

# Annual Report 2021

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Presented to the Membership Meeting of the  
Chebeague Community Church

JANUARY 30, 2022

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**Chebeague Community Church**  
**Prepared on January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2022**  
**Updated on January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022**  
**Corrected on January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022**



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# Chebeague Community Church

*An inclusive, diverse, caring Christian community: worshiping, praying, witnessing, and reaching out to all people on the Island and beyond; daring to grow and change as God calls us.*

COMMUNITY FELLOWSHIP ROOTEDNESS CREATIVITY INCLUSIVITY INNOVATION

## Agenda

**Prelude**

**Welcome**

**Time of Centering**

**Prayer**

**Doxology**

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise God all creatures here below;  
Praise God above ye heavenly host;  
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost!*

**Scripture**

**Reflection - Looking Back and Giving Thanks (reviewing reports)**

- Membership Report
- Finance Report
- Buildings and Grounds Report
- Communications Report
- Small Groups Report
- Food Pantry Report
- Human Resources Report, including Pastor's Compensation for 2022 and Housing Exclusion Designation
- Pastor's Report

*Conversation: share (1) for what do you give thanks from the past year, and (2) where do you notice the movement of God's spirit in what we've done together from 2021?*

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## **Business**

- Adoption of the Bylaws of the Chebague Community Church
- Election of Church Council Members and Affirmation of Committee Members

## **Scripture**

### **Reflection – What Lies Ahead and Listening to the Holy Spirit**

*Conversation: share (1) what resonates with you from what has been lifted up, and (2) what personally gives you hope about what God will do through us in the coming year?*

## **Communion**

*Go forth to be God's hands and feet on the Island and in the world!*

## **Postlude**

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## Chebeague Community Church Membership Roll

As of 01/16/2022:    **53** Full Members, **3** Associate Members, **17** Friends

Armstrong, Lola  
Armstrong, Bill  
Auffant, Chris  
Auffant, Steve  
Beaupre, Jean Louis  
Beaupre, Meredith  
Bowen, Marshall  
Bowman, Cooper  
Bowman, Deborah  
Boxer, Vivian  
Brewer, Dianne Slowik  
Brewer, Hartley  
Brown, Gloria  
Brown, Robert  
Burns, Joyce Hamilton  
Calder, Kevin  
Corson, Karen Weiss  
Corson, Jay  
Damon, Donna Miller  
Doughty, Judith St. Cyr  
Doughty, Julie  
Dyer, Arlene  
Dyer, Chloe  
Dyer, Elizabeth  
Dyer, Genevieve  
Dyer, Mark  
Gaston, Betsy  
Hamilton, Denise  
Hillicoss, Cheryl  
Hillicoss, Darren  
Hunneman, Pauline Smith  
Jackson, Leroy  
Jackson, Suzanne  
Komlosy, James  
MacNeill, Cathy  
Mayer, Betts  
Mayer, Eldon  
McKinnon, Kendra Hamilton  
Merrill, Barbara  
Muller, Emily  
Priest, Lynne  
Rent, Sharon  
Rent, John

Rice, Malcolm  
Rice, Rochelle  
Rich, Jonathan  
Riddle, Cindy MacNeill  
Ross, Sylvia  
Stevens, Cheryl  
Stevens, David  
Tonks-Hartling, Gretchen  
Trask, Jacqueline  
Wentworth, Polly

### **Associate Members**

*Those who retain formal membership in their home church/denomination*

Clark, Elaine  
Webb, Stacie  
Webb, Toby

### **Friends**

*Those who express sympathy with the church's purposes and programs and support the life of the church.*

Calder, Tracy  
Cox-Chapman, Jim and Mally  
Cushman, Mary and Tom  
Hackel, Jenny  
Lauterbach, David  
Leonard, Ann  
Leonard, Eddie  
McGee, Betsey  
Pelton, Ken and Sawyer, Sue  
Porter, Barbara and Michael  
Rice, Sandra  
Webb, Sandy and Jessica



### **How do I become a Member of the Chebeague Community Church?**

Contact Pastor Melissa if you are interested in becoming a member or associate member. If you haven't been connected with a faith community in awhile, or if you haven't gone through confirmation in another Christian denomination, we'll have a membership class which covers subjects like the Christian faith, spiritual formation practices, and our church structure.

### **What does it mean to be a member?**

Membership in a church isn't about membership in a brick and mortar institution, but about commitment to a people – that this particular incarnation of the Body of Christ is one's spiritual home, and these people are companions on the journey of faith. Members and Associates are able to serve on the Church Council and vote at our Membership Meeting. Friends can serve on committees and have voice at our meetings.

The promises we make to each other are as follows:

- *As a member of this congregation, will you faithfully participate in its ministries by your prayers, your presence, your gifts, your service and your witness?*
- *Will you seek to grow in love and understanding, seeking more fully your belovedness as a child of God as well as the belovedness of others?*
- *Will you strive to lift and build up this congregation - in words and in actions - and seek to follow Christ through the work of this community of faith?*

### **How do I become a Friend of the CCC?**

Contact the church office or Pastor Melissa in writing (e-mail, letter, or text) and we will add you to our list. Friends of the church are those who support the work of the church without taking the step of formal membership.

***Whether Member, Associate, or Friend, we are grateful for your connection with us! Thank you for your support and for making us who we are.***

## **Names from CUMC Member Rolls**

*These are folks who were on the rolls of the CUMC that we have been unable to contact. Their names are here (1) for the body's information, and (2) if anyone has current contact information (email, phone, or mailing address), please let the church office know so we can update our records.*

Gregory, Debra Johnson  
Hamilton, Anna  
Hamilton, Gail  
Jones, Peggie  
Phipps, Gisele

Phipps, James  
Phipps, Katie  
Phipps, Kristy  
Tomasini, Deborah Varney  
White, Roberta Sanborn

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## Chebeague Community Church Baptism List

*This list includes people who have been baptized in our church community but have not taken the step of membership in the congregation. \*designates those who are under the age of 13 and who are currently not yet of age to take membership vows. Those who are 13 and older are eligible to join the church after completing a membership class which includes information about the Christian faith, spiritual formation practices, and our church structure.*

Trisha Hamilton	
Jennifer Smith Belesca	5/10/71
Jarrold Smith	4/29/73
Nathan Doughty	4/29/73
Vicki Lee Riddle Todd	4/29/73
Jeffrey Putnam	9/10/78
Ethan Belesca	8/20/00
Aaron Belesca	11/2002
Aaron Michael Feinberg	8/13/06
Richard Jay Feinberg	8/13/06
Laura Hamilton	6/10/07
Jenna Calthorpe	6/17/07
David Calthorpe	6/17/07
Cali Suzanne Pomerleau	6/17/07
Catherine Grace Rich	6/17/07
Elias Rich	6/17/07
Stephen Rich	6/17/07
Alden H Wentworth	7/12/09
Olivia P Wentworth	7/12/09
Carly Allison Rich	8/30/09
*Elias Weld Elsner	8/7/11
Logan Caleb Beaupre	11/13/11
Riley Joseph Beaupre	11/13/11
*Jackson Dane Pomerleau	6/7/15
*Penelope Elizabeth Sabasteanski	5/20/18
*Clara Sabasteanski	5/20/18
*Sojourner Mary McClure Porter	7/21/19
*Rowan Ruth Kelley Porter	7/21/19

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## Changes in Membership since Last Church Conference, November 2019

### Removed by death:

Calder, Dianne 06/12/2021

### Removed by transfer:

None

### Removed by Request:

Morlock, Jade 08/31/2021

### Removed by action of the Annual Meeting:

None; please see the names of CUMC rolls for a list of people for whom we have no contact information and have attempted to reach.

### Added this year:

Corson, Jay	10/10/2021
Dyer, Elizabeth	01/16/2022
Dyer, Mark	01/16/2022
Merrill, Barbara	09/12/2021
Rent, John	10/10/2021
Rent, Sharon	10/10/2021
Stevens, Cheryl	01/16/2022
Stevens, Dave	01/16/2022

### Added through Confirmation Classes:

None

### Baptisms:

None

We also remember those who were part of our wider Chebeague community and have passed since our last annual meeting:

Fred Martindale	01/01/2021	Eleanor Coon Oppel	08/25/2021
Geri Phipps	01/31/2021	Joseph MacDonald	09/16/2021
Jeffrey Hahn	02/15/2021	Jane Harrington	10/06/2021
Peg Damon	03/05/2021	Peg Lyons	10/24/2021
Wink Houghton	06/25/2021	Bill Cushing	11/16/2021
Jeffrey Boxer	07/19/2021	Margaret Ingram	11/21/2021
Ginny Ballard	08/19/2021	Herb Rich	01/11/2022

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# Chebeague Community Church Leadership

## Proposed 2022-2023 Slate

*We have not at this time incorporated classes into our election; we are planning on having conversation about this during the year. Terms are for one year. Members and Associate Members are eligible to serve on the Council; anyone is eligible to serve on committees.*

### **Church Council**

*The Church Council functions as the Board of Directors of the Chebeague Community Church. Its responsibilities include establishing goals and objectives for the church and then initiating plans to accomplish those goals. It works to nurture the overall ministry of the church, tend to the church's overall financial health, hire employees, and evaluate and develop the church's ministries. Officers are elected by the Council.*

Lola Armstrong

Deb Bowman

Gloria Brown

Karen Corson, Ladies Aid Representative

Betsy Gaston

Denise Hamilton

Kendra McKinnon

Emily Muller

Lynne Priest

Rochelle Rice

Cheryl Stevens

Polly Wentworth

Melissa Yosua-Davis, pastor

### **Building and Grounds Committee**

*This committee is responsible for the physical assets of the Chebeague Community Church, including maintaining maintenance logs and records, keep a current facility assessment of the property, provide for the repair of the buildings and grounds, and prepare recommendations that need Church Council approval.*

Deb Bowman, chair

Cheryl Stevens

Elaine Clark

Jay Corson

### **Finance Committee**

*This committee works to develop the financial health of the Chebeague Community Church, and develops policies and procedures for handling income and expenses. This committee also looks to long range planning.*

Rochelle Rice, Chair

Deb Bowman

Donna Damon

Lynne Priest

John Rent

Cheryl Stevens



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## **Communications Committee**

*This committee develops the schedules for communications from the church, both in terms of its mailings, enewsletter, and submissions to the Council Calendar. This team works to ensure that members of the church and the wider community are hearing from us on a regular basis.*

Rochelle Rice

Deb Bowman

## **Human Resources Committee**

*This committee is responsible for being the bridge between the staff of the church and the wider congregation. This group is responsible for setting compensation for staff, overseeing background checks for staff and volunteers working with children, maintaining our safe sanctuaries policy, and developing and maintaining the employee handbook.*

Emily Muller

Lola Armstrong

Melissa Yosua-Davis

TBD

## **Nominating Committee**

*This committee is responsible for leadership development and for presenting a slate of leaders to be elected at the Annual Membership Meeting. They also make nominations to fill vacancies that occur on committees throughout the year, with the approval of the Church Council.*

Melissa Yosua-Davis, chair

TBD

Chair of Church Council

TBD

Vice Chair of Church Council

## **Worship Committee**

*This team focuses on developing worship series, caring for the day-to-day logistics involved with worship and supplies, brainstorming ideas for altar décor and images, and helps with the creative aspect of worship.*

Melissa Yosua-Davis, chair

Betsy Gaston

Denise Hamilton

Cathy MacNeill

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# Chebeague Community Committee Finance Report

Submitted January 15, 2022

## Term of Service:

September 2, 2021 – January 30, 2022

## Committee Members:

Rochelle Rice, Chair

Deb Bowman

Donna Damon

Lynne Priest

John Rent

Cheryl Stevens

## Meetings were held:

October 6, 2021, 4-5pm

November 3, 2021, 4-5pm

December 1, 2021, 4-5pm

## Stewardship/Pledge Campaign:

96 letters went out for two weeks

A suggestion was made to redesign the donation/appeal envelopes to be more like the Historical Society and Library.

**Over \$42,000 is pledged for 2022  
from 23 households!**

## Membership Goals for 2021 Year End:

50 Members

5 Associates

15 Friends

*Note: it is important for CCC to continue to track these goals for financial stability*

## Updates:

CCC will work with the Financial Person at Bath Savings to be our Financial Representative. Michael Buxbaum has agreed to be available to review the recommendations as needed.

We are still seeking a CPA for CCC.

## Recommendations made to the Church Council:

The Finance Committee recommended Quickbooks online beginning June 2022.

The Finance Committee recommended using Little Green Light for a donor management system beginning January 2022.

## Proposed CCC Finance Committee 2022:

Rochelle Rice, Chair

Deb Bowman

Donna Damon

Lynne Priest

John Rent

Cheryl Stevens

Respectfully submitted,

Rochelle Rice and members of the committee, Deb Bowman, Donna Damon, Lynne Priest, John Rent, Cheryl Stevens and Melissa Yosua-Davis.

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## Chebeague Community Church Buildings and Grounds Committee

This committee is responsible for the physical assets of the Chebeague Community Church, including maintaining maintenance logs and records, keep a current facility assessment of the property, provide for the repair of the buildings and grounds, and prepare recommendations that need Church Council approval. This account includes work completed by the Trustees of the Chebeague United Methodist Church. **Trustees:** Eldon Mayer, Cheryl Stevens, Specs Eaton, Steve Auffant, Kendra McKinnon, Elaine Clark, Jay Corson.

**Current committee Members:** Deb Bowman, Elaine Clark, Jay Corson, Cheryl Stevens

### Accomplishments:

- snow removal to be done by Jason Skillins
- copy of 2016 Capital Assessment on file
- copy of Empire heater manual on file
- mouse deterrent baits installed

### **Sanctuary:**

- A Grommes-Precision AXIOM 250 Amplifier, CyberPower CP1000PFCLCD Uninterruptible Power Supply, and Grommes-Precision Speaker Lightning Suppressor were added to the Schulmerich Carillon. The integrated amplifier of the carillon was damaged most likely by a lightning strike to the trumpet speakers in the belfry. This caused a noticeable hum. After consultation with Schulmerich this recommendation was approved by the trustees. These items were funded by a donation from Eldon Mayer and acquired and installed by Cheryl Stevens. In addition Dave Stevens refinished a small cabinet which now houses the Carillon, UPS, and Lightning Suppressor in the balcony.
- Jay Corson and Specs Eaton developed and installed a new seating configuration for the balcony that allows for the flexible use of the space and improves seating and fire safety. The first row of seating in the balcony is now comprised of fixed pews followed by up to two rows of chairs.
- new roof installed
- Consolidated installed Internet
- A report “CCC Building and Improvements 2021” was created. It documents the repairs and improvements made to each building’s plumbing, electrical, and heating systems over the last 20 years.
- The main breaker of the electrical service box in the basement of the Parish House was replaced by Ken Pelton after it caused intermittent failures.
- balcony curtains installed
- furnace cleaned
- new sign in the works by Carrot Signs – old sign to be taken down to PH for cleaning and measuring



### **Parish House:**

- side door in parish house repaired
- Empire heater fixed in PH
- kerosene drained from 2 tanks

### **Parsonage:**

- basement stairs repaired
- Jeff Wescott, Island Handyman has a list of things to get done.
- Mike Rollins is due back to clean parsonage furnace.

Respectfully submitted,  
Deb Bowman, Chair

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# Chebeague Community Church Communications Report

*Communication Plan 1st Quarter 2022*

## *Overview:*

The Communication Committee was developed for the purpose of connecting with our members and the community multiple times a year to let them know they are cared for.

## *Goals:*

- 1 - Share care, concern, joys, prayers, and education.
- 2 – Enhance the visibility of the church in the community.
- 3 – Increase engagement in our membership near and far.

## **January 2022**

Calls to 4 members just to say hello.  
Weekly email blast from Melissa.  
Weekly updates on website, Chebeague.org and ChebWeb from Melissa.  
Calendar info from Melissa.  
Winter Webinar Series: January 26, 2022, Beat the Winter Blues, 6:30-7:30pm  
Notes to Healthcare/Frontline workers thanking them for their service.  
Sympathy cards to those in the community who have lost a loved one – Ladies Aid  
Congratulations cards to members celebrating a birthday, birth, success.

## **February 2022**

Calls to 4 members just to say hello.  
Weekly email blast from Melissa.  
Weekly updates on website, Chebeague.org and ChebWeb from Melissa.  
Calendar info from Melissa.  
Post financials on our website, Chebeague.org and ChebWeb  
Winter Webinar Series: February 16, 2022, Stress Reduction, 6:30-7:30pm  
Valentine Postcard mailed February 10<sup>th</sup>. – Shelly & Deb  
Sympathy cards to those in the community who have lost a loved one – Ladies Aid  
Congratulations cards to members celebrating a birthday, birth, success.

## **March 2022**

Calls to 4 members just to say hello.  
Weekly email blast from Melissa.  
Weekly updates on website, Chebeague.org and ChebWeb from Melissa.  
Calendar info from Melissa.  
Winter Webinar Series: March 16, 2022, Caregiving, 6:30-7:30pm  
Sympathy cards to those in the community who have lost a loved one – Ladies Aid  
Congratulations cards to members celebrating a birthday, birth, success.

The Committee plans to review the communication efforts on February 15, 2022 and revise as needed.

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## Chebeague Community Church Small Groups in 2021

Ladies' Aid met for fellowship and craft-making when Covid restrictions allowed. The ladies held a very successful in-person Fair in November.

The Book Study Group met on Sunday afternoons, mostly via Zoom. Books read in 2021 were:

- *Me and White Supremacy* by Layla F. Saad
- *Who Will Be a Witness* by Drew G. I. Hart
- *Reading the Bible from the Margins* by Miguel De La Torre
- *Dancing in God's Earthquake* by Rabbi Arthur Ocean Waskow
- *Subversive Jesus* by Craig Greenfield
- *Remake the World* by Astra Taylor

After a holidays hiatus, the group will resume on February 6<sup>th</sup> with *My Grandmother's Hands* by Resmaa Menachem.

Beginning during the pandemic, a small group met to study the Psalms. After completing the Psalms, the group has continued to study the Bible using *Social Justice Bible Challenge* by Marek Zabriskie.

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## Chebeague Community Church Food Pantry Report

The food pantry typically has served families/individuals with food insecurity. With the Covid crisis the pantry expanded its services in April of 2020 to provide fresh produce, protein, and limited dairy products for all islanders in order to assist in minimizing trips to the mainland. In May of 2021 the pantry discontinued weekly offerings of fresh produce, proteins, and shelf stable items and returned to the more traditional model that it operated under pre Covid. However, the needs of the island continue, perhaps not in the traditional sense of financial need but more with regard to our neighbors and a desire to minimize exposure due to personal concerns regarding the current pandemic. Some of our neighbors are also finding it increasingly difficult to



navigate getting to the store to meet their nutritional needs. Because of this the pantry started providing monthly boxes in November for families and individuals to help support them with fresh produce and protein. A box was also provided in December and the current plan is to continue with monthly boxes for the foreseeable future.

In addition to the monthly boxes Hannaford gift cards are available to assist those who experience financial hardship. The pantry remains open to the community in order for them to “shop our shelves” but an appointment is required as the Parish House continues to be locked due to the ongoing pandemic.

The Food Pantry continues to be available for any and all in our community should they find themselves in need.

We are so grateful for all our volunteers: Polly Wentworth, Kel Haney, Jessie Graham, Kendra McKinnon, and Vicki Emery. Thank you as well to Barry Fitzsimmons and Genaro Balzano, in addition to all those who have stepped in when needed who are too many to name!

Respectively submitted,  
Denise Hamilton

# Chebeague Community Church Human Resources Report

*These reports are included for your information and will be acted upon at the first Council meeting after the annual meeting.*

## 2022 Pastoral Compensation

Church	Chebeague Community Church	Date	12/1/2021
City/Town + Zip Code	Chebeague Island, ME 04017		
Pastor	Melissa Yosua-Davis		
Percent of appointment at this church FT <input type="checkbox"/> 3/4 <input type="checkbox"/> <b>1/2</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1/4 <input type="checkbox"/> <1/4 <input type="checkbox"/>			
HR Chairperson 2021	Polly Wentworth		
HR Chair: Email	pkwentworth@gmail.com	Phone #s	207-233-8382

*The HR Committee recommends compensation to the Church Council. It is important that the information indicated be accurate and complete. The HR Committee's responsibility is to indicate what is understood to be salary, reimbursable expenses (vouchered) and, where applicable, housing allowance. Indicate figures for each category on this report.*

### 1. 2021 Pastor's Cash Salary

**\$25,292**

Report the total cash paid to the clergyperson by the church here.

*Total cash salary consists of base pay, cash bonuses, equitable compensation, cash allowances, as well as cash paid to the clergyperson for benefits and pre- or after-tax deferrals such as Housing Exclusion, personal contributions to the Personal Investment Plan (PIP), Medical Reimbursement Account (MRA), Dependent Care Reimbursement Account (DCA), Health Insurance Co-pay /Retiree stabilization. Cash allowances in lieu of a parsonage are not included in the cash salary.*

Included in the above cash salary:

Personal contributions to PIP	<u>\$300</u>
MRA	_____
DCA	_____

*A Housing Exclusion Resolution must be submitted and passed at Church Council and reflected in the minutes of said meeting, if the pastor claims one. This is included in the cash salary.*

Housing Exclusion (IRC Section 107)	<u>\$5,000</u>
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**2. Reimbursable Expenses**

*This is a method of claiming and reimbursing church-related business vouchered expenses not included in cash salary. Receipts are submitted to the treasurer.*

Travel	<u>\$750</u>
Business	<u>\$750</u>
Continuing Education	<u>\$1500</u>
Other	<u>\$1500</u>

**Total Reimbursable Expenses** **\$4500**

**3. Housing (check only one box below):**

Parsonage provided

Housing allowance in lieu of a parsonage – amount: \$NONE

No housing or parsonage provided

**4. Pension:**

*Pension rate is set at 12% of cash salary multiplied by the parsonage factor of 1.25 (this is how Wespath calculates pension for United Methodist congregations). CCC has chosen to continue its affiliation with Wespath and assume plan sponsorship for Pastor Melissa’s pension. Where pension used to be billed to the congregation by the New England Conference of the UMC, we now pay Wespath directly.*

2022 Cash Salary (\$25,292) \* 1.25 = \$31,615

2022 pension contribution = \$31,615 \* .12 = \$3,793.80

Please sign below after the pastor’s compensation has been approved at Church Council			
<b>SIGNATURES</b>			
Pastor		Date	
HR Chair		Date	
Treasurer		Date	
Council Chair		Date	



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## Chebeague Community Church Pastor's Report

*4 For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. 5 May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, 6 so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*- Romans 15:4-6*

*Let nothing disturb thee, nothing affright thee; all things are passing, God never changeth! Patient endurance attaineth to all things; who God possesseth in nothing is wanting; alone God sufficeth.*

*- St. Theresa of Avila, found in Celtic Daily Prayer: Prayers and Readings from the Northumbria Community*

It's been a year full of deep work - both in navigating the shifting landscape of the pandemic and in emerging from the shadow of the United Methodist Church. **I want to share with you an overview of the work I've done this year - work that I believe sets the grounds for where God may be leading us in the future.**

### COVID

There's no way to get around how disruptive the pandemic has been for us sharing the fullness of life together. While deep community can form in digital spaces, there's no substitute for being able to eat and sing together. We worshiped remotely for the first half of 2021, found times to worship outdoors (like Ash Wednesday sunset service, Easter sunrise, and a few Sunday mornings), and enacted protocols to worship indoors.

Worship attendance, even with the introduction of remote access, has not gone back to pre-pandemic levels. There are a variety of reasons for this having to do with people evaluating their own risk factors, preferences, folks who are out of the habit, and more. **COVID has raised questions across mainline Protestant and Catholic congregations nationally around what it means to gather together and be church when worship isn't the primary driver of life together. The question I think about isn't necessarily how to get folks "back" into worship, but in what ways can we adapt to address a need that worship isn't serving in the same way for some people?**

I continued to serve on the island's Community Advisory Response Team (CART) as co-chair. This year, that group was able to offer vaccination clinics and booster clinics thanks to the Recompense Grant sponsored by our congregation. CART continued to provide information on where to get masks, access services, get tested, and more. This committee helps keep our island prepared and informed. I am thankful that we have dedicated community members of all types who give time to keep our community safe and that we have a place to communicate around our different organizations' responses to the pandemic.

### Disaffiliation

Of course, leaving the United Methodist Church took up much of our time and attention this year. We discerned that it was time to take this step, and my role in the discernment process was to hold space for the congregation to make this decision - to raise questions for consideration and listen and pray as you discussed and shared and discerned. **I am immensely proud that this was a decision you all reached together - from the start of this process to the end, this was led by you all. You took a stand against the exclusionary and punitive measures of the UMC that actively harm our LGBTQIA+**

**siblings and decided to leave so that your church could truly be a place for all people.** This is an achievement that makes a huge difference.



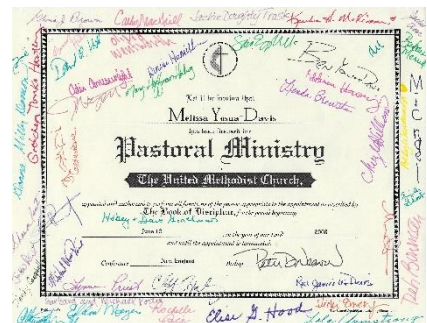
Once the decision was made at our last ever charge conference as a UMC back in February, there was still much work to do, from gathering reports, cataloging our assets, and entering into negotiations - again, work that was done primarily by you all.

Throughout this journey, people from other discerning and disaffiliating congregations in New England were meeting weekly for planning, support, and resourcing. Gloria and Lola were two folks who also participated regularly in these meetings. Another source of connection during this time came through Grandview

Church in Lancaster, PA. I reached out to them following their disaffiliation from the United Methodist Church and shared that there were three congregations in New England taking that step soon. Since then, we have been meeting monthly, dreaming together about a new way of connecting and relating with each other as churches and how we might support, equip, and celebrate ministry together.

As we moved toward Annual Conference in June, where the body would vote on our disaffiliation (along with those of our sister congregations HopeGateWay and Tuttle Road). I, along with Linda Brewster and Sarah Ewing-Merrill, were tasked by the sessions committee of the New England conference to share at a pre-conference gathering on behalf of the churches we serve about our process of discernment and to answer any questions people might have had about what we were doing. We were also tasked with presenting the formal legislation to the session of the New England Annual Conference for it to act upon.

I think we all know the eventual outcome, which is something to celebrate, and the meeting exposed just how toxic a system we were leaving behind. Personally, I have understood my call from God to be grounded in this place, serving the people of Chebeague. I had hoped that while the congregation stepped away from the denomination, the UMC would continue to hold my credentials as a licensed local pastor while I discerned my own personal next steps for credentialing. While the clergy session of the New England Conference was willing to make accommodations and had voted as such, the bishop asked me to surrender my license this fall after Chebeague had disaffiliated. Along with my license, I submitted a letter outlining that I was handing it in not because he asked, but because of the disrespectful and dishonorable behavior he allowed on the floor of Annual Conference, maligning me and my clergy sisters. The work of healing from the spiritual trauma I experienced this summer continues, and I am grateful for the notes of encouragement I've received from you all - and for those of you who took the time to sign my license! I have a copy as a reminder of your affirmation and support for my ministry here.



You all worked hard to meet a September 1st deadline for disaffiliation - earlier than we had previously set. You dispatched folks to raise an enormous sum of money to cover our pro rata share of the conference's Unfunded Pension Liability, you wrote bylaws, you wrote letters to members -

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and so much more. When we became the Chebeague Community Church on September 1st, we did so knowing that there would be things that we'd have to figure out and live into. I'm grateful that since September 1st, we were able to take in 8 new members, 1 new associate member, and list 17 people as friends of the CCC. I hope in the years ahead more folks will decide to take the step of membership and friendship with us - especially those young folks among us who are the church in ways that we have yet to celebrate and embrace. **We continue to work hard to set a strong foundation for the Chebeague Community Church - and we are certainly in ministry together!**

As part of building the Chebeague Community Church, we hosted a dream session at the beginning of November, where we invited conversation around what programs and activities folks would like to see us offer. What ended up surfacing in conversation was a desire to engage young people, thanksgiving for all the programs and ministries we currently offer (like Ladies Aid, the Food Pantry, mission trips to Guatemala), and wondering about creating small groups in order to create a presence in the community. One member talked about risk taking and that we have to be willing to fail as we engage in ministry together. Others mentioned inviting community members to write a paragraph about what the church means to them? What do you want to see happen? It was noted that there is wide community support for the church but that that doesn't always translate into engagement. We ended our time with a few folks sharing deeply around their hopes and what drew them to membership: hearing sermons that mean her life, her family's life, her neighbor's lives matter; the care and concern the church expressed for her in her time of need; and a sense of being at home and grounded in a spiritual community.

There is much more listening to be had as we engage with the community and how we can create spiritual community around Christ together.

### Worship

I appreciate those of you who rode the waves while we were making decisions around the best/safest way to gather for worship, and those of you who live for part of the year away from the island who waited patiently until WiFi was installed in the sanctuary!



We did a few worship series together this year - all from A Sanctified Art. For Lent, we explored themes of "Cultivating and Letting Go" - asking what God was growing within us and what we needed to let go of so that God could bring new things forth from the soil of our lives. In the summer, we spent some time with "I've Been Meaning to Ask" - where we talked about how we encounter and relate to one another from positions of curiosity and deep listening - seeking to create transformative community by the way we hold space for each other.

Lastly, over Advent, we did "Those who Dream" and explored being a people who dare to live out God's dreams for this world, much like those who we encounter in the story of Jesus' birth.

I'm thankful that for part of the summer, while we were meeting in-person, Kate Nyhan provided music for us. If you haven't had the opportunity yet, please drop her a note of thanks!

I am thankful for the worship committee that formed in the fall to help with the logistics and the creative aspect of our worship together - Denise Hamilton, Gloria Brown, Betsy Gaston, Cathy MacNeill, and Polly Wentworth.

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## Pastoral Care

This year, it was challenging to do much visiting, as many places changed protocols throughout the year in response to COVID. It is really helpful to me to know if someone would appreciate a visit from the pastor while they are in the hospital or in a rehab facility. **I rely on the church community's input in this area to know what follow-up would be helpful from a church perspective.**

I meet monthly with the residents at the Island Commons and have had wonderful conversations. We have a treasure here in this facility and its staff who care so deeply for the folks who live there. Our times have been both in-person indoors, in-person outdoors, and over Zoom. We've had times of devotional and prayer, times of one-on-one visitation, and more.

COVID has caused more than one funeral to be put on hold, however I was privileged to preside over a few services this past year - a graveside for Margaret Gaston, a graveside for Peter Hall, a graveside for Jane Harrington, and both a funeral and committal for Ginny Ballard. I'm reminded in each service of the wonderful gift it is to be in this space with folks in the midst of their grief and remembering, and the wonderful legacy left behind that those who are living are tasked with carrying on. **Each service inevitably turns into a time of sharing stories and blessed memories; we have a rich heritage here and I pray for the ways we can remember, celebrate, give thanks, and take what we've learned from generations past and move forward towards health and wholeness together.**

## Continuing Education

One of the silver linings of the pandemic is the ability to attend webinars over Zoom! Conferences that normally would have been held in-person went virtual, meaning it was easier to participate.

This year, I continued seeing my spiritual director - a practice that I engage in for my spiritual health and well-being. If you are someone who is interested in meeting with a spiritual director - a person who is trained to help you discover God in the midst of your every day life - talk to me!

I also finished up a leadership coaching program I did with Beth Estock. **Her coaching enabled me to identify goals for myself as a leader and not just achieve them through reflection and journaling, but through embodied practice that helped me engage emotionally with myself.** I firmly believe that if I hadn't engaged her as a coach and had her training in my pocket (and in my body!) as I went through the trauma of Annual Conference, I would be far worse off. For more information about her and her approach, visit <https://www.bethestock.com/> - I highly recommend her for anyone looking to improve their leadership skills.

I was able to attend Nevertheless She Preached virtually with other women from our sister congregations. Nevertheless She Preached is an organization devoted to dismantling patriarchal structures and elevating the voices of those on the margins. Speakers at this conference, themed "Embrace Healing, Embody Hope" included Dr. Alicia Reyes-Barriénte, Rev. Dr. Valerie Bridgeman, Kaitlin Curtice, Rev. Dr. Lindsey Jodrey, Kathy Khang, Dr. Jennifer Owens-Jofré, Rev. Kyndall Rae Rothaus, Rev. Dr. Irie Session, and Rev. Dr. Angela Yarber. These women are phenomenal preachers, sharing deep wisdom and a refreshing Word from God.

Lastly, in December 2021, I visited Spring Forest in Hillsborough, North Carolina (<https://www.springforest.org/>), which includes an intentional neo-monastic community and a church that surrounds a working farm and CSA. I was able to spend time with Elaine Heath, abbess of the community, who is also an author and theologian and the former dean of Duke Divinity School.



The community is a missional, monastic, and teaching community that embodies an ethic of rest, healing, and regenerative agriculture. Their work flows out of a contemplative stance (show up, pay attention, cooperate with God, release the outcome) that has led to their development of a CSA as their model of financial sustainability, works and advocates for refugee resettlement and immigrant rights, and more. What binds

them together (the church and intentional community) is a shared rule of life: Prayer together, Working together, Eating together, and Loving their neighbor together. Their philosophy of ministry is “failing forward” where experimentation is key. **Their ethos promotes adaptability and the ability to pivot based on a changing landscape and changing needs.**

One of the most important learnings from that time (aside from the reminder that church and a lived faith can take many different forms and congregationalism is but one of many expressions of spiritual community) is the idea of holding strategic intentions as opposed to strategic goals. Goals are great, but sometimes circumstances beyond our control mean that meeting our goals is challenging. Just look at how disruptive COVID has been for so many people. Moving toward strategic intentions (or, in Christian language, a rule of life, or set of values) allows an organization to ask and evaluate “how are we living out our values”. **It shifts towards being more process-oriented and harkens back to the early church in many respects; the early Christians were known as followers of The Way because it was about a shared way of life and a way of showing up in the world.**

### **What is Next?**

This leads me to think about what is next for us as the CCC for 2022. We’ve been through a lot. We’ve achieved a lot. **We have completed our disaffiliation from the United Methodist Church and yet the fullness of who we are as the Chebeague Community Church has not yet come to fruition. We are in a liminal space where we are not who we were any more and not quite yet who we are to be.**

My hope for this year is that it is a year of rest. We did something big together; praise God for God’s faithfulness to us and for our faithfulness in heeding this daring vision God placed before us of a place where all are welcome, where our LGBTQ siblings and their families are embraced, where it doesn’t matter what or who you are - we see you as a child of God and welcome you in. I hear how hard we worked and how much that took out of us as a people - and while there is still business to tend to and gatherings to be had (worship!), my prayer for us is to take a big breath out together. **My hope for 2022 is that this is a year of deep listening - to the community, to each other, and to God.** I believe that the primary work of the Council this year is to be in formation together - to let our meeting time together be one of nurture and not expenditure, to let business take a second seat to learning and growing together, to spend some time with our values (strategic intentions) and consider what we are doing in light of what we profess to value. (Need a refresher? Our values are community, fellowship, rootedness, creativity, inclusivity, and innovation).

This is where I think back to the quotes I referred to at the beginning of this report. In this season of waiting and listening and discerning - patience is needed. We attend upon a God whose presence transcends time and space and people. Our invitation is to listen and be faithful and tend to each other (I think back, as well, to our Christmas letter which encouraged tending to the small things which make our life so rich). God is the source of our life together - and if we pay attention to what

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God is about, if we seek to grow in ministry together, reading off the same page, working in harmony (note: sometimes harmony is discordant, but it eventually resolves and that's the beauty in music!) - it is all to glorify and witness to the work of God who brings all things into wholeness.

Personally, I know that I need to tend to my own work of healing and moving past the grief and trauma of my own separation from the UMC. I need a season that is marked more by abiding and inner work. I look forward to joining one of Jessie Graham's Atlas of the Heart by Brene Brown's groups. I may look into other areas of professional support as well as part of my healing. **My priorities in terms of pastoral leadership as we enter this season of rest and contemplation are Sunday morning worship, responding to crises that come up (funerals, community crises, etc), and community listening.** I will also be reengaging the Pastor's Prayer List, where over the course of 2022, I will be in prayer for each person that is connected to the CCC in some fashion. They will receive a letter from me inviting specific prayer requests.

I also hope to learn more about Celtic spirituality this year. I have felt drawn to learn more about this thread of Christian thought and practice - one that actually was marginalized because of the ways it incorporated nature into its theology. I have a stack of books to work through!

#### **Family Notes:**

On another personal note, we continue to navigate the uncertainties of the pandemic. Genevieve at 2 ½ is not yet eligible for the vaccine. We had to schedule intentional time for Ben's reaction to the booster, knowing that his chronic illness interferes with vaccines of all types. While all three of us have all the recommended vaccines and boosters we are eligible for, we continue to be careful as both Ben and I have conditions that put us at higher risk for long-COVID should we get the virus. After experiencing one unanticipated health crisis this past year (Ben's appendectomy), we are not anxious for another one!

We also continue to work on 54 Firehouse road and hope to move in between Memorial Day and Labor Day. We are excited to put roots down on the island in this way and are so thankful for people who have pitched in by watching our kids so that we could work on the house together, allowed us to borrow equipment, given us advice, and more.

Ben formally stepped down as the Music Director this year when we resumed in-person worship and is working at the BTS Center as the Director of Applied Research - where the organization as a whole is looking at the intersection of climate devastation and the changing religious landscape and asking the questions of what faithful leadership looks like in this moment.

Michael continues to thrive in Kindergarten this year and Genevieve enjoys Kids' Place and we are thankful to these institutions that serve our children and many of the island's children so well.

Thank you for taking the time to read this report - may we lean together into the rest that God invites us into for the coming year.

Peace,

Melissa Yosua-Davis, pastor