



Stanwich
CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH

ANNUAL REPORT

July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020

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Report of the Senior Pastor – Rev. Dr. Nathan Hart

The State of the Church: *Abundant*

As I write these words, I am looking out of my office window onto our picturesque ten acres on Taconic Road. It's a beautiful Monday morning after a typical weekend of ministry activity: here in Greenwich, we had a fantastic Parenting Seminar on Saturday, hundreds of worshipers who glorified God in worship on Sunday morning including a very meaningful baptism ceremony during the 10:45 AM service; in Stamford, we participated in a community clean-up effort on Saturday morning and hosted a college movie event in the evening. The weekend culminated on Sunday night with a Spirit-filled Prayer and Worship service with yet another capacity crowd in our worship space in the South End of Stamford.

Now it's Monday morning, and the action continues as the church buzzes with activity: in Emmaus Hall, Pastor Heather is leading a Christ-centered prayer activity called JourneyMates for 35 area ministry leaders; in the Children's Wing, a skilled expert is conducting our annual training about sexual assault prevention and awareness for our staff and ten other area ministry leaders (plus three Harvard Business School graduates who are observing for a research project); and the church's Admin team is busily preparing details for another week of ministry ahead.

In the last three days alone, the above-mentioned ministries and activities will have reached around 500 people and comes just one week after Holy Week and Easter, which ministered to more than double that. This amount of programming and ministry is rare for a church in our region. Frankly, it all would be exhausting except that it is so life-giving. Jesus said that he came to earth so that we "may have life and have it abundantly" (John 10:10). Here at Stanwich, we are living the abundant life he promised, every day.

Leadership and Strategic Plan

Since our last Annual Meeting, we have experienced a significant shift on our pastoral team. Pastors Chuck, Jacky, and David were all called to other mission fields. Such a leadership transition could have divided or derailed us, but instead, God's faithfulness has sustained us. The congregation rallied while Pastor Richard Williams assisted me in worship and Gina Choi and Heather Wright stepped up to the roles of Stamford Campus Director and Pastor of Connection and Care, respectively. As you probably know, I am over-the-moon about both of these amazing women of God. Daily I watch them lead, teach, serve, and shepherd the flock with skill and passion. We are so fortunate to have them in our midst! Soon, the Personnel Committee and I will be able to update you on how God is leading us to fill the remaining position on the team as Pastor David Borden returns from his Army deployment overseas.

One of the reasons that this year of transition has gone so smoothly is because of people like James McArdle who has ably served as Elder Chair, and Susan Connaughton who stepped into the Church Administrator role with excellence and poise. I feel profoundly blessed to serve alongside this leadership team, including our entire Elder board and staff team during this season of our church's history. Not only do we have excellent leadership, we have what must be the world's best congregation. Our flock is energized, loves God's word, exalts Jesus Christ, and is united around our shared mission. As I said in a Stewardship video last winter, being senior pastor of this church feels like sitting in the front row of a fast-moving train. So much momentum! Our call is to continue stewarding this energy strategically for God's glory.

To that end, I hope you have read the Stanwich Strategic Plan. The Elders, Ministry Directors, and I have prayerfully worked on it for the last few months and I have been eager to roll it out to you. Together, by God's grace and sustaining power, we will live into the vision that started 288 years ago when several farmers united themselves together "for Christian fellowship, the enjoyment of Christian ordinances, the public worship of God, and the advancement of His Kingdom in this world" (Stanwich Church Covenant, 1731). The initiatives in the Strategic Plan are guided by the same commitment that guided the church's founders so long ago, but in a cultural landscape that they could have hardly imagined.

Our vision is to know Christ and make Him known. I am more energized than ever to advance God's Kingdom with you as we pursue this vision strategically, faithfully, and boldly in Jesus' name.

Nathan Hart

Report of the Pastor of Care and Connection - Heather Wright

This first quarter has been a delightful immersion in parish ministry. I am grateful for the warm welcome and support of the staff, pastoral team and for Nathan's direction and leadership. As a congregation, you could not have been more gracious in receiving me and encouraging me as I learn the ropes. Thank you for trusting me with your concerns, sorrows, joys and stories. My new call has taken me to homes, hospitals and senior care facilities and participation in several memorial services.

Stanwich Church is a place of healing, care and welcome. Many visitors have described our church as warm and hospitable. Even walking in the doors for the first time, they felt they were "coming home." I can't think of a higher compliment for any church. In overseeing Care and Connection, I am so grateful that our DNA includes compassionate and faith-filled disciples of Jesus Christ.

Care Ministries

In my new role, I have been tasked to create a coordinated and equipped lay Care Ministries program. To research current best practices in this area, I interviewed seven regional clergy. With the help of several wise voices here at Stanwich about direction and members' gifting, several new elements will be in place by this fall. Some Care efforts are already well underway, but with further coordination we can deepen and enhance all aspects of this ministry at Stanwich.

Here are a few highlights of what is in place and what is to come:

Our Prayer Chain is being run expertly by Patricia Hallenbeck. We are looking into ways to transform prayer requests to care requests with efficiency going forward.

I am grateful to Laura LaSpalluto who offered to pilot a Prayer Shawl ministry, in which people use yarn, needles and prayer to fashion a tangible expression of God's love given to those in need of comfort or connection. She approached me not knowing I had been asking God to make it clear if prayer shawl ministry might be a good fit for Stanwich. Already, we have blessed three hospitalized members with prayer shawls. It is a blessing to those who gather to knit and pray as well as those who receive them.

Prayer card ministry will be shepherded by Betsy Parkinson. She will head up this effort to be sure that members of the Body in need receive additional support.

There will be a new offering of trained lay Care Ministers. The goal will be to have a handful of Care Ministers provide support, alongside our clergy, to those in our fellowship who are going through illness, loss or are homebound. These Care Ministers would also be able to support those who are going through life's challenges and transitions. My hope is that those who join

the team will receive interesting and supportive training and not be overly burdened time-wise in serving in this capacity. Training will begin this fall.

Connection ministries

Since beginning in January, I have been honored to lead the Charis Women group on Thursday mornings. We meet in the Charis House and have a strong group of wise and faithful women gathering to study Scripture together. We are currently working through a 5-week series on “Jesus’ Use of the Psalms” that Valerie Gammage and I co-wrote for our Bible studies.

During Lent, I also provided a digital Zoom lunchtime study to walk through the Lenten series with women who were not able to attend another group. One woman held up her phone to show us her corporate conference room, from which she participated remotely. The boundaries of the church and our groups were extended.

The Women’s Retreat was a wonderful day (and for some also overnight) of fellowship, worship and encouragement. I am so grateful for how honest and open the women were with one another. Our afternoon table small groups were the highlight. As follow up to the retreat, each table has a “retreat re-connector” who is contacting her respective group for a follow up gathering together. Because these groups were randomly selected, each table represents a cross-section of our Stanwich Church family. I am delighted that so many made new Stanwich friends on the retreat.

I would value your prayers for my ongoing development in this new role. May I learn to abide more deeply in Jesus each day. I ask that God would:

- lead me in developing my prayers, Bible study and sermons
- direct my efforts to implement a new model of Care Ministries
- and counsel me as I provide pastoral counsel and comfort to others

I am deeply grateful to God and each of you for this glorious opportunity to serve Stanwich in this season.

Blessings,
Pastor Heather

Report of the Stamford Campus Director - Gina Choi

Overview:

Stanwich in Stamford is a unique church body situated in the South end of Stamford; an area that was once notorious for its criminal activity. It has gone through significant changes since its redevelopment and is projected to attract over 20,000 people over the next 20 years. When the campus was initially planted, its vision was to reach working millennials residing in the new, luxury high-rise apartment buildings. Instead, what we've discovered over the years is that our campus has attracted a diverse multiethnic, multicultural, multi-socioeconomic population that is reflective of God's kingdom. On any given Sunday night, you will see a wide variety of people worshipping at our campus-- a single mom struggling to pay her bills, a young man working at a hedge fund, a Pivot graduate, a homeless individual from the train station, a young family, a pastor/leader from another church, college students, etc. In some ways, our community on Sunday nights is a glimpse of what heaven will look like as people from every tribe, nation and tongue gather to exalt the name of Jesus.

Even with Pastor David's leave of absence last year, the campus has continued to thrive. By the grace of God, our weekly attendance has nearly doubled since the fall, growing from around 50 to around 100 worshippers. Those who attend our campus are committed to carry out the gospel in their homes, workplaces and communities. We have had several testimonies of individuals who were touched by God in the South end because committed believers from our campus stopped to listen, talk and pray for those they encounter daily. We have had numerous opportunities to serve the underprivileged, including the homeless, those recovering from addiction, single parents, etc. Just as Jesus ministered to both the wealthy and the poor, to the elite and to the marginalized, we as a Church are called to proclaim the gospel from both the center and the margins of society. Our Stamford campus presents us with the unique opportunity to be a church on the margins and to cross social, cultural boundaries; bringing the transformative power of the gospel to the South end of Stamford and beyond.

Strengths/Highlights

- We are a diverse multi-ethnic, multicultural, multi-socioeconomic Christ-centered community.
- We offer a unique, contemporary, Spirit-filled, gospel-centered worship experience.
- The impact of Pastor David's leave on the campus has been minimal which reveals that Stanwich in Stamford is a Christ-centered, not a personality-centered church body.
- Last fall, we launched our very first leadership team meeting. My goal was to develop a core group consisting of 10 individuals who can carry out our vision to make Christ known in Stamford and beyond. Currently, these leaders are actively serving in the church and in our community.

- This past year, I've made connections with a group of college students from UCONN Stamford. I have been mentoring a young married couple who are leaders of a Christian club at the college. In addition, we've made connections with a teacher from Stamford High School who leads a Christian club and have sent out volunteers to serve as mentors for teens as well as provide financial assistance to purchase bibles for the club. It is an exciting time as we partner with God for the next generation!

Challenges/Opportunities

- There are limitations with our current worship space. First, is not easily accessible and visible to the public. Second, it is not a welcoming facility. Third, there are various safety hazards concerning the freight elevator and office space not being baby-proofed. Fourth, we are unable to accommodate families with young children and infants due to our limited space.

Future Goals

- To reach and serve the next generation; especially youth and college students. Continue to build a relationship with UCONN Stamford and other local schools. Enrollment continues to increase at the Stamford campus and the school is continuing to build more dormitories in downtown Stamford to accommodate its growth.
- To reach and serve young, working professionals who are isolated and looking for community.
- Establish unity between both campuses: continue to promote one church in two locations.
- Establish unity with other local churches through joint efforts in prayer, ministry and outreach.
- Finding a new space for worship that has a visible presence in the community, creates a welcoming atmosphere, and is sustainable for growth.
- To develop and equip current leaders, while raising up new leaders to carry out our vision to know Christ and to make Him known.

Executive Director – Bob Rieger

“We want to avoid any criticism of the way we administer this liberal gift. For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of men.”
(2 Corinthians 8:20-21)

The Executive Director is dedicated to financial stewardship and a commitment to excellence in directing the strategic financial and administrative requirements to manage the operations of Stanwich Congregational Church. This enables our Pastors and Ministry Leaders to have more time to focus on the ministry and mission of the church “in the field.”

The Executive Director’s staff responsibilities span a full range of activities including financial management (annual and monthly budget, internal/external audits), program management, communications, information technology, human resources, building maintenance, and ministry support.

Financial Summary:

In FY 2019, giving from July through September was in line with budget plan with the exception of January; all other YTD Giving months were below plan. However, we are encouraged by January Giving (Pastor Nathan’s Train Dashboard Video) and the recent Stewardship/Finance communications plan with a significant increase in giving. As of May 15th, we need \$742,319 to meet this year’s budget. The Operating Fund balance has remained stable at \$471,053 (April 30th). Our Missions Fund giving of \$224,412 is on track to finish the year at budget level of \$275,000. We need to finish this fiscal year strong.

Future: The proposed FY 2020 budget represents a flat operating budget over prior year and includes an increased commitment to the Capital Maintenance Fund. Financial budget highlights include:

- Strategic Plan:
 - The vision and mission to advance Word and Sacrament Worship, Missional Engagement, and Regional Influence will be accomplished without increasing our FY20 annual budget from FY19.
- Staffing:
 - Pastor Nathan, working with the Personnel Committee, has made some adjustments to the org chart in order to position the staff team to better achieve our mission and vision.
- Property Management:
 - Continuation of the annual transfer of \$50,000 plus an additional \$37,057 from the Operating Fund to the Capital Maintenance Fund to provide for current and future capital requirements of our five properties.

Sheila Hyland, Business Director, has been my “right hand” and has fully supported my many requests with grace and excellence. The entire staff here is something to behold as team players who love the Lord and Serve Him and the flock well.

Thank you for the honor and the privilege to have served as Executive Director over the past 2 ½ years. Stanwich will always hold a special place in my heart.

In His Service, Blessings, Bob Rieger

Church Children's Ministry – Ann Roth

Children's Ministry at Stanwich Church is wrapping up another successful year of working with children, and their families, to teach them the truths of the Bible and show the children who Jesus is and how life changing a relationship with Him is. Our focus is the same as the church mission statement, "To know Christ and make Him known."

In order to know Christ, our children have to know the Bible, and know it, not as a book of rules and regulations for how to live a moral life, but as the divinely inspired word of God. We want the children to look at the Bible as the story of God's redemption, His love for us and His rescue plan, sending Christ to die as the ultimate sacrifice for our sins. Our tool for teaching the Bible is our Sunday curriculum, "The Gospel Project for Kids," a chronological teaching of the Bible, with a Christ connection for every lesson.

Team

Our team consists of two people, however we added Sara Samuels as an administrator for Children's Ministry. Sara was hired to work 10 hours per week in Children's Ministry, and consistently goes above and beyond her job description: gathering supplies for Sunday morning, making sure our volunteers have everything they need in order to teach and more. She also teaches a preschool class in the 10:45 service and rotates teaching with me in the 9:00. Whomever is not teaching the 9:00, attends the service. Sara is also helping to greet new families and welcoming them to Stanwich and helping with any issues that come up during either service on Sunday. Sara is perfect for this role, she is a parent with children in our ministry and a peer to the other parents, and does a great job relating to them.

My duties include teaching large group sessions in Kids Church on Sundays, leading small groups on Sundays, editing curriculum, communicating with Sunday volunteers, planning for, directing and working at Sky Camp, collaborating with other church ministries for service projects, communicating with parents and welcoming new families to Stanwich.

Kids Church

Kids Church happens on Sundays in both morning services. The children (grades 1 through 5) join their families in the worship service and then are dismissed to Kids Church after the children's sermon. The children begin Kids Church by worshipping together, then playing a quick game or sharing important events going on in their lives. They are then taught a lesson from our curriculum, "The Gospel Project for Kids," which includes a Bible story, Bible verse, Big Picture Question and a short video illustrating the Bible story. After our large group session, the children are dismissed to their small groups, where they are grouped by age and sometimes gender, to further discuss the Bible story in an age appropriate way. Small groups will also have an activity, game or craft relating to our lesson, and prayer.

Our attendance numbers on Sundays are consistent, we have about 70 – 80 children total on any given Sunday.

Preschool and Kindergarten Kids Church

Our preschool and kindergarten program (age 3 through kindergarten) also uses “The Gospel Project for Kids.” Their program is similar in that it involves worship, prayer and Bible study along with games and crafts to reinforce our Bible story. This group also spends time in play, so that the children can engage with one another and with their teachers.

Nursery

Our nursery is a wonderful, inviting place for our littlest children. Magda Castro and Vilma Castro have been with Stanwich for 11 and 8 years respectively, and they work hard to create a loving environment, where parents are happy to leave their children so the parents can attend a service or a Bible study. Melissa Aridoux has been working with Magda and Vilma since June of last year. Melissa also keeps the nursery on Sunday nights in Stamford for the 6:00 service.

Sky Kids (VBS)

Sky Kids was a great success last year! This program is a fantastic way to show off our ministry and bring in new families from around Fairfield County. We collaborate with Trinity Church to make this program happen; however, a large part of the administrative duties is completed by Stanwich staff. I am sure Sky Kids will continue this year as a strong program with a great reach into our community.

I am completing nearly four years of working for this ministry and I am constantly amazed at what our God is doing in and through our children. It is such a privilege to get to work for this church and this ministry, my personal relationship with God has grown stronger through this role and I am just so grateful I get a close-up view of what He is doing through this ministry.

I am looking forward to the future at Stanwich Church. 2018 brought a lot of changes, but I see God in all of it! God has blessed Stanwich richly with an amazing leadership team.

Ann Roth
Director of Children’s Ministry

Student Ministries – Lance Svendsen

This past year has been a wonderful year. Stanwich Student Ministries has been growing both in numbers and in spiritual maturity. Pastor Nathan has provided excellent vision for the church and the Student Ministries feels right in line with that vision.

If you, as part of Stanwich Church, have an idea or would be interested in being a leader in the Student Ministry, please come and talk to Lauren Sumner or me. We would love to brainstorm and discuss ideas. Here's what this past year has looked like in a nutshell:

Reaching Busy Teenagers

It is essential to have high school and middle school students as a part of the greater church, even when they are difficult to reach. It's a known fact that the families of Greenwich and the surrounding area are consistently busy. There are multiple kids who can only attend events on certain days. Despite the great variety of students, they all still consider themselves part of Stanwich Student Ministries. Over my past seven years, we've had to become creative with how we spend time with students—attending school and sports events, doing Bible studies over breakfast, or meeting at diners late at night. We try to keep our availability open and do whatever we can to show students that they are valuable and worth the time of the student leaders who care for them.

Mentors

Being an intergenerational church, we have seen the impact of dynamic relationships between adults and students on the life of the church. We love seeing adults and teens talking together after services and at church events. It makes the church feel smaller and more friendly. This past year, one of our goals was to give more attention to our mentorship model, by starting with the confirmation class. It went very well this past year and we plan to strengthen it by setting up the next group of confirmation mentors early. Along with that, we plan to follow through with the relationships set from the previous class. Our goal is for each student who is part of Stanwich Student Ministries to have an adult mentor over time. Currently, we have 60 students who are considered part of Stanwich Student Ministries. About a quarter of those students have adult mentors who take part in their lives. Over the next three years, our goal is to match every active student with a Christian mentor in the church. Ideally, these relationships will continue far beyond a student's years at Stanwich. It is a challenge to find these leaders to be mentors, but with a push from the church, I believe each student could have an adult speaking into their lives besides just their parents and church volunteers.

Sunday Morning Student Service

On Sundays, students meet during the 9am and 10:45am services. Currently, we average about 30 students each week. The Student Service has become Stanwich Student Ministries' focus

since this is the most well-attended, consistent gathering that we offer. Since last year, we have altered the look of what the Sunday morning class looks like. We now have one speaker each week give the lesson to a combined middle and high school group. After which, we have four breakout groups divided by gender and age for deeper discussion with leaders in each group. We typically have six leaders in class during the 10:45am service and two in the 9am service.

Small Groups on Friday Nights

For the past year, we have provided students the opportunity to join Stanwich Student Ministries every other week in a smaller, more intimate Bible study at a home in Greenwich. Small groups have been well attended in that time period, averaging around 15-20 students, and 5 or 6 leaders each week. We begin each small group session by hanging out and catching up with the students while we enjoy pizza and refreshments. We then divide the larger group into smaller boys' and girls' Bible studies, with a separate combined high school group. The students, guided by the leaders, dive into the Bible and apply it to their lives. We end the night asking each student what their prayer requests are and then have the students pray for each other as we also pray over them. Through their attendance and positive feedback, we have found that this is something the students really desire. They need a place where they can talk about how they really feel and explore their beliefs, which Stanwich Student Ministries has provided over the last 18 months.

Confirmation

We have now completed our sixth full Confirmation Class, graduating a class of 20 this past year. The class consists of 9 sessions over the course of 13 weeks, where students learn vital truths about God, the Church, and Biblical History. Each student is charged with choosing a life verse and writing a testimony of faith. As in the past, the challenge continues to be retaining the students who only attend Stanwich because of Confirmation, typically required by a parent, but then do not return for other events. A portion of families do continue at Stanwich after Confirmation Sunday, which is encouraging, but we would like to see more in the future. This coming confirmation class will be open to any student 7th grade-12th to capture any students who may not have had the opportunity to be in confirmation during their 8th grade year.

Student Ministries Assistant

In September of 2018, Lauren Sumner took on the full-time position as Student Ministries Assistant. She has flourished in the role and has expanded the reach of the ministries to include more events focused on the girls at Stanwich. There has been a noticeable improvement in how we the Student Ministry runs since she has come on full-time.

We are excited to see what the next 12 months will bring for the Student Ministry and what God will be doing at Stanwich Church this coming year.

Respectively,
Lance Svendsen

Ministry of Music – Leon G. Reid

“Oh come, let us sing to the LORD; Let us come into His presence with thanksgiving; Let us make a joyful noise to Him with songs of praise!” (Psalm 95:1A & 2, ESV)

The Lord has blessed Stanwich Church with very committed and talented musicians and singers. It is a blessing to see our teams (Stanwich Praise Team, Stanwich Adult Choir, Stanwich Handbell Ringers and Stanwich Children's Choir) grow deeper in their commitment to excellence in the music ministry at Stanwich/Greenwich.

The Stanwich Praise Team continues to diligently lead our congregation in singing contemporary praise songs and contemporary arrangements of hymns in our Sunday morning services. A very special "thank you" to Anna Jacobson, Tod Baharian and Bob Leinbach, for their consistency and faithfulness.

The Stanwich Adult Choir has ministered in our Sunday morning 9 a.m. services, in both morning services once a month, in our Fall and Christmas concerts, and in two of our Christmas Eve services. Their commitment and enthusiasm is admirable and contagious!

The Stanwich Handbell Ringers has ministered in our Fall and Christmas concerts and in two of our Resurrection Sunday morning services. This group is extremely energetic and there is never dull moment in any of our rehearsals.

The Stanwich Children's Choir participated in one of our Christmas Eve and Resurrection Sunday morning services. Thank you, parents, for bringing your children to the rehearsals and for your support. It has been a privilege to lead the children in singing and to work alongside Ann Roth and Sara Samuels.

We have had two very successful hymnsings: one in the Fall focusing on hymns of thanks to God and one in the Spring focusing on hymns of the cross. A very special thanks to Vaughn and Jane Dunn for hosting both hymn sings in their lovely home.

The Lord has blessed me to have the opportunity and privilege to be the Minister of Music at Stanwich/Greenwich. I am honored to be a part of the team here at Stanwich/Greenwich. Even though the number of participants has dropped in each team (with the exception of the praise team) the commitment and enthusiasm hasn't. Please pray that God will raise up new members, and that the anointing of the Holy Spirit would be our only source of power for music ministry. May God alone be magnified. (SOLI DEO GLORIA!)

Respectfully,
Leon G. Reid

Board of Elders – James McArdle

The Bylaws of Stanwich Church task the elders with spiritual leadership, financial stewardship, and oversight. The elders represent the Church in its relationship with the Pastors and assisting the Pastors in defining and implementing the overall mission, vision and strategy of Stanwich Church. It is the sincere desire of the Elder Board to faithfully execute the responsibilities entrusted to us, and particularly to hold Stanwich church, Pastors, staff, congregation and ministries in trust for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Much of our work this year was accomplished through the five working committees:

- Finance
- Governance
- Personnel
- Stewardship
- Prayer (new this year)

Elders also serve as liaisons to existing ministries in the church including:

- Buildings and Grounds
- Children/Youth
- Congregational Care
- Discipleship
- Greenwich Center for Hope and Renewal
- Missions
- Nominating Committee
- Stanwich Stamford
- Vision
- Worship

In this transitional year, the Elders have taken our call to prayer very seriously. We have been intentional about praying for the needy, for the spiritual welfare of the church and for our pastors. We implemented a shepherding component to our role to better care for the congregation. We completed and implemented a new Board Policy Manual which should be a great benefit for Elder boards to come. Additionally, we offered oversight and counsel to Pastor Nathan on several human resource matters including the hiring of Pastor Heather.

Last year, the Elder board co-chairs reported that there was work to be done in order to meet the budget before the June 30 fiscal year end. This year, we have a similar situation but with a larger shortfall – we are currently \$659,452 under budget as of May 21, 2019. While this is a less-than-ideal situation, we feel this is an invitation to rely on God and to trust Him. We are continuing to pray for discernment and wisdom. The budget for FY20, which has been approved by the Elders upon recommendation from the Finance Committee, has no increase.

The board extends heartfelt thanks to retiring Elders Emily Dreas, Eric Kampmann, Bill Voth and James McArdle, along with Treasurer Scott Mohr. Anticipating congregational approval at our annual meeting, we extend a warm welcome to incoming Elders Mitzi Lumbrá, Monona Tang, Mike O'Connor, and Jay Stout as well as incoming Treasurer Steve Schultz and Assistant Treasurer Jamie McNabb.

The elders have been blessed to witness God's continued work at Stanwich. Our hope for all of us at Stanwich is to experience God's fullness daily as we draw closer to Him, and that we would make Jesus known because of the joy of our salvation.

Respectfully submitted,
James McArdle-Chair

Rocco Abbate, Cindy Conarroe, Mark Curtis, Jen Deinard, Emily Dreas, Eric Kampmann,
Justin Luehman, Ed Morgan, Melodie Moss, Christine Walker, and Bill Voth

Report of the Clerk – Kimberly O’Hara

Regular Worship

During this past year, we have continued to have three regular Sunday worship services at 9:00am, 10:45am, at the Greenwich location and 6:00pm at the Stanwich Stamford location. During the summer, from June 10th, 2018 through Labor Day Sunday, September 9th, we had one morning service at the Greenwich location at 10am.

Special Services

On November 21st, 2018, we held a service on Thanksgiving Eve. On December 12th, we held our eighth annual Service of Remembrance and Hope at the Greenwich location for those who had suffered loss during the past few years. We also had a reception in Emmaus Hall following the service. We held three Christmas Eve Services, 4pm, 6pm and 8pm at the Greenwich location. All three services had candlelight and traditional carols. The services followed the same format except for the Children’s Choir (no adult choir) singing only at the 4pm. This involved our adult choir, soloists, and string quartet. All services were streamed live for those who wanted to watch from home. For Lent, we had our traditional Ash Wednesday service on Wednesday March 6th. Palm Sunday was April 14th. We held the Maundy Thursday Dinner on the 18th with communion in Emmaus Hall. We once again had only the traditional Passover food with projected explanations of the different food items. We also had 4 small cups at each place, three of which were consumed during the meal. A prayer vigil was held from 8pm on Thursday evening through noon on Good Friday with an additional open prayer service held in the basement of the church that went till midnight. On Good Friday, there was a service at 12:30pm on the last words from the cross. On Resurrection Sunday, April 21st, we held three services – 6:00am, 9am and 10:45am in Greenwich. There was no 6pm service in Stamford on Resurrection Sunday.

New Members

A total of twenty-seven new members covenanted with us during this past fall. We welcomed Lesley Bolton, Paul and Mary Gojkovich, Carolyn Loverro, Tim and Monica Lukes, Sharon Lund, Jamie and Stephanie McNab, Lori Messana, Jack and Karen Oerth, James and Melanie Paddon, John and Lindley Pless, Jordan and Noah Rhodes, Stephen and Catie Salyer, Heidi Marie Scharfman, Rob and Etiene Thuemmel, Robert and Carter Vann, and David and Amy West.

As of May 1, 2019, our total active membership is 458.

Funerals/Memorial Services

We held six funerals/memorial services at Stanwich Church during this past year. The services were for: Joseph Bracchita, Ken Connaughton, Charles Mosher, Josephine Dossarios, Kathryn Guimard, and Sandy Nyenhuis. In addition, four services were held off site and officiated by Stanwich pastors for Roger Sharp, Walter DeTour, Nils Anderson IV, Frances Adams. No services were held offsite.

2018:

Baptisms

During this past year, there were eleven infant baptisms: Dylan Kenneth Siebell Gruss, Stephen Peter

LaSala, Avery Joy Leuhman, Jacob Preston Mandes, Eliza Vale Siegrist, Pippilotta Grinnell Host, Taylor Alyson Vann, Mason Abigail Vann, Evelyn Scott Salyer, Joseph Averett Salyer and Sienna Vitale, and one adult baptism: Ken Connaughton.

Weddings

There were thirteen weddings that were held at Stanwich Church officiated by Stanwich pastors: Linnea Davis and Uriah Patterson, Sarah Crozier and Brandon Bajramoski, Valerie Shaw and Gabriel Kutter, Kirby Grabowski & Gad Lim, Katherine Mohr & Stephen Stahl. There were seven weddings that were held at Stanwich and officiated by non-Stanwich Pastors for Talita Colombini and Jesse Hupal, Deanna de Arango and Alistair Grant, Taylor Griffin and Austin Beard, Katie Lyvers and Ryan Fjat, Karla Duran and David Kast, Jackson Kiniry and Melissa Kabilio, and Kyrlyse Nash and Brendon Blackwell.

We had two marriages held off-site and officiated by one of our pastors for Jessica Sturm & Tommy Diehl, and Sara Zimmerman & David Mercer. Finally, we had one renewal of vows held off site and officiated by one of our pastors for Robin and Jennifer Prince.

Meetings

The Annual Meeting for 2018-2019 was held on June 18th, 2018.

Respectfully submitted in His love,
Kimberly O'Hara

Cemetery Report - Trey Reynolds

This is my fourth report since I was appointed Cemetery Superintendent which covers the financial data for this fiscal year to date through April 30th, and interments since last year's report.

Cemetery fund balances, revenues, expenses

Beginning Balance: \$217,384

Revenue: \$4,700

Fund Performance: \$5,466

Expenses: \$9,096

Balance 4/30/19: \$218,454

Interments

Ronald L. Kelly, May 25, 2018 Full burial Kelly family plot #62.

William Stover, 2/27/19, full burial, Stover family plot Section II, #4.

Eleanor Daniels Bronson, June 2, 2019, full burial, Bronson Plot Section II, #3.

Sales of Plots

Chuck Mosher bought a plot for his dad in Sarge's garden, plot number 58 for \$1,900.

Events/progress over the past year:

The cemetery seems to be in good shape. We have a couple of families who are interested in cleaning their tombstones at their expense and I am assisting with that.

STANWICH WORLD MISSIONS – Laura LaSpalluto
Proclaiming the gospel in word and works of compassion
across the world and across the street.

“Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” (Matthew 6:10)

When we pray the Lord’s Prayer together during worship, it is a powerful moment of solidarity with each other, with millions of fellow believers around the world, and with believers throughout the ages.

This prayer is a supplication, a plea for God’s peace and justice to come into the world, for the captives to be free, for healing to come to those who suffer, for the world to hear the Good News. This prayer is also an invitation. In one of the great mysteries of our faith, God reaches out to us and says, “Come, let us do this together.”

As individuals and as a community, we are invited to use what God has given us — financial resources, time, talents, influence, relationships — to make way for God’s kingdom to break into our families, our homes, our neighborhoods, our country, our world.

In Community

One of the ways we do this as a community is through the **Stanwich World Missions Fund**. Thanks to your generous designated giving, we are able to support 24 mission partners locally and internationally — partners that are evangelizing, caring for AIDS widows and orphans, going into the darkest places in Guatemala, working with teen moms in Norwalk, helping people break the grip of addiction, feeding the hungry, housing the homeless. Through our financial support of the Mission Fund, we get to go “to the ends of the earth” proclaiming the gospel in word and works of compassion.

The fund supports a balanced mix of ministries across geographic boundaries and four ministry categories: Outreach & Discipleship, Christian Recovery & Community Compassion, Global Medical Mission & Community Development and Christian Education.

In 2018-19, the Missions Fund supported these Partners and Projects:

Bridgeport Rescue Mission – Serving the hungry, homeless and addicted throughout coastal Fairfield County.

Care4Leaders (Ingrid Davis) -- Caring for ministry leaders around the world, especially in under-resourced areas.

Children’s Village (Co Holby) – Helping troubled teens become educationally proficient, economically productive and socially responsible members of their communities.

Christian Mission to Gaza – Ministering to the physical and spiritual needs of refugees in the Middle East.

Elim Fellowship – Equipping missionaries to provide culturally sensitive witness and disciple Muslim-background believers.

FOCUS – Ministry to high school students in New England.

Global Hope India -- Bringing critical resources to some of the poorest villages in India.

Global PEHT – Working to end human trafficking in New England.

Kairos Prison Ministry -- Bringing the light and friendship of Jesus Christ into the lives of prisoners and their families.

Last Call Ministries – Providing quality education rooted in the Christian faith for elementary school students in Guatemala City.

Lemonade International – Using education, gang prevention and community relief to break the cycles of poverty, violence, and injustice in Guatemala.

Living Water Church (Daouda Zonga) -- Ministry to West African immigrants, many who are of Muslim background.

Manhattan Christian Academy -- Christ-centered school with a Preschool through Grade 12 program.

Nireekshana ACET - AIDS clinics in India.

Pivot Ministries -- Christian residential treatment program for men challenged by alcohol and substance abuse.

Project Bako – Medical mission in Mali.

SIM (Gail and Quentin Friesen) - Healthcare leadership training.

Tyndale Theological Seminary -- Interdenominational, evangelical seminary training pastors, teachers, missionaries, church planters and denominational leaders.

Young Life -- Introducing young people to Christ .

Young Lives – Young Life for teen moms.

2018-19 PROJECTS (SHORT-TERM)

Chicago Hope -- Church plant in inner city Chicago.

Chuck Davis – Training and nurturing leaders around the world who are proclaiming the Gospel.

Mali Poultry Project – Establishing sustainable revenue stream to support local ministries in majority-Muslim context.

Russell Zimmermann – Serving refugees in the Middle East.

As Individuals: Compassion Outreach/Hands-on Service

As individuals, we are called to act out of the unique gifts God has given us, performing direct acts of service, like feeding the hungry, visiting the prisoner or praying with the sorrowful.

Stanwich World Missions offered many opportunities for mission and engagement:

- A Stanwich team ran in the Brooklyn Half-Marathon to raise awareness and funds to build wells in Africa (through World Vision), raising \$50,000.
- Stanwich joined a church coalition to support the Partnership to End Human Trafficking's efforts to establish a home and a program to serve women coming out of sex trafficking.
- The congregation sent 250 boxes containing toiletries, school supplies, clothing and stuffed animals to children in need through Operation Christmas Child.
- Three times a month, volunteers serve at the Bridgeport Rescue Mission's mobile soup kitchen in Norwalk.
- We prepared and served 600 meals for the men at Stamford's Pacific House shelter.
- We prepared and served 400 lunches at the New Covenant Center in Stamford.
- Our clothing ministry collected clothing and toiletries to be distributed at the New Covenant Center and Midnight Run.
- In connection with Pivot Sunday, we held a food drive for Pivot Ministries.
- We sent two teams to the Bridgeport Rescue Mission's Great Thanksgiving project, distributing clothes, turkeys and fixings in Norwalk and Bridgeport.

- We sent out two mission teams:
 - ... to Guatemala to work with mission partners Last Call Ministries and Lemonade International
 - ... a team to North Carolina for clean-up and restoration after Hurricane Florence
- We clothed, fed and ministered to the homeless in New York City on a Midnight Run (in conjunction with Allen Temple AME Church)
- Several members of the Stanwich congregation minister to those in prison through Kairos Prison Ministry

Engaging the Congregation

Moments for Mission

Our monthly Moment for Mission features one of our mission partners updating the congregation at each of our worship services. Members also have the chance to speak with them afterwards.

In October we held the 4th Annual Missions Celebration with the theme “On Earth As It Is In Heaven.” It brought together many of our missions’ partners and members of the congregation to celebrate God’s work in and through us. Our featured speaker was JR Woodward, church planter and author of several books on creating a missional community. He challenged us to imagine what God’s kingdom would look like in our homes, in our friendships, in our work and in our neighborhoods. This year, we switched the order of the evening, with the program first and dinner to follow, which gave people as much time as they wished to interact with our speaker and with the mission’s partners present.

It was well received and well attended (attendance increased by 50% over the previous year).

Looking Ahead

Our goal is to continue to increase the impact of Stanwich World Missions through growing the congregation’s engagement with mission. This includes increasing the number of people engaged, and the level of their engagement by deepening our commitment to the Great Commission.

In Christ’s service,

Stanwich World Missions Committee: Zahya Beall, Christian Davis, Steve LaSala (treasurer) Laura LaSpalluto (chair), Ellen Morrison, MaryAnn O’Connor, Melissa O’Neill, John Skelly and Sharon Sunoo.

**Internal Auditor's Report
FY2019 May 21, 2019**

As required by the By-Laws of Stanwich Congregational Church, I have reviewed the accounting processes, reporting and internal controls and other aspects of the Church's operations, as in effect during the current fiscal year of the Church. The processes and controls are documented in (i) the Stanwich Congregational Church Accounting Policies and Procedures Manual, (ii) the Stanwich Congregational Church Children's and Youth Ministries Policies/Guidelines, and (iii) the Stanwich Congregational Church Personnel Policies Manual. These policies, procedures and guidelines were used as the basis for my review.

My review included discussions with the following individuals during the Church's current fiscal year: Sheila Hyland, the Business Director; Matthew Lund, the Bookkeeper; and Judy Fine, the Financial Secretary. All individuals with whom I spoke were cooperative and knowledgeable about the controls and processes they oversaw.

In addition to my review, I attended and participated in the majority of the monthly meetings of the Church's finance committee during the current fiscal year, so that I am aware and have been part of any discussions relating to the Church's financial operations.

The materials and functional areas that I reviewed related to the following:

- Collections/other donations and related deposits
- Check disbursements and supporting documentation
- Credit card expenditures and employee reimbursements
- Budgeted vs. actual expenditures
- Bank and investment account statements and associated reconciliations
- Procedures of the Children's Ministry
- Designated missions' donations
- Prior reports of internal and external auditors

Based on my review, I can confirm that (i) the Church currently has in place financial and operational controls and processes that are designed to reduce the risk of material fraud and misstatement of financial results as well as other relevant operational risks and (ii) no material issues came to my attention during my review indicating that those controls and processes are not functioning effectively to reduce such risks.



Mark Tibberts
Internal Auditor