanese Presbyterian Fellowship, as summarized by Kay from a conversation with Sudanese Fellowship leader Matthew on August 8, 2022.

When Matthew came to America in 1995, a Nazarene pastor in Portland encouraged him in his desire to worship with his community; several Sudanese families worshipped with the Nazarene Church. However, the Presbyterian worship connection was clear: "We missed our Presbyterian way of worship that was so strong from [our] upbringing in Sudan. Eventually, two Sudanese church leaders visited Mid-Coast Presbyterian looking for a home, a place to worship."

In 2004, Mid-Coast Presbyterian began to support the hopes of the Sudanese Presbyterians financially and operationally. A joint steering committee was formed (half Sudanese, half Mid-Coast) that acted as a Session. Ted also became interested and helped train/shape the community, as did Pastor Bruce and Pastor Diane who helped more recently with worship communion and baptisms. The Fellowship was officially chartered by the PNNE thanks to the efforts of the PNNE Moderator and PNNE Presbyter at the time.

Since there is not a Portland Presbyterian Church to provide hospitality, the Fellowship found Baptist and Congregational churches to host their worship service. The tithes and offering, PC(USA), Synod and PNNE grants, and donations from several PNNE churches provided Deacon Funds and other operational expenses, primarily rent. Throughout, Mid-Coast has been a friend to the Fellowship; Elders Paul and Marci and Reverends Stephen and Ted continue to offer guidance to Matthew.

The past two years of COVID changed many aspects of church life for the Fellowship. Not being able to worship together meant the Fellowship lost the main source of responding to and growing with God. In the summer of 2022, the Steering Committee began searching for a facility for Sudanese Fellowship worship; they learned that the environment has changed: there are few, if any, facilities available at a low fee. After months of frustration, the Fellowship opted to worship twice a month at Mid-Coast Presbyterian Church, about 30 miles from Portland. This temporary arrangement will continue until a reasonably priced rental facility can be secured.

Mission of Sudanese Presbyterian Fellowship (in Matthew's words):

- *Welcoming all; worship language is Nuer and English when guests are present.*
- *Success means growing in God; success encourages people to move forward in faith.*

- *The community needs strengthening through worship. Once worship begins, we will re-build a strong relationship of faith within the community. Worship will bind the community together.*
- *We will use this grant with our tithes and offering and other contributions to cover the rental expenses.*

A 5-minute video of a conversation with Matthew, Kay, Pastor Diane and Paul Brown can be found on our website at <https://mcpconline.org/>.

SOUTH AFRICA CONNECTION: J.Z.S. NCEVU MEMORIAL CHURCH

Through our congregation's correspondence with members of the J.Z.S. Ncevu Memorial Church in Komani (formerly Queenstown), Eastern Cape, South Africa, we have shared stories of ourselves and of our church.

Loss of their beloved pastor to the Covid virus in 2021 was a heartbreaking experience. He was not only the pastor of the congregation in Komani, but the pastor for nine rural, small, “outstation” congregations as well. Many of those writing from South Africa shared in their letters how deeply personal his death was to them. This disease continues, even into 2023, to seriously deplete their numbers. Many people are still scared of coming to Sunday worship, but the church treasurer has expressed her gratitude for those who have continued to support their ministry.

Despite all the challenges, the Ncevu Church is moving ahead with building an outstation church in Whittlesea (an hour drive from Ncevu). As one writer said, “We won't be deterred in our determination to do the Lord's will.” It is hoped that some kind of financial support can be sent in support of the outstation church at Whittlesea in early 2023.

Our Pen Pal program continues to mature between MCPC and Ncevu promoting a deeper friendship, understanding, and support between our two congregations. Letters from Ncevu members have shared personal joys and concerns. Following the death of their pastor, a joy from Ncevu was the installation of a new pastor. Concerns continue to be expressed over the deteriorating political situation, the lack of consistent delivery of electricity, the Covid epidemic, and the poor performance of the postal service.

Your Mid-Coast Connection Team is grateful for this deepening relationship with our brothers and sisters in Christ in another part of God's world.

BRIGHT START CHILD CARE

As 2022 began, Bright Start struggled to carry on, with low attendance and enormous dependence on volunteer support due to the challenge of staffing as teachers were in and out with illnesses or family emergencies. Most importantly, the director, who had returned temporarily until we found a new director, had been trying to retire for the last few years. Throughout January, February, and March, applications were reviewed and interviews held. In March a part-time bookkeeper was hired. This took some stress off the director, but with

no replacement in sight and staffing needs becoming more dire, June 1 was set as a deadline for Eileen's retirement and an emergency meeting was called for April 27 to discuss the possibility of closing Bright Start if a new director could not be found. Nothing less than a miracle followed. Three weeks later, we were shouting "hallelujah!" as Crissy was hired as Lead Teacher and Sam accepted the job of Director. As the remaining teachers left due to family issues, Bri was hired as a teaching assistant. And Jill Gagne continued on staff. We just knew God was watching over us! *[This section of the report was written by Pastor Diane!]*

As joyful as the transition was, it was not easy as Covid made its way around the school resulting in a four-day closure. Over the summer, teachers reset classrooms, cleaned, organized, and had a fun summer with the 14 children we had enrolled.

Preparing for the 2022-2023 school year, enrollment quickly increased and was at capacity (24 children) for the amount we had on staff. We soon had to hire a floater to help with lunch and afternoon coverage. In October we hosted Pumpkin Night where families came to do projects, play, and eat. It gave the parents time to talk with teachers and meet other parents. Shortly after we had an RSV outbreak. Unfortunately, this Fall and into the Winter has been a roller coaster with sickness and staff coverage, but we also had a lot of positive changes!

In December we teamed up with AFFM (Adoptive & Foster Families of Maine) and planned a giving tree. With many parents' and church members' support, we were able to provide toys and gifts for 12 children this holiday season!

Through most of 2022, Bright Start continued to receive a \$5,000 monthly grant that started in 2021. In October it decreased to \$2,000. This grant has helped cushion Bright Start's account to be able to add staff and make some classroom updates in the upcoming year. Staff have continued received a \$200 monthly bonus from the state.

Members of the Property Committee have been essential to the care of Bright Start: a new sandbox cover was made with new sand brought in, and myriad other needs have been addressed!

A special thank you to the Bright Start Board of Directors, our past director Eileen, and many church members for the support to get Bright Start back up on our feet, help in the classroom when needed, and provide many supply and snack donations.

At our last board meeting of the year, Mary Ellen shared this prayer that we felt was fitting to include in our Annual Report:

Heavenly Father,

*As we begin our last board meeting of the year,
we must give thanks for how the year has evolved.*

Just when our frustrations peaked, Samantha came along and became our wonderful new director, Crissy our terrific head teacher, and the children came to fill the classrooms.

What blessings we have experienced. Thank you.

May we always remember the trust the Bright Start parents have in us as they bring their children here each day for loving care and nurturing.

*As we head into the next year Lord, guide us as a board to work together,
to move forward in a positive way, and to appreciate our many blessings.
In Christ's name, Amen.*

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS & OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE

PUMPKIN PATCH

The Pumpkin Patch each October benefits the Indigenous population in the Farmington area of New Mexico. The growing and harvesting of the pumpkins employs over 700 Navajo, Hopi, Zuni, and Pueblo people and provides a sustainable income for families in an area where the unemployment rate is over 40%.

Our church's visibility in the area has increased as more and more people come to associate our church with a pumpkin-filled lawn. Part of our success is that, as the Pumpkin Patch people say, "We are selling pumpkins with a purpose," and that we return 70-75% of our proceeds resonates with our customers.

Pumpkins arrived Monday, October 3, and with the help of the Southern Maine Movers and a helpful crew of volunteers from the congregation, friends, neighbors, and MCPC building users the unloading began. And, as in 2021, the sight of the Mt. Ararat track team youth running to join in the task was a joy indeed. More than 1400 bulk pumpkins plus boxes and bins of weebies, mini pumpkins, and a variety of gourds were unloaded and arranged on the pallets on our front lawn, ready for sale to the community.

In 2022, **Total Pumpkin Sales** were \$10,431.66, and **Other Sales** (crafts, food, etc.) were \$397.76. MCPC returned \$6,957.92 to Pumpkin Patch Fundraisers and contributed \$500 to Wabanaki Reach*. The total for MCPC's fundraising was \$3,475.74

**Pumpkin Patch Fundraisers assesses us only 66% because of our excellent sales total. In keeping with our commitment to support the Maine Indigenous People, Session approved a donation of \$500 to Wabanaki REACH (www.wabanakireach.org).*

Thank you to all who helped unload, staff the patch, and tell the story of the pumpkins and the Indigenous farmers all to make our Pumpkin Patch endeavor so successful.

THE FARMERS' MARKET & CRAFTING

MCPC continued their Ministry of Presence at the Brunswick Farmers' Market in 2022. It is always a blessing—meeting new people, seeing old friends, and letting the Brunswick/Topsham area know that MCPC values being a part of the community.

The Farmer's Market crew began spending Fridays at the Farmers' Market the last week of June. In addition to being present, we always had a few things for sale. We sold lots of sweaters and many felted owl sachets this past year. Balinda has been supplying the bulk of the handmade crafts they take to the Market to sell. She would **LOVE** other crafters to jump in and supply even just a couple things. (Please reach out to Balinda to learn more—she says

she is always amazed at what sells!) Unfortunately, people were not buying homemade treats the way they used to pre-Covid.

It was a great year at the Market, and in October we ended the year by working at the Pumpkin Patch on all the Fridays it was open.

ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS MARKET

Providing an opportunity to support outreach and mission work through donations and purchases has been a part of MCPC's Christmas tradition for many years. Instead of giving tangible gifts for friends and family, gifts to various organizations and causes in the name of those friends and family are made possible.

The 2022 Christmas Market took place on the three Sundays before Christmas. Folks had the opportunity to:

- donate money for our local 7 Rivers Chapter of Habitat for Humanity.
- purchase jams and jellies from PW for mission support.
- purchase craft items or donate for sending to Heifer Project International.
- donation through the PC(USA) Giving Catalogue.
- purchase Shenaini Crafts.

Sadly, the traditional sale of CEOLI cards as another fundraiser was not possible this year because of Covid restrictions. (Money raised from such sales had been sent for years to a specialized school for handicapped children in rural Cochabamba, Bolivia.) It is hoped that cards will again be available at the 2023 market!

TEDFORD SHELTER MEALS

As an expression of caring concern for the homeless in our community, a wholesome meal has been delivered to the residents of the TEDFORD SHELTER in Brunswick on the fourth Monday of each month.

During the past year we have prepared a variety of different meals: Enchilada Casserole, Shepherds' Pie, Meatloaf with mashed potatoes and gravy, Macaroni & Cheese, Butternut Squash Lasagna, Hearty Beef Vegetable Soup, Taco Casserole, Haddock Chowder, Red Beans and Rice with Sausage, Turkey Tetrazzini, and Beef Stew. (*Editor's note: As always, many thanks to Shirley for preparing these main courses.*)

Sign-up sheets are posted in the Fellowship Hall 3 or 4 weeks before the meal and members and friends are encouraged to sign up to provide salads, bread, desserts, and fresh fruit or other parts of the meal.

You can be a part of this local ministry by helping to prepare meals, by donating ingredients, or by helping with delivery to the Tedford Shelter. This truly is an opportunity to serve neighbors in need. Thank you to all who have so faithfully participated in this ministry of feeding hungry neighbors.

Please see the sign-up sheets in the Fellowship Hall each month to see how you can help.

THE GATHERING PLACE:

Our community has many homeless, destitute, and misfit people who need some kind of support to keep going. They may be a 20-year-old with substance abuse issues, a man or a woman who holds a part-time job and lives in their car, a child who has been left behind at a shelter, or a teenager thrown out of their home.

People like these, and others, can find help and support at The Gathering Place (TGP). TGP is a daytime shelter started by people in this church and others in our local faith community who recognized the need for just such a place. It began as a place where guests could get in out of the weather, have a cup of coffee and someone to talk to. Now guests can get help finding work, dealing with health problems, getting something to eat, or finding housing. First housed in the Seventh Day Adventist Community Center and completely staffed by volunteers, it now is in its own building behind the Community Center on Union Street in Brunswick. It is still largely staffed by volunteers but also has three part-time staff people.

The pandemic has been hard on all of us, but it had a devastating effect on the homeless of our community. Due to tireless effort by the staff and volunteers, TGP only briefly closed due to Covid and is now pretty much operating as it did pre-pandemic. The staff and volunteers are to be applauded for the many ways they help people in need.

MCPC continues to support TGP with volunteers, gift cards, and donations of warm hats and gloves. TGP website is a little out of date but check it out for more information and see what a gift TGP is to the community.

“And the King will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’” *Mt 25:40*

MID COAST HUNGER PREVENTION PROGRAM

Their Mission: “MCHPP is a 501-c-3 nonprofit organization. Our mission is to provide hungry people with access to healthy food, work to improve the quality of their lives by partnering with others, and serve them in a manner that recognizes their dignity.”

The Mid Coast Hunger Prevention Program consists of many parts including the Food Bank, Soup Kitchen, and Food Pantry. These are all located at 84A Union Street, Brunswick, just behind Hannaford. The MCPC Board of Deacons coordinates our involvement with MCHPP. In late 2022 we began having a monthly focus for contributions (peanut/nut butters, breakfast cereal, canned soups & stews, etc.)

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

Support of affordable housing in our region in gifts of time, talent and money has taken place since 1991 through our covenant relationship with Habitat for Humanity/7 Rivers Maine Chapter.

While the main purpose of Habitat is to provide affordable housing to those who could not otherwise move into a home, Habitat has now expanded its charter to include two additional

programs: Winterization & Repair and Stay in Your Home. Volunteer efforts drive this mission. Funds have traditionally been raised through ReStore sales profits, through a Spring Walk fundraiser and through individual/corporate donations such as from our Alternative Christmas Market (\$260 raised in 2022).

The primary activity for 2022 was MCPC's involvement in the Spring Fundraising Walk. This year the walk took place through the "highways and byways" of Bath. Fifteen intrepid participants raised \$850. Way to go, MCPers! Volunteering time and fundraising at our church's Alternative Christmas Market rounded out MCPC's Habitat involvement. Unfortunately, the pandemic dramatically slowed home construction, so no actual construction projects were held.

An upbeat note in 2022 was the addition of the Donor & Volunteer Engagement Specialist, to the Habitat staff. She has already worshiped with us at MCPC and does plan to become further known to our congregation.

Five areas of rewarding and challenging activity lie ahead for 2023:

- MCPC has committed in the past to work on at least one new home build a year. Hopefully 2023 will see a resumption of this most important (and fun) type of volunteering. Men and women volunteers will be needed. No prior experience required!
- WINTERIZATION and REPAIRING projects continue in support of the elderly and the economically poor in our community. In addition, a new "bookcase brigade" has been formed to supply ReStore with much sought-after bookcases. Individual volunteers are needed. Contact the Habitat office (504-9333) if you can help out.
- Mailing and other office projects need volunteers who are willing to work either at home or, eventually, at the Habitat office in Topsham.
- ReStore can only succeed if folks from covenant churches pitch in and work at the store. Staffing of the retail store includes working "behind the counter" as cashier, stocking shelves, and helping shoppers. No experience is needed.
- The Spring Walk, the major fundraiser for the year, is tentatively scheduled for early May of 2023. Come join us for raising money for a very good cause and experiencing fun, exercise and food treats. Volunteers to work during the Walk and folks providing those food treats will also be needed.

REPORTS ON MCPC FINANCIAL MATTERS

FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Mid-Coast Presbyterian Church Finance Committee met near-monthly by video conference in its role of supporting the Treasurer and providing input to the Session on

financial matters. Ongoing updates in income, expenses, and the balance sheet were reviewed to evaluate results, trends, and to ensure accuracy.

Items of note during the year:

- Ministry giving to PNNE continued in 2022 in the amount of \$2,000 with an additional \$3,300 in per capita donations.
- A part-time Bookkeeper now assists the Treasurer in the church office with data entry, check preparation, and account reconciliation.
- Proceeds from the ERTC (Employee Retention Tax Credit) applied for in 2021, a Covid relief Federal government program, were all received during 2022.
- A portion of the ERTC was used to supplement the Building Reserve in order to pay for the new roof.
- October saw another successful Pumpkin Patch event which helps support the church and fosters community with 70-75% of the total proceeds going to Indigenous people, primarily the growers in the Southwest US.
- In July, the Finance committee crafted and submitted a document to the Session outlining a framework for duties of our committee, to be included as part of an overall document of MCPC Policies and Procedures. This is to help guide the work we do and help new members of our group know what is expected.

After a challenging couple of years, we count ourselves blessed that in-person church activities are once again occurring and that financial contributions were maintained throughout.

TREASURER'S REPORT

As 2021 came to a close and we were preparing the budget for 2022, our congregation, which is mighty but few, was not coming to services on a regular basis and I was struggling to stay ahead of the mountain of papers on the Treasurer's desk. In preparing the budget for 2022 I and the Finance committee gave Session a budget projection which was as honest and realistic as we could put together. That budget showed an \$11,585 deficit even though we cut back everything we thought we could. Session's response was "you did a good job at cutting this back now let faith take over." Still we wondered how we could overcome such a deficit.

Then God worked miracles. Our congregation, including several newcomers, was incredibly generous. We hired a Bookkeeper who conquered the mountain of paper. The Property Committee did amazing work to keep our maintenance costs really low. With a new Director (seemingly sent by God) and increasing enrollment, Bright Start was able once again to contribute to the cost of the insurance on the building, and bright little faces were back in our building.

When we got to the end of 2022, the offerings received at MCPC's had exceeded our expectations by \$10,187. So we ended 2022 with a budget surplus of \$4,083. As we head into 2023, we are again looking at a faith budget, which you can see in the Financial Reports on the following pages.

In 2022 we received a \$24,793.15 Covid-related Employee Retention Tax Credit from the IRS; it was a blessing that our payroll company Paper Trails helped us file for this credit. The ERTC was proportionally distributed to Bright Start based on staff wages paid. Another portion was put toward roof repair and future building needs. The remaining amount will be used for expenses when Pastor Diane goes on sabbatical.

Thank you for all the blessings which you have shared with this congregation, our community, and the world. God is Good.

Special Offerings and Memorial Gifts

This year our congregation reached out and contributed generously to PCUSA special collections. The contributions to PCUSA Special Offerings were: Christmas Joy – \$1,055, One Great Hour of Sharing – \$1,189.44, Pentecost – \$585, Peace and Global Witness – \$850. There was a \$200 contribution to Presbyterian Disaster Relief for their work in Ukraine. We received \$9,417 in Memorial Gift donations. The annual Christmas Eve collection for the benefit of students in need at Brunswick and Mt Ararat High Schools was \$200. Additionally, the Alternative Christmas Market raised \$260 for Habitat for Humanity (7 Rivers Chapter) and \$580 for Heifer International.

Please contact Balinda Washington, MCPC Treasurer, if you would like further detail on the financial reports that follow.