

# THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF GREEN'S FARMS

Westport, Connecticut



## ANNUAL REPORT May 2009 - May 2010 for the 299th Annual Meeting May 2, 2010

### I N D E X

Acting Senior Minister.....	3
Church Clerk.....	8
Deacons Department.....	9
Education Department.....	10
Fellowship Department.....	5
Financial Review Committee.....	23
GFC 300 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration.....	7
GFC Seniors .....	16
Membership & Community Department.....	15
Minister of Music, Dr. Eileen Hunt.....	5
Moderator.....	4
Outreach Department.....	17
Personnel Committee.....	20
Response to the Financial Review Committee.....	25
Senior Minister.....	1
Stewardship Department.....	21
Trustees Department.....	22
Worship & Music Department.....	26

## **Senior Minister Annual Report 2009-2010**

*“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. (Jeremiah 29:11)*

Looking back, 2009-10 was a year filled with plans. As soon as the last annual meeting ended I sprang into action and, with help and input from many of you, raced to submit a 10-page proposal to the Lilly Endowment in time for their May 14 deadline. The plan requested a grant to fund a three-month sabbatical, and as I’ve said before, the process of coming up with a detailed plan of action was a gift in and of itself. Being forced to make plans gives us permission to dream, and it grants us clarity about who we are and what we hope to be about. When I was done writing I assumed all the planning was done, but when our church was blessed to receive the Clergy Renewal Grant in October the planning to keep all the details of this church going throughout the sabbatical began in earnest!

After thinking every “t” had been crossed and every “i” dotted, I left for Florida in February. Within two weeks I started to face a series of unplanned events, the biggest of which was that my long awaited trip to Africa, the focus of my sabbatical, would have to wait a bit longer. Now what to do? What do you do when careful plans just don’t work out? After exploring lots of options I spoke with the folks at Lilly. Their warmth, care and sound judgment were another gift that put me back on track and took away my worries. These things happen all the time, they said. Set some money aside and take the trip at another time. And whatever you do, don’t cut your sabbatical short. Take the time to do the real work of a sabbatical, the work of renewal. Meanwhile, all sorts of plans had started to unravel back here at church. Just like the Nativity Pageant before it, the Combined Choir event was shut down by ferocious weather. In fact, wind and rain not only affected our homes and schools, the loss of electricity and flooding shut down the church office for five days. Fortunately some dedicated folks braved the storm, lit candles and lifted prayers, keeping our march toward 300 years of uninterrupted Sunday morning worship going strong. Thank you to everyone who rose to that unplanned, unforgettable occasion.

Fortunately for a day like today, concerts, like pageants and trips, can be rescheduled. And that got me thinking about all the planning that’s been going on in preparation for our 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It’s true as I found, plans are extremely helpful – they get us started, give us direction, enable us to work together, and point us to new possibilities. But life being what it is, whenever we pursue our own plans we’re also sure to face the unplanned, the unscheduled, the unexpected. What I learned on sabbatical is that when plans go off course, as they surely will, we need more than a “Plan B”, or deep breathing techniques. We need God, and we need each other. We need to shower each other with the love that God showered on the world when he unexpectedly sent us his Son.

This year our Worship and Music team came up with a new idea, brilliant and simple by design – the pink care note. How many of you have sent one after hearing a joy or concern, the challenge of an unplanned event in someone’s life, raised here in church? How many of you have received a note of encouragement on a pink card? I know I have, and the warmth and energy Lynn and I get from your personal notes is beyond words.

Or, consider this:

When you look back on the big events in your life – a wedding, a baptism, a funeral – what is it that you remember? Is it the way everything went according to plan, the precise execution of every detail? Or, is it the fluke, the mishap, the curveball that came out of nowhere? Chances are it's the unexpected, the things that catch us by surprise making us laugh or cry (or both!) that stick with us. This is the real stuff of stories that get told and retold as we remember events over time.

God has big plans for each one of us, and he has plans for our life together as a church, plans to prosper us, and not to harm us. When we keep the faith and pray for one another, encourage one another, love one another, those unplanned events become a means for us to see just how good God is after all. Supporting one another in his name is how we discover the hope and the future God has for us. Who knows, maybe this was his plan after all!

I want to take this opportunity to personally thank you for making my sabbatical possible and for giving me the gift of renewal. May this anniversary year be a time of renewal for us all, as together we discover God's plans for our future.

The Joy continues...

Rev. Jeffrey P. Rider  
Senior Minister

## **Acting Senior Minister Annual Report 2009-2010**

As I write a note for this year's annual report, I am preparing to return the helm to Jeff as he is due back from his Sabbatical. We all can look back at this past year as a productive and faith-enriching time together on all levels. I can only feel excited for next year as Jeff, refreshed, restored and inspired, can share new ideas and a new vision for our ever-expanding "body." I would like to share a quote from Emilie Griffin's book *Wilderness Time*:

*Perseverance is needed to live out our fundamental commitment: to serve God, not randomly but over the long run. Not unlike a marriage or a religious vocation, this way of life is transforming; it **will** change us. Over and over again we must make clean breaks, fresh starts, and new beginnings.*

On behalf of Jeff and myself, I want to thank our lay leaders and our entire staff who give their all in service to God. Special thanks to our Moderator, Bob Atkins, and to our department chairs for their faithful commitment: Kaye May (Deacons), Brad Cosgrove (Education), Susie Daut and Sally Judd (Fellowship), Mark Kammert (Trustees), Claire England and Jeff Booth (Outreach), Natasha Bowens (Membership), Eric and Grace Chaing (Stewardship), Bill Rubidge and Martha Eidman (Worship & Music).

With thankful hearts let us embrace this most amazing day, every day!

With Joy,

Amy M. Forte  
Associate Minister

## **Moderator Annual Report 2009-2010**

As I finish my first year as Moderator, I would like to express my deep gratitude for the honor and privilege of serving God and the membership of Green's Farms Church.

When I became your Moderator, not having the experience of being the Vice-Moderator, I could not have anticipated the help I would need – but more importantly – the help I would get! With constant guidance from Dave Braun and Jeff Rider, along with a lot of help from all of the members of the Church Council and the GFC staff, we made it through the year without too many scrapes and bruises. I have come to appreciate even more than before, the talented and dedicated staff and volunteers we have in our church. There are so many “unsung heroes” who do everything necessary week-in and week-out to keep our church running smoothly and efficiently. We already know that we have an A-1 staff, but what we didn't know was how well they would do while Jeff was away on sabbatical. Not to worry! Our staff, led by Amy Forté was up to the task as they proved week after week – even against difficult situations such as the storm that ripped through our town and knocked out the power for nearly six days – that they are the best of the best and I thank every one of them.

It's been an exciting and busy year...and a lot was accomplished. The new computer system is up and running and our staff continues to find new and innovative features to utilize in their daily work. Our Youth Group came up with many ways to make a difference by working alongside a number of our partner ministries in order to help improve the lives of so many in need. Our Sunday School continues to grow and our volunteer teachers have such a positive impact on our children at such an important and impressionable age. We once again added new members throughout the year which keeps our church family growing and vibrant. Our adult bible study classes are exciting and well attended. A third Covenant Group was formed and is now meeting on a regular basis. And once again, during the most difficult recession many of us have ever seen, our church members and friends proved how generous and caring they are by increasing Stewardship to record numbers, which enabled our Outreach Department to expand its efforts to a new high in helping our partner ministries.

We continue to have meaningful worship services with music that other churches can only wish for. And congratulations to our Music Minister, Eileen Hunt, who recently celebrated 25 years at Green's Farms Church!

As we look forward to beginning our 299<sup>th</sup> year, we can begin to anticipate the joyous celebration of our 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. I am so excited to see what God has in store for Green's Farms Church next year. And working together, I believe that He will help us all discern just the right way forward.

Bob Atkins  
Moderator

## **Minister of Music Annual Report 2009-2010**

The 2009-2010 church year has been an exceptional one for the Music Ministry of Green's Farms Church. Throughout the year many dedicated volunteers have given freely of their time and talent to make significant contributions to our worship services. Our wonderful section leaders have taught us, inspired us, and brought great beauty and meaning to our weekly worship services, and to our celebrations during the church year. We have hosted many guest instrumentalists who have joined our singers to praise God through music. We are truly blessed with an outstanding Music Ministry.

Some of the highlights of the season included a celebratory Homecoming Sunday in September, complete with Jonathan Henken, bagpipes, and Kenneth Tedeschi, trumpet; a service in October featured music which was all set from the book of Psalms; a festive Thanksgiving service with wonderful music for trumpet and organ, again featuring Kenneth Tedeschi; outstanding music throughout the season of Advent; our traditional Christmas Eve services with strings, harp, and choir. Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday and Easter Sunday in April brought yet more wonderful music to enhance our worship on these special days, including selections from the Mozart *Requiem* and Handel's *Messiah*.

Our 2010 Combined Choir event, featuring selections from Felix Mendelssohn's *Elijah* was sung on March 7 at Saugatuck and will be offered on May 2 at GFC.

Our section leaders have played a very important role in our Music Ministry this year. Samia Bahu, Selena Moretz, Sanjay Merchant and Steven Magnuson are an inspiration to all of us! In addition to their exceptional singing during worship services, these four people have worked behind the scenes in some very important ways. They have offered excellent vocal coaching for our choir; and they have sung at the Advent Vesper Service in December as well as other special services during the year. In addition, I would like to thank Culver Casson and Paris Cheffer who have joined us from time to time during the past year. We look forward to hearing much more from all of them during the 2010-2011 church year!

With the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of GFC being celebrated throughout the 2010-2011 program year, I have already been hard at work planning for some special musical components of the celebration. Last fall, I received approval from the committee working on planning the 300<sup>th</sup> to move ahead with three musical commissions to be part of the celebration. I am delighted to tell you that James Woodman (Cambridge, MA) is writing a multi-movement work for organ, brass and timpani, and Edward Thompson (Westport, CT) is writing an anthem for our choir. James Gertmenian (Minneapolis, MN) is writing a new hymn text for us. The Woodman and Thompson works are scheduled to be completed by September 15, 2010, and they will both be programmed during the latter part of 2010 and the first half of 2011. The Gertmenian hymn will be ready for Homecoming Sunday, September 12, 2010. I have been working closely with all three composers during the past few months and I could not be more pleased or excited about these three new works which we will have the privilege of introducing to the congregation as part of our anniversary celebration. In addition, we will feature works which have previously been commissioned by GFC during our anniversary year, including the anthem commissioned in 1994 for William Bryant's retirement, and the works commissioned in 2003 to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our current Meetinghouse. There will be special musical events throughout the entire celebration year.

On a personal note, I want to say how honored I am to have begun my twenty-fifth year serving the Music Ministry of GFC. Thank you for all of the good wishes and for the spectacular flowers which I received on Easter. I look forward to continuing the celebration all year long! I am truly grateful for this wonderful congregation and for all of the support for our Music Ministry.

Without the help and support of many people, our Music Ministry would not be possible. First and foremost, I want to express my deepest gratitude to the members of our wonderful Chancel Choir. Week in and week out, we rehearse and sing music for each and every worship service. It is a privilege to work with you! Our dedicated office staff helps me in so many ways: JoAnne LaBella, Alison Fisher and Bob Custer, thanks for everything you do for us! This winter, it has been a great pleasure working closely with Amy Forté, and I am so grateful for her leadership, energy, good humor and wonderful collegiality. And a huge thank you to the congregation for all of your enthusiastic support for the Music Ministry.

Dr. Eileen Hunt  
Minister of Music

## **Green's Farms Church 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration**

### **REMEMBER, REJOICE, RENEW**

June 12, 2011 will mark the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Green's Farms Church, or as it is more officially known, the Congregational Church of Green's Farms. As you know, this event was also a major step in the development of the Town of Westport as an independent community. During the past year, the 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee has been organized and is starting to put in place specific plans for a whole variety of activities that relate to our theme: **Remember, Rejoice, Renew**. As we have noted in previous presentations, the intent of the celebration is not just to focus on what happened 300 years ago, but also to focus on the present and the future of our congregation.

The events that will mark the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary will take place throughout the 2010-2011 Church year and will end in an all-Church celebration on Sunday, June 12, 2011. Our goal will be to develop an on-going celebration that is fun, memorable and deeply meaningful.

Examples of the activities that are being planned / considered for the major categories include:

- Remember
  - Cemetery Tours conducted by Peter Jennings;
  - Updated Church history written by Michaela McCabe;
  - Oral / video history developed by a professional TV team;
  - Bronze plaque honoring our more recent ministers to complement the existing Meetinghouse plaques;
  - Specific Christian Education rotation relating to our history;
  - Reprise of "historic" sermons;
  - One or more lectures relating to the early days history of our Church, Town and area by a noted historian (perhaps in conjunction with the Westport Historical Society);
  - Heritage Bike-a-Thon tour of historic area churches.
- Rejoice
  - Special Music commissions – Composition for Organ and Brass Quintet, Anthem for the GFC Choir and a new hymn text to a familiar hymn tune;
  - Special music performances;
  - Gala Celebratory Luncheon on June 12, 2011;
  - 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Quilt;
  - Banners and bunting around the Meetinghouse.
- Renew – activities under this heading will include a variety of special community outreach activities and a spiritual renewal focus within our own Congregation.

The 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee leadership team includes Bob and Karen Atkins, Nancy and Dave Braun, Joan Burgess, Sarah and Tony Menchaca, Jennifer and Duncan O'Brien, K.P. Pascarella, Allen Raymond, Susan Schmidt, and Jan Topercer as well as all the members of the GFC staff. In the coming weeks and months, we will be reaching out to many more of you to volunteer to help on specific assignments, all of which we believe will add to the collective enjoyment and appreciation of this important event.

On Heritage Sunday, June 6, we will describe more specifics of the activities to come, unveil the official "Logo" for the celebration year and introduce opportunities for all the members of the Congregation to get involved. We hope you all look forward to being part of a joyous celebration of 300 years of a community committed to Christ.

Diane & Steve Parrish and Mary Ellen & Jim Marpe, Co-Chairs

## The Church Clerk Annual Report 2009-2010

TOTAL ACTIVE RESIDENT MEMBERSHIP, January 1, 2009		630
MEMBERS RECEIVED during 2009		
By Affirmation of Faith and Confirmation	22	
By Transfer and Reaffirmation of Faith	<u>31</u>	
Total Received	53	
MEMBERS REMOVED FROM ACTIVE RESIDENT MEMBERSHIP during 2009		
By Death	1	
Other	<u>77</u>	
Total Removed	78	
TOTAL ACTIVE RESIDENT MEMBERSHIP, December 31, 2009		605

### THE BOOK OF LIFE May 1, 2009 - April 30, 2010

Baptisms	23	
Marriages	1	
Eileen Hunt and Mark English		February 14, 2010
Deaths of GFC Members		
Martha Kimberly		October 14, 2009
Richard Siebrasse		March 27, 2010
Memorial Services held at GFC		
Martha Kimberley		October 23, 2009
Mardi Heilman		October 31, 2009
Robert Shepherd		April 10, 2010
Richard Siebrasse		April 23, 2010

## **Deacons Department Annual Report 2009-2010**

Caring for others in the church allows the deacons to be extensions of the pastoral care that is provided by the ministers and other friends in the church. Whether it is through sending cards of support or condolence or to remind people that they have friends who are thinking of them at Thanksgiving and Valentine's Day, we try to connect with all the members of the church, even those who can only attend infrequently.

In addition to cards, the deacons deliver flowers to show that we care. This year, we began a relationship with a new florist and instead of having fresh flowers every week tried having silk flowers with changing bouquets monthly and fresh flowers on the first Sunday of the month. This has met with mixed reviews and we are still in discussion about how our flower arrangements will be for next year. We do appreciate the feedback we have received and can assure you that we will be making changes in our flower arrangements for next year. We did deliver poinsettias at Christmas and beautiful spring plants at Easter and that will continue.

Our annual Women's Christmas Coffee was a wonderful opportunity for ladies at the church to visit with old friends and meet new members. Sharing this event with the Membership Department allows us the chance to bring new members into a festive yet relaxed atmosphere where they can meet other members and we can welcome in the Christmas season in a beautiful setting...this year, at Walter and Judy Hlawitschka's home.

Deacons have the honor of helping provide the hospitality at memorial services. Being present before the service as the family awaits the service, we provide water, tissues and directions throughout the church. If the family wishes to have a reception after a service, the deacons play a role in helping in the planning of the reception as well as in setting up and cleaning up afterwards. The memorial services this year were for Marti Kimberly, Mardi Heilman, Rob Shepherd and Dick Siebrasse. It is very meaningful to be able to play a behind the scenes role for families at such a significant juncture in their lives.

Friendship and assistance are provided to those needing assistance in getting into the church. The Women's Club has donated a wheelchair for anyone who may need assistance accessing the church. The deacons are pleased to be able to help make church available to anyone who wants to worship there.

Since so much of our task in doing our pastoral care is dependent on good communications, we are grateful to all the ministers who keep us informed of friends in our congregation who may be in need. That communication and guidance is enhanced greatly by the knowledge and willingness to help which is always smilingly provided by Alison Fisher and JoAnne LaBella. Whether it's setting up the social hall, arranging flowers, making coffee or other logistics, Bob Custer is invaluable to us and we thank him.

Our deacons this year have given generously of their time and energy. Thank you to Carolyn Raymond, David Feliciano, Paul Muller, Sue Fiore, Barbara Cross, Martha Bonti, Lucy Corey and Karen Eickhoff. I would also like to thank Sandy Atwood, deacon emeritus, who is always available for consultation or volunteer support whenever I call.

Kaye May  
Chair of Deacons

# Education Department Annual Report 2009-2010

## Children's Ministry

*Contributed by Lynn Rider*

I write this while preparing to join Jeff on the final leg of his sabbatical, and I want to thank our congregation and staff for creating the opportunity for me to share experiences with him in Florida and the Southwest during his time of spiritual renewal. I could not have joined him and kept up with the Sunday School without your support. You are a blessing to our family and we are grateful.

### New Life

Once again we found ourselves bursting at the seams during the fall as we scrambled to find room for all the children of Green's Farms Church in 09-10! We have been blessed by the continued contributions of teachers Emily Warren and Ingrid Johnson in the three-and four-year-old room, and by the new and wonderfully creative teaching team of Celia and Emma Campbell-Mohn in the kindergarten room. These dedicated teachers develop age appropriate ways of teaching the Bible stories to our youngest students, and do a remarkable job of growing young children and parents alike in the faith. Their extraordinary service is the backbone of our ministry to children.

The elementary students were taught by a host of talented volunteer teachers who rotate the teaching of workshops on a monthly basis. And the middle schoolers enjoyed learning about faith with their teachers, Brad Cosgrove, Dwight Meyer and Cal Rider. Additionally, once a month the rotation story is brought to the adults in a sermon in worship. This allows everyone in the family to share questions and ideas about the same story when riding home from church or sitting at the dinner table together.

Another way the Education Department rose to the challenge of increased participation and space constraints was the practice of big tent or festival days to provide special activities on large attendance Sundays. Other highlights of the program during the year included these memorable events:

On Thanksgiving Sunday, students in grades 1 – 8 gathered to participate in our fourth annual event, a mission project of partnering with the Outreach Department to collect food for local pantries which have seen increased demand. This activity helped the children to live out Jesus' great commandment to "Love your God with all your heart and your neighbor as yourself"

In the winter we celebrated our fifth annual Bible Bee. Children learned to recite the words from Matthew's gospel, "Do Not Worry." (see "Biblical Literacy," below).

Students had the opportunity to join their parents and worship God with special music from the Good News Gospel Choir and the men of Pivot House.

Despite severe winter weather interruptions we were able to mark the season of Lent by creating Lenten table runners for families to use at home to remind us that as Christians we spend those 40 in training to prepare our hearts for Easter.

On Palm Sunday the entire Sunday school from first through twelfth grade assembled for a Palm Sunday Festival Day filled with a Stations of the Cross walk through Holy Week produced by the Confirmation class, crafts, and a take home workbook aimed at familiarizing students with

the story of Holy Week. In addition our kindergarten class delighted the Meetinghouse and started the morning off by helping Amy Forté deliver a children's message about the events of each day of Holy Week.

The Education Department would like to thank all the volunteers who teach our children, contributing ideas, time, talents, energy, creativity, patience, and a whole lot of fun, making Sunday School the place we all want to be on Sunday mornings! In addition to thanking all the volunteer teachers, the Department would also like to recognize Maureen Fay for her kind, competent, and loving presence in the Nursery with our youngest children (and their parents!), and Teri Nasi for her energy, enthusiasm, and organization managing the wild logistics of the workshops. These two responsible and reliable staff members make a real difference in the life of our church.

### **Biblical Literacy**

The Education Department focused its curriculum for the Bible Detectives this year on the theme of going green. "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it." (Genesis 2:15) The very first job that God gave to people in the Bible was to take care of his world. This year in Sunday School the Bible Detectives explored ways we can do the work God asked us to do. We learned about a host of Bible stories, studying each for the hidden meaning, trying to engage curious, inquisitive minds in learning about God and his people's role in creation through varied activities and experiences including the building of our own garden.

Increasing biblical literacy and providing opportunities for faith formation serve as the organizing principles for planning curriculum and events. In addition to exposing students to a new Bible story in each rotation, the Sunday School taught children how to pick up their Bibles and locate a text. Throughout the year children are encouraged to become familiar with Bible stories for both information and transformation, as a tool for encouraging their personal relationship with the God revealed in Jesus Christ.

### **Special Events**

What an amazing year for special events! In June of 2009 we gave brand new Bibles to our 4 year olds and 3rd graders at our end of year Sunday Sundae celebration.

Fall 2009 was kicked off with a wonderful Homecoming event on our front lawn filled with hotdogs, a giant air slide, and lots of reunions.

The Live Nativity gave families in our church and the wider Westport community a unique chance to prepare for the coming of Christmas. We made gingerbread crèches, crafted cards for the troops, sipped hot cocoa, supported the youth mission trip with a bake sale, listened to carols sung by the Staples High School singers, and best of all got to see the manger scene depicted by our youth group and real camels, donkeys and sheep up close and personal in our church parking lot!

The Nativity Pageant welcoming the Christmas Star, delayed by a winter storm and produced during Epiphany after all, was surely director Karen Kosinski's best yet!

The traditional Easter egg hunt provided a chance for our community to gather for a wild scramble on that beautiful morning giving 120 children age 11 and under the chance to celebrate New Life together.

Who can believe it's already time to get ready for another class of students to receive brand new Bibles? They grow up fast.

## **Youth Ministry**

*Contributed by Amy Forté*

The 2009-2010 church year proved to be an exciting time for Youth Ministry. Icthus our high school discussion group, *averaged* between 25-30 participants. The group continues to meet once a week on Thursday nights and is led by myself, Dwight Meyer and Jan Topercer. In light of budget constraints we went back to meeting at the church and my home. We also had once a month meetings, called Soul Tending, for just the upperclassmen which proved to be a great success. Icthus continued its outreach efforts by hosting our annual dinner for Pivot House. This year we also hosted a dinner for a local National Guard troop that was being deployed to Afghanistan. Additionally, Icthus ran a Valentine's party for the kids and families at St. Luke's Lifeworks. In the spring Icthus followed up the troops' dinner with an arts and crafts afternoon for the kids of the soldiers. We had the opportunity to participate in a drum circle, which was great fun and helped bring the group together. Icthus continued to participate in monthly events as well including; Laser Tag, a camping trip to Merck forest, and a ski day to Butternut. The year brought about a continued maturing community of faith within this group of dedicated teenagers.

We were pleased with the performances from our high school band, *God Squad*. Tom Wiggin led the participants in three appearances over the course of the year and did an excellent job. The band included as they did last year middle school talent, which enriched the performances, and laid the groundwork for continuing strong performances.

### **Confirmation**

This year's Confirmation Class has 19 8<sup>th</sup> graders being confirmed. The classes met regularly on Tuesday evenings from 6:00pm - 7:30pm. The class shared a dinner that was provided by the Confirmation families. We had one retreat in January. We participated in three "Faith Adventures," our outreach component of the class. We took the class to the Pivot House, the Carver Center and St Luke's Lifeworks. Overall, the class developed close relationships with one another, and ten of them will be coming on the Mission Trip in June. They will be taking an important step on their lifelong faith journey when they are confirmed on May 16<sup>th</sup>.

### **Mission Trip**

In June roughly 35 senior high participants will be traveling to the Cheyenne River Reservation with Simply Smiles for the annual Mission Trip. This is a new mission site for Simply Smiles and it serves the families and the children in particular by providing a summer camp for the kids belonging to the Boys and Girls club on the reservation. The week we are there we will be providing light construction work on existing homes, hosting the children and youth for their summer camp, and putting on a Peace Concert on our final day there. Additionally, we will be running another Mission Trip at the end of July for an elite group that will be traveling to Oaxaca, Mexico with Simply Smiles. The newest mission for Simply Smiles is providing food, education, and medical care to the mountain villages surrounding Oaxaca. There are 13 individuals going made up of adults, Icthus alumni and the juniors and seniors of Icthus. The leaders this year for our South Dakota trip are, Dwight Meyer, Amy Forte, Karen Kosinski, Dan England, Brad Cosgrove, Judy Hlawitschka, and Rob Custer. This year the participants held smaller fundraising events such as; Live Nativity, a Mardi Gras and a Coffee House.

It has been a pleasure to serve the youth of this church. I have incredible support from the parents who have helped to nurture the faith life of their children. Lay and staff members alike have each contributed throughout the year to offer enjoyable and meaningful experiences for the youth of our church.

## Women's Ministry

*Contributed by Diana Mrotek*

**The Women's Study Group** is a committed group of women who gather to discuss Bible readings every Thursday morning in the parlor at 10-11:15 AM. In the fall, we began with reading and discussing One and Two Samuel, as we continue our multi-year project of "walking through the Bible." Then, for four weeks in January, 2010, we took a break from this project by doing a workshop, entitled, "Unwrapping Your Spiritual Gifts." After this, we began our current Bible Study, which is One and Two Kings. By the end of June, 2010, we should be well on our way through Two Kings, and ready to begin the Prophets in the fall. We continue to add new members to the group as we meet, always being eager to incorporate new women into this group of enthusiastic women who yearn to know more about the Hebrew Bible and our Christian heritage. It has been a year of new insights, nurtured spirituality, and growing friendships.

**The Prayer Shawl Project** is part of the Women's Study Group, and women have been busy producing shawls to give to those who need the nurturing comfort offered by these shawls, knitted or crocheted while saying prayers for those who receive these gifts. The Bible group then decides who among our congregation most needs these shawls, and then they are distributed by our members. So far this year, 7 shawls have been distributed to those in our congregation.

**Sophia's Circle** is our church-wide women's group that meets five to six times each year. *The Mission of Sophia's Circle is to support women in friendship and love, in celebrations and challenges, as we share and grow in faith together.* This year, the following programs have been presented:

- Oct 7, 2009, 12:00 noon to 2 PM. Lunch and Walk in the Woods, held at EarthPlace in Westport, hosted by Blythe Ashton. This is a time for conversation, and Christian fellowship over lunch and walking in the fall beauty of the Westport woods.
- November 18, 7:30 PM. *The Gift of Gratitude*, a time to share all of God's gifts in our lives. This Thanksgiving gathering has become a favorite for the women of GFC. It was held at and hosted by Jo Ann Davidson in her new home.
- January 30, 2010. *Come in Out of the Cold*, a day retreat focusing on finding understanding and even spiritual transformation in these times of change in the nation and in our lives. This wonderful, well-attended retreat, led by the Rev. Anne Bonney, and held at St. Brigitta's Convent in Darien.
- April 15 at 7:30, *Sophia's Spring Open House* at Lucy Corey's home. We gathered around an outdoor fireplace to share in Christian fellowship under the stars. Wine and cheese was served; the program was to share Sophia gatherings experiences, favorite events, and hopes for future events.
- May 7-8, overnight retreat in Litchfield at Joan Burgess' home. Planning is now taking place having to do with the theme and content of this annual retreat, which we all look forward to and love attending. We take long walks, have wonderful conversations with our GFC friends, visit places of interest, such as the local Abbey and Zen gardens, and generally, have an overnight experience that infuses us with energy and spiritual nurturance.
- June 24, from 4-6 PM, our annual *Bring a Beach Chair and a Friend* will be held at Compo Beach. This gathering is an opportunity for old friends to gather with new ones to watch the sunset and enjoy Christian fellowship. It is one of the most well attended, enjoyable gatherings of our program.

A Planning Group meeting will take place in June in which we will make our plans for the next year. This group consists of the following women: Anne Alcyone, Lynn Anvari, Blythe Ashton, Karen Atkins, Joan Burgess, Lucy Corey, Jo Ann Davidson, Lisa Kammert, KP Pascarella, Jan Topercer and Carolyn Twiname. Diana Mrotek serves as Director of Sophia's Circle and Carolyn Twiname serves as Event Chairperson.

### **Prayer Ministry**

This has been a year of growth in the Prayer Ministry, by God's grace. We now have five Prayer Circles, led by Amy Forté, Diana Mrotek, Diane Parrish and Jeff Rider, each of whom pray the Prayer Chain once a month. Since at least one group meets each week, those on the Prayer Chain are prayed for once each week. Amy Forté leads a Youth Group Circle that meets on Thursday nights, Diana Mrotek leads the Second (12 noon) and Third (11:30 AM) Thursday Prayer Circles, Diane Parrish leads the Fourth Thursday (8:30 AM) group, and Jeff Rider leads the first Thursday (11:30 AM) group. In all, there are a total 25 people, not counting the Youth Group (which is variable) involved in Prayer Circles at Green's Farms Church.

## **ADULT EDUCATION / FAITH FORMATION**

*Contributed by John Twiname and Dan England*

In between and around Dan England's "Tour of the Bible," Diana Mrotek and John Twiname introduced two courses that dealt with the application of Christian faith to social/political issues. The first, in the fall, was entitled "Seeing Gray in a World of Black and White" – an attempt to develop an orientation among Christians that can reduce polarization, thereby making social/political issues more discussable.

This course was followed up by John Twiname who presented a Forum on Health Care Reform, critiquing and discussing various options that have been put forth. This forum topic proved to be of such interest that John repeated the forum a couple of weeks later to another "full house" in the Parlor.

In February, more than 30 people showed up after a worship service to express opinions on the place of social/political issues in our church – both from the pulpit (a couple of sermons had touched on political issues) and in forums such as the one on health care. The consensus was that we need to consider social/political issues, especially in the church, but with a minimum of partisanship from the pulpit and a maximum of forums to allow all opinions to be expressed – all with the purpose of encouraging us to use our faith and God's Word in developing our social witness as citizens.

Then in the spring, Diana and John followed up on this encouragement by presenting the first three sessions of a course entitled "Confronting the Controversies- Biblical Perspectives on Tough Issues." The remaining four sessions will be scheduled later.

### **Tour of the Bible**

This year was the travel adventure of a "Grand Tour of the Bible" led by Dan England. It started off in the Garden of Eden, moved to Rome and wound up in Heaven, that is, the Book of Revelation. These three stops constituted, perhaps, the three most important books of the Bible and those who ventured out to their destinations learned the origins, the theological heart and the end of mortal and Christian life. We had excellent attendance and lively discussion along the way. It was an amazing trip.

## **Fellowship Department Annual Report 2009-2010**

The Fellowship committee has struggled quite a bit with membership this year. Many members left to either pursue other departments within the church or because they were moving out of Westport. Maggie Parkhurst joined in the fall and Jessie Domenico is now contemplating it. I was able to tap into a list of subs (Fellowship Angels) who pinch hit for us but we really are in need of some additional members for next year. The Confirmation families continue to be very helpful (February-Mid May) and the extra hands are greatly appreciated. We have scaled back our offerings quite a bit on Sundays that fall during break as coverage is always difficult to secure. I am usually only able to find 1-2 people available and willing to help. On a normal Sunday, a smoothly run Coffee hour takes 4 people to set up, serve and clean-up. Some of the projects that we've undertaken this year include: complete clean-up/reorganization of kitchen cupboards (both social hall and parlor) and pantry, Christmas tree decorating, End-of-the year kitchen cleaning and Summer Fellowship coverage.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Susie Daut  
Fellowship Co-Chair

## **Membership and Community Department Annual Report 2009-2010**

This year, the Membership Committee has welcomed sixteen new families and individuals to Green's Farms Church. We kicked off the fall with a chock-full Inquireres Series - 10 families! It has been a great year getting to know everyone and introducing them to GFC, and we look forward to their involvement in the life of the church.

The Committee reached out to hundreds of new Westporters through two mailings over the course of the year, and the bread ministry was extremely active on a monthly basis thanks to new visitors at Sunday services. Together with the Deacons, Membership also assisted with the annual Women's Christmas Tea. A great success once again, the tea was graciously hosted this year by Judy Hlawitschka.

As this is the end of most members' two-year tenure, when the new school year begins there will be many new faces on the Membership and Community Committee. Some of those faces will belong to members who have joined over my short time as chair, and I think that fact stands as evidence to what a wonderful and welcoming place Green's Farms Church indeed is, and how quickly it becomes part of the fabric of our everyday lives. Thank you to everyone who has helped me and made my time as Membership Chair so memorable.

Respectfully Submitted,

Natasha Bowens  
Chair, Membership and Community Department

## **GFC Seniors Annual Report 2009-2010**

During the 09-10 Church Year about 75 seniors and friends participated in our diversified events as listed below:

- Round The World in 60 Minutes ( pictures and highlights of the Long's worldwide cruise)
- Boat Trip to Sheffield Island
- Sightseeing Cruise Around Manhattan
- Tour of New Yankee Stadium
- Annual September Planning Meeting (to suggest and vote on events for the next 12 months)
- Tour of Philip Johnson Glass House in New Canaan
- Visit to Yale Center for British Art
- Holiday Production- THIS WONDERFUL LIFE – at Westport Playhouse
- Annual Christmas Luncheon at GFC
- Westport First Selectman Presentation at GFC
- Lunch at Curtis House Inn in Woodbury CT
- Musical-SHE LOVES ME- at Westport Playhouse

We look forward to new interesting event suggestions and increased participation by seniors and their friends.

Wayne Balfanz  
Event Coordinator

## **Outreach Department Annual Report 2009-2010**

The mission of your Outreach Department is fourfold:

- Monitor the charitable agencies that the church supports and decide the level of financial support to provide
- Support hands-on outreach opportunities for congregants
- Coordinate in-kind donations made by the congregation through the church
- Coordinate special collections, both recurring and one-time collections.

2009 was a challenging year for many of the organizations supported by the outreach budget and activities of Green's Farms Church. As the economy turned down, the demand for services and support from non-profits close at hand in Connecticut and further afield increased sharply, just as giving by foundations, corporations and individuals slowed in response to the recession. Our church's budgeted outreach contributions totaled \$104,700.

As in the past, our largest donation was Our Churches Wider Mission, the mission arm of the United Church of Christ. Of the \$30,250 we gave to the UCC, some 37% went to support the work of the Connecticut Conference and 63% contributed to the national and international outreach of the church.

The balance of our budget went to 12 agencies: one that serves the Westport area, two serving the community of Norwalk, six serving the Bridgeport area, one serving both Bridgeport and Norwalk, one serving other nearby local areas, and two small international organizations. Our largest donation was \$11,500 and the smallest \$2,500. The agencies provide services including housing and support for the homeless, emergency shelter for youths in crisis, support for victims of domestic violence, after-school programs for children, rehabilitation programs for those struggling with addiction, and, overseas, orphanages and help for the very poor.

Our committee also has resources to make special one-time awards from the Bryant Escrow Fund (the fund set up in memory of our former senior minister, Bill Bryant, to commemorate his commitment to outreach). Noting the difficult times brought by the recession, the committee used the Bryant funds to make \$7,200 worth of additional gifts to agencies with whom we have a relationship that were hurting because of a reduction in funds from other sources. Your committee thus made extra donations to Christian Community Action Center in Norwalk, the Council of Churches of Bridgeport, Interfaith Housing in Westport, Burroughs Community Center and the McGivney Center in Bridgeport, the Domestic Violence Crisis Center in Norwalk, and the Indian Gospel Mission in Tamil Nadu, South India.

The congregation has always been generous with in-kind donations and this year was no exception. The Christmas gift tree, coordinated by Bob Makuch, collected some 75 gifts for local families in need. These gifts were shared with families served by Christian Community Action in Norwalk. Thanks to Bob and volunteers for giving their time and energy during the busy holiday season. We also participated in the Connecticut Bike Project, which collects used bikes for those who need them; our congregation provided 15 bikes.

Monthly donations of food and clothing donations totaling more than \$10,000 were collected and distributed. Food donations were shared with the Christian Community Action food pantry in Norwalk, Interfaith Housing Association in Westport and the Operation Hope pantry in Fairfield. Clothing was typically delivered to the Bridgeport Rescue Mission.

The Gillespie Center, Westport's homeless shelter, continued to be the beneficiary of our Church's assistance. Special thanks go to Grace Chiang who once again served as the coordinator for our Gillespie Center meals, arranging volunteers and making sure that we met our commitment to provide and serve dinner to the residents twice a month. To the families and groups who served dinner—thanks for your work and donation of time and food.

Every year, the congregation is given the opportunity to donate to special collections, some of which occur regularly, some of which are one of a kind. The UCC has five special collections every year and we supported two this past year – the Christmas Fund which aids the retirement fund for UCC ministers from less fortunate congregations, and One Great Hour of Sharing for international relief efforts.

As well as making good use of the dollars you give to your church, the Outreach Department is committed to finding an increasing number of way individuals and families can get involved in personal outreach. In the year ahead, we anticipate sharing some \$120,000 with organizations, and finding new ways to put the skills and energy of our congregation to work. If you are interested in getting more involved, please contact a member of the committee, or take the opportunity to:

- Bring food to church--the first Sunday of every month is Food Sunday. Bring your donations and we'll see that the delivery is made. Your generosity continues to be needed while unemployment remains high and families suffer economic stress.
- Prepare a meal at the Gillespie Center. This is a great family activity, or activity for anyone to do alone, with a friend, or for a group such as scouts. Our regular slots are the first Wednesday and third Friday of every month – please volunteer.
- Join the Outreach Department. We can always use new members. It is a fun, interesting and rewarding way to learn about a side of Connecticut, often unseen. Our mission of helping others is at the core of our Christian faith.

Our entire department thanks you for your generosity in providing us with such wonderful resources to complete our mission. We also wish to thank all of our department members for all the dedicated work they did this year to help us achieve our goals.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Jeff Booth and Claire England, Co-Chairs

Ben Aldrich

Ted Aldrich

George Birch

Grace Chiang

Courtney Garzone

Greg Gatta

Pam Gau

Ben Gerig

Bob Makuch

Bill McCutchen

Jim Muschett

**GREEN'S FARMS CHURCH OUTREACH**  
**Outreach-Related Contributions in 2009**

	<b>Budgeted Outreach</b>	<b>Bryant Fund</b>	<b>Pass Thru Outreach</b>	<b>Gift of Giving</b>	<b>Donations in Kind</b>	<b>Total Outreach</b>
Bethel Recovery Center	\$ 2,500	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,500
Borroughs Community Center	5,700	900	-	-	-	6,600
Bridgeport Rescue Mission	-	-	-	-	3,700 [f]	3,700
Christian Community Action	11,500	-	522 [b]	1,875 [e]	6,180 [g]	20,077
Council of Churches of Bridgeport	10,000	-	-	-	-	10,000
CT Bike Project	-	-	-	-	375 [h]	375
CT Fund for the Environment	-	-	123	-	-	123
Domestic Violence Crisis Center	3,500	1,100	-	-	-	4,600
Homes With Hope (formerly IHA)	8,600	-	771 [b]	-	3,600 [i]	12,971
Indian Gospel Mission	3,500	1,100	-	-	-	4,600
McGivney Community Center	5,000	1,600	-	-	-	6,600
Ministers' Benevolent Fund Donations	-	-	1,507	-	-	1,507
Northwestern University	250	-	250	-	-	500
One Great Hour of Sharing	-	-	82	-	-	82
Our Church's Wider Mission	30,250	-	-	-	-	30,250
Pilgrim Towers	4,000	-	-	-	300 [j]	4,300
Pivot House	5,500	-	70	-	-	5,570
ReEntry Ministry	-	-	3,316	-	-	3,316
School Uniform Initiative	-	-	1,841 [c]	-	-	1,841
Silver Lake Fund	5,000	-	-	-	-	5,000
Simply Smiles	2,500	-	8,400	-	-	10,900
Westport Warm-Up Fund	-	-	282 [d]	-	-	282
Yale Divinity School	1,000 [a]	-	-	-	-	1,000
Youth Mission Trip	5,000	2,500	-	-	-	7,500
<b>TOTAL OUTREACH</b>	<b>\$ 103,800</b>	<b>\$ 7,200</b>	<b>\$ 17,164</b>	<b>\$ 1,875</b>	<b>\$ 14,155</b>	<b>\$ 144,194</b>

**Percent of Operating Budget**

**14.2%**

Notes:

[a] Honoraria for Jeff Rider, Lynn Rider, and Amy Forte

[b] Includes distribution of GFCC share of beach church loose plate collection of \$435, plus church school offerings

[c] Offerings from church school and congregation

[d] Children's offerings

[e] Estimated value of gifts supplied from Christmas Tree - 75 gifts at estimated value of \$25 each

[f] 148 bags of clothes at estimated value of \$25 each

[g] 206 bags of food at estimated value of \$30 each

[h] 15 bikes at estimated value of \$25 each

[i] 24 meals at estimated value of \$125 each, plus 20 bags of food at estimated value of \$30 each

[j] 10 bags of food at estimated value of \$30 each

## **Personnel Committee Annual Report 2009-2010**

The most significant personnel development during the past year was the sabbatical of our Senior Minister, Jeff Rider. Green's Farms Church has not had a minister on sabbatical since the ministry of Bill Bryant. Last year, Jeff completed an application to the Lilly Foundation for financial support of his proposed sabbatical. In addition to the rest and spiritual refreshment that is a main objective of any sabbatical, Jeff is focusing on expanding his understanding of "hospitality" by experiencing it in circumstances very different from the familiar environs of Fairfield County, CT. Jeff received his Lilly Award in October, and that set off an intensive cycle of planning by Jeff and the church staff for how the church would function seamlessly during Jeff's three-month sabbatical period of February - April 2010. The planning certainly paid off. With our Associate Minister, Amy Forté, assuming the role of interim head of staff, the church has not missed a beat. We look forward to Jeff's return on May 1<sup>st</sup>, and we are mindful of how blessed we are to have such a professional, motivated and collegial staff team providing such high quality service during his absence.

At last year's Annual Budget Meeting, the church elected Suellyn Durkin to the newly created position of Vice Treasurer. As the church's budget has grown and the treasury function has become more complex, it had become obvious that we needed a second senior officer to share the Treasurer's responsibilities. This solution has worked out extremely well. Budget tracking for the Council and the various department chairs has been enhanced, and Andrea and Suellyn have had the time to do analyses that have streamlined the treasury function. With the able assistance of Assistant Treasurers Joan Bassett and Helen Ranholm, and the oversight of our Financial Review Committee of Susan Schmidt and Sally McNeela, our financial controls are excellent.

Our annual review process will occur later this year than usual because of Jeff's sabbatical. Typically, staff reviews are conducted in March. But, this year we will do them in May/June to enable Jeff to participate as the head of the staff.

In addition to the volunteer members of the Treasurer's Department, I would like to express my great appreciation to all our staff members for their commitment to excellence and for rising to the challenges of managing through a sabbatical year with such aplomb. I would also like to acknowledge and thank the members of the Personnel Committee – Bob Atkins, Mark Kammert, Brad Cosgrove, Bill Rubidge, Steve Parrish, Andrea Register and Jeff Rider - for their dedication to enhancing the effectiveness and work satisfaction of our staff members.

Dave Braun  
Personnel Committee Chairman

## Stewardship Department Annual Report 2009-2010

We kicked off the Stewardship campaign with the theme “A Mountain of Mustard Seeds,” which was derived from the mustard seed parable in Matthew’s gospel and extended to “a mountain” to indicate that if each of us plants a few mustard seeds, then the entire congregation can make a huge difference in the world. Based on the theme, Laura Pflug created a wonderful painting that was on display in the Meetinghouse throughout the stewardship season.

We continued the emphasis on Outreach this year due to the fact that the economic downturn was still with us and would cause more people than ever before to need our help. No matter how much sacrifice it required, our church wants to be there to help.

This is the first year that we expanded the opportunities for families to get together, to strengthen fellowship and to learn more about our church. The feedback and results were overwhelmingly positive. Over the course of the campaign, we also heard inspiring personal stories regarding their Outreach experiences from Renie McCutchen and Claire England, followed by the powerful sermons from our ministry, and concluded by the moving and uplifting testimony from Duncan O’Brien.

The ongoing campaign efforts to increase the level of communication through speakers, letters, e-mails, new member events and dinner/brunch events have helped our congregation better understand the needs within our church and how we help others outside our walls – in addition to reconfirming how blessed we are that we get to share our spiritual, social and other dimensions of life together as a family of faith at Green’s Farms Church.

Our campaign results reflect the strong faith commitment of our congregation, with an increase in the number of families pledging and the total amount pledged. What’s even more amazing is that 100 families actually increased their pledges in the midst of the worst economic crisis in decades.

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Number of Pledges	211	231	233	212	227
Amount Pledged	\$699,476	\$742,940	\$779,300	\$847,706	\$872,107
Average Pledge	\$3,315	\$3,216	\$3,345	\$3,999	\$3,841

These numbers are astonishing; however, they are not the take away. The true take away is that this congregation can make miracles happen! We should never underestimate the potential impact we can have to the community. As we move into our 299<sup>th</sup> year, we know those mustard seeds will sprout and grow tall!

A very special thank you to our co-chairs, Duncan and Jennifer O’Brien, who will take on the lead role for the 2011 Stewardship Campaign ... we are in good hands. We’d also like to express our appreciation to all of the event hosts, advisors, volunteers, ministers & staff for their help during the campaign.

Eric & Grace Chiang  
Duncan & Jennifer O’Brien  
Co-chairs, Stewardship Department

## **Trustees Department Annual Report 2009 – 2010**

The Trustees of Green's Farms Congregational Church have several main responsibilities:

- Caring for and maintaining the Church's buildings, parsonages and cemeteries;
- Analyzing the needs of the Church and recommending an annual budget to the congregation for approval; and
- Managing the prudent investment of the Church's endowment funds and developing a long-term plan to increase the financial resources of the Church.

The Church's physical facilities remain in good condition, overseen by David Mrotek and Bob Custer. During 2009, David and Bob supervised a major repair to the flat roof over the Church's nursery school hallway and Upper Room, painting and carpentry repairs to the exterior of the Meetinghouse, landscaping of the interior courtyard Memorial Garden, upgrades to the main parsonage, and repairs to the small parsonage rental property. In the coming year, the Trustees will focus on replacement of aged windows at the rear of the Church, repair of water damage to the Youth Room, as well as continuing building maintenance for the Meetinghouse and main parsonage.

The Church's multi-year technology modernization initiative is also reaching its conclusion, following successful upgrades to the Church's computer systems and database software. For 2010, Thad Eidman and Lisa Krosse are leading a major re-design of the Church's website.

The Church's financial position continues to be strong. As a result of cost reductions implemented by the Church's various departments during the year, the Church recorded an operating budget surplus of \$20,400 in 2009. Thanks to another record Stewardship campaign, 2010 pledge income is expected to be up more than \$32,000 from 2009's actual level. The generosity of the Church's congregation allows for a 2010 budget that increases Outreach spending from \$103,800 in 2009 to \$120,000 in 2010; provides for a 2.5% raise in staff salaries; provides financial reserves in preparation for the Church's 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration activities in 2010 and 2011; and allows continued support for the activities of all the Church's operating departments.

The Church's endowment funds in 2009 achieved a strong recovery from depressed levels at year-end 2008. The portion of the Church's endowment funds invested in equity and fixed income securities showed a positive return of 15.6% overall in 2009, and the funds gained over \$110,000 for the year.

We thank all the Trustees and the Church staff for their efforts over the past year. Trusting in God's providence, we look forward to continued financial strength in 2010-2011.

Mark Kammert  
Chair, Trustees

## **Report of the Financial Review Committee 2009**

The Financial Review Committee, as established by the Constitution of the Congregational Church of Green's Farms, meets annually to review the financial practices of the Church Treasurer. The Committee can make recommendations to the Treasurer and the Board of Trustees pertaining to the Church's finances, and also confirms that previous recommendations have been acted upon.

The Committee inspects all aspects of the Treasurer's duties, including basic transaction input, report generation, investment practices, and operating procedures. However, the Committee does not perform a formal audit and the resulting report does not conform to professional auditing standards.

The GFC Treasury is currently staffed by Andrea Register (Treasurer), Suellyn Durkin (Vice-Treasurer), Joan Basset and Helen Ranholm (Assistant Treasurers). JoAnne LaBella, GFC Administrator, provides backup for many Treasury functions. 2009 is the first year that the Church has added the Vice-Treasurer position, as recommended by the Financial Review Committee in 2008. The addition of Vice-Treasurer has greatly assisted in the modernization of the Treasury's financial practices, which include updating the financial software, improving the accounting for worker's compensation and employee benefits, and updating the filing systems to reflect current accounting standards.

Overall, we find the Church's financial practices to be sound. Deposits and payments are processed in a timely manner, with proper verification and documentation. Procedures put in place to control risk associated with fraud are being followed.

Our recommendations fall under the main categories of risk reduction and reporting.

### **Risk Reduction**

The Trustees have successfully diversified the Church's cash position in light of the recent systemic failures in the banking system. While the likelihood of another such failure is remote, we recommend a formal analysis by the Investment Committee be done on the risk to the Church should one or both of the financial institutions that hold the bulk of the Church's assets fail.

Due to the complexity of managing the middle school and youth group activities, the Treasurer, along with the ministry staff, has developed new procedures for depositing and expensing youth activities. There are often times when the ministerial staff (Alison Fisher, serving as assistant to Amy Forté) will hold checks in her office for batch deposits. We recommend that Alison be given an additional file drawer with locking capability to hold such checks, as her office cannot be adequately secured throughout the day.

### **Reporting**

The Church Constitution requires that an annual financial report be prepared for the inspection and approval of the congregation. This report is generated annually by the Treasurer and Trustees for presentation at the Annual Budget Meeting, and is generally completed under tremendous time pressure. While the Church's operating budget has increased dramatically over the past 10 years, there have been few changes to the overall Report which we recommend given the added complexity of investment practices and a wider base of spending. We recommend that

the Trustees, along with the Treasurer, review the format and information contained within the Budget Report before the end of 2010.

**Investment Policy**

During 2009, the Investment Policy Committee of the Board of Trustees completed its development of formal investment guidelines and performance benchmarks, including recommendations for use of income from endowment funds. These guidelines were finalized in April 2009 and approved by the Board of Trustees, and now form the basis of investment decisions, activity and monitoring carried out by the Treasurer, under the purview of the Investment Policy Committee and Board of Trustees. All records reflecting actions of the Investment Review Committee and Quarterly Reports are being maintained as required.

We are grateful that GFC has such a dedicated team of financial leaders to lead us through the coming years. Please join us in congratulating all of them on their success in maintaining the financial health of GFC.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Schmidt

Sally McNeela

## **Response to the Report of the Financial Review Committee 2009**

Along with the development of the church budget each winter, the Treasurer and Trustees of the church open their books and records to the Financial Review Committee (the “Committee”), a group independent from the Church Council, Trustees and other working groups of the church. The Financial Review Committee has submitted their report for fiscal year 2009, and the Trustees herein formally respond to their suggestions and comments.

The Trustees want to express their thanks to Susan Schmidt and Sally McNeela, who constituted this year’s Committee, for the time they spent reviewing the church’s financial operations for the 2009 fiscal year. This process of outside review of the financial systems, both formal and informal, that have evolved over the years at the church can only improve the efficiency and integrity of the church’s financial processes.

The Trustees’ point-by-point review of and response to the Committee’s report is provided below:

### **Risk Reduction**

- The Trustees agree with the first recommendation made by the Committee, namely, that *“a formal analysis by the Investment Committee be done on the risk to the Church should one or both of the financial institutions that hold the bulk of the Church’s assets fail.”* While the Church’s cash balances have been spread among different banks to reduce the risk of loss in the event of bank failures, a large amount of the Church’s endowment assets are held at UBS and Vanguard. The Trustees and the Investment Committee, under the leadership of Lee Backus, will examine the possible risks entailed in this concentration of assets at an investment bank and a mutual fund management company.
- The Trustees also agree with the Committee’s second recommendation that *“Alison [Fisher] be given an additional file drawer with locking capabilities to hold . . . checks, as her office cannot be adequately secured throughout the day.”* The Chair of Trustees provided authorization for the purchase of such a new locking file drawer, and the file drawer has been installed in Alison’s office.

### **Reporting**

- The Trustees agree with the Committee’s recommendation that *“the Trustees, along with the Treasurer, review the format and information contained within the Budget Report before the end of 2010.”* Although the complexity of the Church’s financial systems and the size and the budget and endowment have increased in recent years, the format of the Annual Budget Report is largely a carryover from years past. The Trustees will review the Report, with input from the Treasurers, the Committee, and possibly other interested members of the Church, to determine ways to improve the content and format of this report.

We offer our thanks and appreciation to the Financial Review Committee for their efforts in reviewing the finances of Green’s Farms Church. Their assistance in maintaining the integrity of our records and policies is fundamental to the continued success of the church.

Respectfully submitted,  
The Trustees of Green’s Farms Church

## **Worship and Music Department Annual Report 2009-2010**

The department met monthly. Members served for a month as Head Usher. They recruited and supervised ushers, greeters and communion servers. With the assistance of Amy Forte´ and Alison Fisher, our confirmands and their families served as ushers and greeters for most Sundays from January through May.

Our Minister of Music Eileen Hunt and Chancel Choir once again provided extraordinary music all year long.

Friendship Sundays planned by department members ran smoothly, with helpers handing out nametags, pens and collecting papers. Friendship Sundays coincide with new member and special event Sundays like Homecoming and Sundae Sunday.

The Advent, Lenten and Maundy Thursday services were all supported by the department, as special mid-week services on Thursday evening, available to the community.

Summer services were held at Compo Beach as usual, with Walter Eads continuing as an ad hoc volunteer handing out bulletins and taking the offering as he has for many years. Regular 10 a.m. services were held in the sanctuary. Communion elements were provided and set up through most of the year by faithful volunteers Marge and Bruce Allen who have quietly served the community in this capacity for years, and later by department members. Thanks to Marge and Bruce for their long service preparing the elements!

With leadership from Helen Farthing, the department introduced Care Cards this year, allowing members of the church to fill out cards noting concerns, congratulations, or other sentiments to be mailed out by the church. Thanks to Helen for organizing this effort!

Thanks to all department members for their service throughout the year and to JoAnne LaBella, Alison Fisher and Bob Custer for their support. Department members have been: Culver Casson, Janis Collins, Roger Eickhoff, Helen Farthing, Carlos Garcia, Margot Hayward, Holly Kear, Lisa Kammert, Lisa Krosse, Maura Mula, Steve Magnuson.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the department,

Martha Eidman  
Bill Rubidge  
Co-Chairs