

Annual Report 2024

Annual Meeting Jan. 28 on Zoom, 7:30 PM

Article 1: Acceptance of Minutes

Article ii. Acceptance of reports.

Article iii. Election of Officers

Slate as follows:

Moderator—?

Clerk—?

Treasurer—Steve Pullen

Members: Wayne & Donna Burkhart, Sheela Clary, Liz Goodman, Linnea Grealish, Peter Grealish, Sally Pullen, Steve Pullen, Susan Quinn, Steve Snyder.

Transaction of Any Business:

Minutes of Annual Meeting 2024

Jan. 30, 2024

Present: Steve Snyder, Sheela Clary, Jenny Daily, Hannah Fries, Liz Goodman, Bev Larson, Wayne Burkhart, Donna Burkhart.

Move to accept minutes of 2023 Annual Meeting, Wayne moved, Jenny seconded, all voted yea. Minutes of Special Meeting on December 10th, Jenny moved, Wayne seconded, all voted yea.

Wayne moved to accept slate of Parish Council—Hannah, moderator, Sheela, treasurer, Jenny, clerk – and Liz seconded.

Business report: It was an eventful year, through which we moved in our discernment and more practical meetings decisively but very thoughtfully. “We’re leaving a really good record of this.....which will be important if we (the congregation) don’t continue, and also if we do, which is the plan at this point.”

Financial update: our problem is certainly not one of money. Our investment accounts were robust in 2023; the balance is somewhere around \$780,000. We spent less this year than in last years on Liz’ pension, as there was some confusion over who was paying what between Monterey and Lenox. But between Jesse Goodman and Debbi Herdman, our wonderful bookkeeper, it was straightened out in 2023.

Update on the real estate news: working with Berkshire Property Agents now, and Liz says they, Rachel Louchen and Claudia Crane, are blessedly fielding questions from the public about the church. Berkshire Eagle reporter Jane Kaufman called Liz several times, and she called her back, to say there’s no news to report as yet, but Kaufman said she still intended to file a story, even though there is no story. So Liz will inform us when that non-story is going to be posted.

Liz did not submit a story to the Monterey News this month because that would be considered marketing, and if we do that we’d have to list the church in the MLS, which would likely cast a much wider net of interest about the church from folks who have no stake or interest in Monterey.

The idea of Construct was mentioned, and Liz reiterated that the affordable housing is not doable in Monterey, for its lack of public transportation and the cost of building, among other reasons.

Jenny moved to adjourn the meeting, Hannah seconded, all approved. Adjourned at 7:25 pm.

Pastor's Report 2024

2024 was a difficult year as pastor here, definitely the hardest of my term. Overwhelmed by issues surrounding the building and its possible sale, I found the summer particularly hard to take. The fact that the sale fell through felt like a personal relief because I couldn't shoulder the burden any longer, but a professional setback since my leadership had come to nothing and had cost me a lot in distress.

Come September I realized I'd been trying to solve a problem that wasn't really mine, that problem being the church surrendering its commitment to steward this building and therefore likely to leave behind a building to deteriorate in a town that had already suffered the Tea Room coming apart until, at long last, it was mercifully taken down, more recently the school rotting on its bluff, and the general store hovering in a timeless state where it's always going to open "next season."

Then I realized, as I said, this isn't my problem to solve. I'm the pastor of the church and mine is, according to the church's by-laws, "to be the spiritual leader of the Church, conducting worship and administering the sacraments with the assistance of the Board of Deacons, and offering pastoral care where it is needed. The Pastor shall work closely with the Parish Council to administer activities of the Church and shall serve *ex officio* as an advisory member of all boards and committees."

So, here's how I've spent my 20 hours a week with these vocational tasks for which I was first called to ordination.

Leading Worship—10-15 hours a week.

My highest priority any given week is preparing for and leading worship. I've begun choosing hymns further in advance than in the past. I generally work on the sermon Friday-Saturday.

Organizational and Committee work—This *ex officio* service was as needed in the fall, when the Trustees and Deacons had reconstituted themselves. Prior to that the Parish Council met frequently to attend to details around the building sale.

Communication (Web site, bulletin, podcast, email, etc.)

Messaging with the congregation and wider public generally takes about 5-10 hours a month.

Pastoral Care—1 hour a month

Typically I'm not called on much for pastoral care, so I reiterate my availability for care however it might be needed. I also encourage people to let me know when a pastoral need arises. Never assume I already know or someone else has already told me.

Faith Formation

The (both-church) book club, which meets on Zoom, took on three books this year. We generally have two-three of our participants join in on that.

Special Services

I officiated a Good Friday service, participated in the Memorial Day service at Veterans' Park, and led the Christmas eve service of lessons and carols.

Wider Church

I am still a delegate with the SNEUCC planning to attend my 2nd General Synod this July. I joined the newly reconstituted South County Interfaith Clergy Association, which began a monthly meeting in the fall and am a member of a Clergy Community of Practice as one of eight UCC clergy people of Berkshire Association, which also meets monthly. The weekly podcast of the preaching tends to have 30-40 downloads per episode.

Faithfully submitted,
Liz Goodman

Moderator's Report

2024 was a sad turning point year for the Monterey UCC. According to the trajectory of churches provided to the Deacons committee by the church conference, in 2024 we entered into the "life support" phase of our 275-year-old history. After the withdrawals of Hannah Fries and Jenny Daily we ended the year with membership and Parish Council at nine: Susan Quinn, Sheela Clary, Steve Snyder, Steve Pullen, Sally Pullen, Wayne Burkhart, Donna Burkhart and Linnea Grealish and Rev. Liz Goodman.

The year 2024 began, however, with the then-Parish Council ~ Liz, Sheela, Jenny and Hannah - making the difficult decision to put our beloved meetinghouse on the real estate market, choosing local realtor Claudia Crane, together with Rachel Louchen, of Berkshire Property Agents, to hold the listing. Within a couple of months we had interested buyers enter into a purchase and sale agreement, and they got to work on extensive due diligence. The Parish Council felt good about the buyers. They seemed to be community-minded people, and there seemed to be a strong possibility that the congregation would be able to continue to meet in the sanctuary on Sunday morning.

But after several months of inspections and much back and forth, along with some friction caused by the need for confidentiality around the sale, the pair of potential buyers backed out of the contract. They had reached the point of facing still more months of expensive permit-seeking for a change in use that the town had not foreseen or made allowances for. They could not see a viable way forward.

Meanwhile, over the fall the Parish Council, then down to Sheela and Liz, called in the remaining members to form a reconfigured Parish Council to thereafter be split into two cohorts: Trustees, charged with figuring out next steps as regards the Meetinghouse, and working with the Monterey Meetinghouse Steering Committee, made up town residents; and Deacons, charged with care for the life of the congregation and establishing next steps there. The deacons have met a couple of time to steward the congregation, which includes about a dozen non-members who regularly attend services, many of them affiliated with Gould Farm.

Rob Hoogs created the Monterey Meetinghouse Steering Committee ~ Hutch Neilson has recently taken over—whose monthly meetings Linnea and Wayne attend. Seeing that the Committee could use a boost, the church, on November 25th, sent the Steering Committee a grant of \$30,000 to

help them pay for feasibility studies and to hire an architectural firm to do a master plan. At the end of 2024 the committee was working toward getting a 501 c 3 designation which they expect to be in place by April. 2025 begins with a great deal of uncertainty for the Monterey UCC.

Faithfully submitted,
Sheela Clary, outgoing Moderator

Trustees' Report

The committee of Trustee's comprised of Wayne Burkhart, Steve Pullen, and Steve Snyder met in the church sanctuary with Pastor Liz once a month starting in October of 2024 to assess the physical needs of the building and take the appropriate action. Among the actions taken or pending at this date:

- Steve S. spoke with Eric Martin who uses the sanctuary for his music lessons to confirm Eric's intention to advise the committee of any impending maintenance issues and/or correct these as he feels able.
- In the wake of crumbling ceiling tile in the vestibule, Steve S. examined the church belfry to assess for water leaks and determined that there were none and that the falling tile was most likely the result of earlier water spills in the second floor office.
- Wayne B. purchased and had new lighting fixtures mounted in the kitchen area to replace the non working fixture.
- Steve P. is creating a list of UCC contacts to be posted on the church doors for anyone needing information or communication regarding the building.
- A building use policy is being formulated to inform persons interested or currently using the building of our requirements and protocols for its use.
- Steve P. is developing a stewardship task list as a reference for periodic and future maintenance.
- Liz Goodman is reviewing policy on leasing our building to nonprofit entities.
- Wayne B., Steve P. and Steve S. are planning the placement of fire extinguishers as well as investigating our current alarm system.
- Steve P. is investigating what needs to be done to complete the wall installation of the new fuel tank compartment.

Treasurer's Report

Source and Uses of Funding for 2024 and 2023

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
Contributions	\$7,891	\$27,899
Transferred from Investments	<u>210,000</u>	<u>??</u>
Total Sources of Funding	<u>\$217,891</u>	<u>??</u>
Pastor Compensation	\$66,778	\$65,133
Church Mission, Contributions to Various community non-profits	32,424	0
Property - Fuel oil, water, electricity	19,248	14,137
Repairs, septic pump, cleaning		
New Boiler and tank	15,500	0
Other - insurance, bookkeeper, office	12,728	10,649

Musicians and Administrator	9,408	20,060
Legal Fees	<u>6,720</u>	<u>0</u>
Total Uses (Expended)	<u>\$162,806</u>	<u>\$109,979</u>

Investment Account Activity 2024 and 2023

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
Market Value at Beginning of Year	\$782,625	
Less Amt Transferred to Checking	(\$210,000)	
Increases from Dividends and Interest, and unrealized gains	<u>\$70,376</u>	
Market Value at End of Year	<u>\$643,001</u>	

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Accrual Basis

Monterey UCC
Profit & Loss Prev Year Comparison
 January through December 2024

	Jan - Dec 24	Jan - Dec 23	\$ Change
Ordinary Income/Expense			
Income			
Contributions			
Stewardship Contributions	7,891.01	27,898.80	-20,007.79
Total Contributions	7,891.01	27,898.80	-20,007.79
Investment Income			
Interest	2.83	4.71	-1.88
Total Investment Income	2.83	4.71	-1.88
Total Income	7,893.84	27,903.51	-20,009.67
Expense			
Ask Acct	0.00	0.00	0.00
Church Administration			
Bank Fees	176.99	105.46	71.53
Insurance	6,652.60	6,154.00	498.60
Office Supplies	122.01	0.00	122.01
Postage	31.52	111.30	-79.78
Postal Box Rental	100.00	98.00	2.00
Safe Deposit Box	105.00	75.00	30.00
Telephone	860.76	893.03	-32.27
Total Church Administration	8,048.88	7,436.79	612.09
Church Mission			
Berkshire Assoc. of UCC	22.00	22.00	0.00
Mass Conference of UCC	402.00	402.00	0.00
Church Mission - Other	32,000.00	0.00	32,000.00
Total Church Mission	32,424.00	424.00	32,000.00
Church Program			
Advertising	0.00	96.63	-96.63
Worship Expenses			
Supplies / hymnals / Candles	2,990.00	0.00	2,990.00
Total Worship Expenses	2,990.00	0.00	2,990.00
Total Church Program	2,990.00	96.63	2,893.37
Church Staff			
Admin Salary	2,706.68	14,560.08	-11,853.40
Musicians	6,700.00	5,500.00	1,200.00
Pastor			
Guest Pastors	150.00	600.00	-450.00
Health Insurance/Stipend	4,979.08	5,056.75	-77.67
Housing Allowance	21,915.01	22,226.00	-310.99
Pension	9,374.50	6,452.64	2,921.86
Salary	26,290.69	26,670.50	-379.81
Social Security Stipend	4,068.66	4,127.50	-58.84
Total Pastor	66,777.94	65,133.39	1,644.55
Total Church Staff	76,184.62	85,193.47	-9,008.85
Payroll Expenses			
FICA	207.06	1,113.84	-906.78
Payroll Expenses - Other	0.00	-0.06	0.06
Total Payroll Expenses	207.06	1,113.78	-906.72
Professional Fees			
Legal	6,720.00	0.00	6,720.00
Payroll Processing	480.00	480.00	0.00
Professional Fees - Other	1,004.00	1,000.00	4.00
Total Professional Fees	8,204.00	1,480.00	6,724.00

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Accrual Basis

Monterey UCC
Balance Sheet Prev Year Comparison
As of December 31, 2024

	Dec 31, 24	Dec 31, 23	\$ Change
ASSETS			
Current Assets			
Checking/Savings			
Checking - Berkshire Bank	-9,681.86	22,458.68	-32,140.54
Total Checking/Savings	-9,681.86	22,458.68	-32,140.54
Total Current Assets	-9,681.86	22,458.68	-32,140.54
Fixed Assets			
New Boiler	15,500.00	15,500.00	0.00
Total Fixed Assets	15,500.00	15,500.00	0.00
Other Assets			
United Church Funds			
Book Value	437,549.75	522,748.17	-85,198.42
FMV adj	255,451.58	259,877.15	-4,425.57
Total United Church Funds	693,001.33	782,625.32	-89,623.99
Total Other Assets	693,001.33	782,625.32	-89,623.99
TOTAL ASSETS	698,819.47	820,584.00	-121,764.53
LIABILITIES & EQUITY			
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
Accounts Payable			
Accounts Payable	716.96	2,710.00	-1,993.04
Total Accounts Payable	716.96	2,710.00	-1,993.04
Other Current Liabilities			
Payroll Liabilities	0.00	749.94	-749.94
Restricted Funds			
Food Pantry	0.00	-15.10	15.10
Total Restricted Funds	0.00	-15.10	15.10
Total Other Current Liabilities	0.00	734.84	-734.84
Total Current Liabilities	716.96	3,444.84	-2,727.88
Total Liabilities	716.96	3,444.84	-2,727.88
Equity			
Retained Earnings	817,139.16	793,859.75	23,279.41
Net Income	-119,036.65	23,279.41	-142,316.06
Total Equity	698,102.51	817,139.16	-119,036.65

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Accrual Basis

Monterey UCC
Transactions by Account
 As of December 31, 2024

Type	Date	Num	Adj	Name	Memo	Clr	Split	Debit	Credit	Balance
Checking - Berkshire Bank										-150.00
Check	12/20/2024	10034		Elizabeth Goodman			-SPLIT-		2,388.27	-2,538.27
Bill Pmt -Check	12/30/2024	1347		Berkshire Immigrant...			Accounts Paya...	5,000.00		-7,538.27
Bill Pmt -Check	12/30/2024	1348		Community Develop...			Accounts Paya...	5,000.00		-12,538.27
Bill Pmt -Check	12/30/2024	1349		Construct, Inc			Accounts Paya...	5,000.00		-17,538.27
Bill Pmt -Check	12/30/2024	1350		Elizabeth Freeman ...			Accounts Paya...	1,000.00		-18,538.27
Bill Pmt -Check	12/30/2024	1351		Foodbank of Weste...			Accounts Paya...	5,000.00		-23,538.27
Bill Pmt -Check	12/30/2024	1352		Janice Madden-Coon		*	Accounts Paya...	840.00		-24,378.27
Bill Pmt -Check	12/30/2024	1353		John B. Hull Inc.	25873	*	Accounts Paya...	48.58		-24,426.85
Bill Pmt -Check	12/30/2024	1354		Literacy Network of ...			Accounts Paya...	5,000.00		-29,426.85
Bill Pmt -Check	12/30/2024	1355		Mount Everett Sanit...	montereyunit...		Accounts Paya...	945.00		-30,371.85
Bill Pmt -Check	12/30/2024	1356		Multicultural Bridge			Accounts Paya...	1,000.00		-31,371.85
Bill Pmt -Check	12/30/2024	1357		National Grid	51460-34009		Accounts Paya...	161.35		-31,533.20
Bill Pmt -Check	12/30/2024	1358		Verizon	351-378-620-...		Accounts Paya...	72.20		-31,605.40
Bill Pmt -Check	12/30/2024	1359		Volunteers in Medici...			Accounts Paya...	5,000.00		-36,605.40
Paycheck	12/31/2024			Elizabeth R Goodman			-SPLIT-		57,318.48	-93,923.88
General Journal	12/31/2024	DH	*	Reclass Eliz. ...			Payroll Expens...	57,318.48		-36,605.40
Total Checking - Berkshire Bank								57,318.48	93,773.88	-36,605.40
TOTAL								57,318.48	93,773.88	-36,605.40

Deacons' Report

At a September 7 meeting of the reconfigured Parish Council, we formed a sub-group of Deacons to include Linnea (chair), Sheela, Susan and Liz (ex-officio).

In advance of our first zoom meeting, we reviewed information provided by the Southern Conference's Center for Transformational Leadership to help us better understand the life cycle of congregations and the logical inflection points.

On a September 17 call, we discussed this material. We decided that the purpose of the group to be twofold...to address spiritual life of the church and to address questions around viability and leadership. With respect to leadership, we concluded that while there may be others with more experience working through legacy issues, we have no concerns about OUR leadership. We also discussed the relationship between the church and town, which has since been addressed through Monterey News articles and communications with the Meeting House Steering Committee.

At the November meeting of the full council, we shared the UCC material referenced above. There was agreement that our congregation falls somewhere between "Preservation" and "Life Support", and there isn't a viable path for reinvigoration. Demographics of both the membership and the town work to our disadvantage. We discussed the availability of assistance from the Center for Transformational Leadership to help us with next steps. We concluded that we should solicit help by completing and submitting the questionnaire provided (attached.)

We have had several discussions about the endowment, which remains a remarkably consistent \$750,000. With agreement from the full council, we offered the Monterey Meeting House Steering Committee up to \$30,000 for them to hire architectural firm to conduct a current conditions report and compose a master plan for the building. We did this with the explicit understanding that they pursue 501(c)(3) status, upon which time we can also negotiate the price of the building, should they decide to go ahead with acquiring it.

Also with respect to the endowment, we decided we should begin disbursements in more significant amounts and establish a record of giving to likely recipients of a more final disbursement down the road. (This will be important for getting attorney general approval of such a disbursement.) To that end we approved the following disbursements in December:

\$1000 EFC (Elizabeth Freeman)
\$5000 BIC (Berk Immigrant Center)
\$5000 VIM in name of Rich Holbein and Ken De Loreto
\$5000 Lit Net
\$5000 Food Bank
\$5000 Construct
\$5000 CDC SB (housing)
\$1000 BRIDGE

Slate of Officers

Moderator—Linnea

Steve Pullen—Treasurer

Steve Snyder—Clerk

