

United Methodist Church of Auburn
Charge Conference Minutes
October 5, 2005

The annual Charge Conference of the United Methodist Church of Auburn was held on October 5, 2005 at

6:30 p.m. Members in attendance were: Ruth Cannon, Betty Dexter, Wanda Sprague, Karl Foss, Judy Johnson, the Rev. Russ Peppe, Gladys Chapman, Barbara Newbauer, Eric Howes, Kathy Gleason, Dick Gleason, Nancy Holler, Sharon McGilvery, and Pastor Rich Cullen.

District Superintendent the Rev. David Svenson welcomed all.

Pastor Richard Cullen welcomed all including Rev. Svenson. He also welcomed the Rev. Russell Peppe, retired United Methodist minister, to his first charge conference in that capacity.

Sharon McGilvery was nominated as recording secretary and unanimously approved.

It was voted by council members to reconvene as a church conference and all members be allowed to vote.

Rev. Svenson led all in worship. He was assisted by Ruth Cannon on piano.

Pastor Rich introduced the Naming of the Saints who have died since the last charge conference. They were: William Dwinel, John Paul Jones, Florence Keene, Edward Gowell, Sally Claudia DeWolfe, Walter Field Sargent, Rachel H. Germond, Bob Bilodeau, and Ruth Shipton Lowe. Gladys Chapman assisted by reading the names as Eric Howes lighted candles in their memory.

The minutes of the December 12, 2004 charge conference were approved as printed.

Ruth Cannon presented the SPRC recommendation for Pastor's salary. It states "Although the SPRC has not finalized its budget recommendations on staff salaries, the SPRC does propose that the Pastor's salary be no less than the current salary with the expectation that it will increase at a percent consistent with other staff salary increases."

Pastor Rich stated his reimbursable expenses as \$X travel and \$X general.

Pastor Rich reported that the SPRC has formulated Safe Sanctuary guidelines. They have been approved by the Church Council and are now being implemented. A policy on Sexual Harassment now needs to be worked on.

The membership report was presented. Betty Dexter asked what a **constituent roll** means.

Answer: **Someone who is not in full church membership but has a relationship with the church.**

Pastor Rich stated that the average church attendance (Saturday and Sunday services combined) is 175.

Gladys Chapman reported current Sunday School enrollment is about 65.

Ruth Cannon gave the report of the Lay Member of Annual Conference. A printed copy is included in the reports.

She also said that she is returning to the Auburn church as Lay Leader. She has been asked to focus on (1) Lay Speaker Ministry and (2) Annual Conference.

Rev. Svenson thanked the church for its support for hurricane relief and asked for gifts of prayer for all involved.

Stewardship of God's gifts included the naming of Gary Adams as church treasurer and Dick Gleason as Finance chairperson.

Dick mentioned that the church had extended its thanks to Frank Thomas for his many years as treasurer.

Challenges still face the church in meeting its Mission Shares.

Judy Johnson, chairperson of Trustees, reported on the new steeple.

Pastor Russell Peppe stated that he will be relating to the Auburn charge conference. He is now living in Lewiston.

Rev. Jay Turner prepared a printed report on his Extended Ministry.

Pastor Rich named Ruth Cannon and Barbara Newbauer as new Lay Leaders. They were affirmed.

Ruth Cannon spoke on Lay Speaking. There are two levels: (1) advanced, and (2) Local. Lay speakers are involved in communicating, leadership, and caring.

Rev. Svenson recommended Ruth Cannon as an advanced lay speaker and Sharon McGilvery, Nancy Holler, and Janice Meserve as local church lay speakers. All were affirmed.

The Mission/Vision statement was presented. Rev. Svenson encouraged the church to check its applicability to the current church.

Eric Howes, Lay Leader, thanked Janice Meserve and Sue Pohl for the work they did as Lay Leaders.

He mentioned that although Pastor Rich took the summer off that with everyone's assistance the months went well.

Eric welcomed Ruth Cannon and Barbara Newbauer as new Lay Leaders.

During this past term, Eric has served as chair of the Administrative Team which has been dealing with the issues surrounding the Reconciling Congregation.

Rev. Svenson urged those present to explore all boundaries of being a Reconciling Congregation. He also spoke of the Bishop's Day on the district which was held in Belfast.

Pastor Rich gave a verbal Pastor's report stating this has been an incredible year for him.

Highlights have included:

- (a) His 50th birthday celebration in January.
- (b) Celebration of his 20th year in ministry in April.

(c) Release time this summer.

Challenges this year included issues regarding the Reconciling Congregation and the Capital Campaign.

Rev. Svenson thanked Rich for his work as chairperson of the District Superintendency Committee.

The meeting closed with prayer.

Adjourned 8:20 p.m.

Sharon E. McGilvery

PASTOR'S REPORT FOR 2006: THE STATE OF THE CHURCH

The year 2006 for me marked the end of ten years as pastor of the United Methodist Church of Auburn and the beginning of the next decade. In my June newsletter column I took the opportunity to reflect back over these ten years so I will limit my thoughts here to the year 2006 itself. It was yet another active, busy, fast-paced year in the life of our church with much to celebrate and a few concerns to address. What follows are some of the many things that I would like to celebrate as we look back over the year that is past:

- **The revival of Youth Emphasis:** For the third year in a row we had a group of youth participate in a summer mission trip, this time to York, PA. We had four youth from our congregation along with three from the High Street Congregational Church and one youth together with one adult leader from the West Auburn Congregational Church take part. From this experience came the idea to begin a joint youth group with youth from each of these churches. This was begun in September with a good response from each of the churches. We have had an average of 15 youth attend the four meetings that have been held so far and out of these youth 12 are signed up to participate in next summer's mission trip to Ottawa, Ontario. I am grateful to Sarah Dow for her support of the mission trips as an adult leader and to Gladys Chapman for her assistance in getting the youth group started. We still do not have consistency in our Sunday School classes for youth and for the second year in a row we did not have any youth confirmed. There is room for growth and I would welcome both your prayers and the support of other volunteers especially with the youth group.
- **Continued Growth in Mission Giving and Participation:** Besides the youth who participated in the summer mission trip we also had one adult, Lois Beechum, take part in a mission trip to South Carolina where she worked with the Rural Mission on John's Island. This grew out the first of two VIM (Volunteers in Mission) Sunday's that our mission committee planned this year each of which highlighted the many opportunities for adults to participate in hands-on mission projects. Perhaps the most exciting mission opportunities that we supported this year were the renovation projects at the two New Beginnings Shelters. Thanks to the energy and commitment of Jane Thomas and Chris

Conant along with the financial support of the missions committee and the United Methodist Women's group these two projects were a wonderful success.

- **Greater Stewardship Emphasis and Support:** Thanks to the leadership of our Finance Committee this has been a year in which we have witnessed a strong stewardship emphasis along with great success in the area of fundraising. Our Fall Pledge Campaign with the theme of "Soul Responsibility" looks as though it will result in the highest pledge total in the history of our church. A new fundraiser, an auction, was added in late April and proved to be both enjoyable and successful. Our Church Fair looks as though it will surpass every other year in its final tally with nearly \$ X raised!
- **Strong and Growing Adult Christian Education Program:** Thanks to the wealth of capable teachers we were able to offer a strong education program for adults this past year. Rev. Russ Peppe led two very well attended classes "This I Believe" and "Familiar Stories of Genesis"; Bob Allison offered a wonderful class focusing on the "Diversity of Belief about Jesus in the Early Church"; and I led two well attended Adult Sunday Classes focusing on the "United Methodist Social Principles" in the Spring and the study regarding Holy Communion "This Holy Mystery: A United Methodist Understanding". I am grateful to have such capable and willing teachers who offer such interesting and challenging classes.
- **Contributions of Retired Clergy:** Besides the teaching contribution that Russ Peppe made we have also been blessed by his preaching on a couple of occasions. Two other retired clergy have been active in our congregation this year as well: Rev. Mervin "Chad" Chadbourne who has preached on a couple of occasions and Rev. Stuart Price who has once again provided pastoral care when I have been away for vacations. We are truly blessed to have these three retired clergy active in our church along with the Rev. Jay Turner, an active pastor in Extension Ministry at the Central Maine Medical Center, who has also preached on a couple of occasions this past year.
- **Capital Campaign Support and Building Improvements:** This month brings to an end the three-year capital campaign that was begun in January of 2004. This campaign enabled us to address many serious and urgent needs such as the replacement of our boiler, upgrade of our electrical system; addition of new, energy efficient windows in the education wing and numerous other smaller projects. This month also marks the end of the first year and a half of the Together for Tomorrow Capital Campaign that was done in conjunction with our Annual Conference (a five year campaign). Thanks to the generosity of so many people we have been able to pay an extra \$ X towards our \$ X loan leaving us only \$X yet to pay. At the same time we were able to replace our steeple; purchase a new screen and LDC projector primarily for use in the Saturday Worship Service; make improvements to our Sound System including the addition of Assisted Hearing Devices and purchase a much needed new folding machine for our office. At the same time we have had a \$X memorial gift given which will enable us to purchase a beautiful new, lighted, sign that will allow people to better know who we are and what we are doing. The sign has already been ordered and should be installed sometime soon.

- **Less this report get way too long let me just mention the following in passing:** the revival of our children's choir under the leadership of Claire Cote; the wonderful and well attended Women's retreat held in September; the transitions in our Church Council and the Council planning retreat also held in September with the very, capable leadership of Dick Babb; the addition of an Easter Sunrise Service held out at the Martindale Country Club; and the well attended and very enjoyable Christmas Concert and Pie Social held on December 1st.

The year 2006 has clearly been a good year in the life of our congregation but less we become a little too smug for our own good I would be remiss if I didn't point out that there are also some glaring concerns that will require our attention in the year ahead:

- **Increasing Financial Pressures:** In spite of the very generous financial support that our church enjoys and the success of our many fundraising efforts, this past year has been a very challenging one financially. It remains to be seen as of this writing whether we will meet all of our financial commitments for the year. In particular it is entirely possible that we will fail to pay our Conference Mission Shares in full for the first time in more years than anyone can remember. The reality is that the cost of being the church continues to grow at an alarming rate and surpasses our yearly increases in giving. The utility and maintenance costs of our church and parsonage along with the yearly increases in health and property insurance, not to mention the increase in real estate taxes all contribute to making our financial situation a difficult one. **Will we rise to the occasion in the year ahead and support the mission and ministry of our church?**
- **Change in Christian Education Director:** By the time she retires in June of 2007 Gladys Chapman will have been Director of Christian Education for ten years. In many ways Gladys has been the "glue" that keeps us together as a congregation. As one person pointed out in the pastoral evaluation survey that was completed recently "Gladys has made Pastor Rich look good!" There is a lot of truth to this person's perception- Gladys has made me look good given that we have worked so well together as a team. So many good things have happened in our church because of this teamwork and I know that the future will be much different without her in this position. Nevertheless, this is also an opportunity for us to hire someone who, although different from Gladys and having different gifts, can help us to reach our full potential as a congregation. The Church Council and Staff Parish Relations Committee have already been hard at work laying the groundwork for the hiring of a new person and you will have the opportunity in the near future to have input as well. **The truth is though that replacing Gladys will likely cost more than we are already paying: are we ready to rise to the occasion?**
- **How then Shall We Live as a Reconciling Congregation?** Since choosing to become a Reconciling Congregation in February of 2004 we have struggled to understand what this means for us in concrete and practical terms. Our Committee on Sexual Diversity, in consultation with the Church Council, came to the conclusion that its role in educating the congregation regarding the particular issues facing gay and lesbian members of our community needed to be replaced by something broader. The decision was reached that the committee would disband in favor of a Social Justice Committee which would

continue the educational and advocacy work of the Sexual Diversity Committee while seeking to address other issues of social justice and concern as well. In the year ahead we need to make this change a reality. As John Wesley, the founder of Methodism once said, "I know no religion but a social religion" so we too need to claim our important role as those who support those in our community who are without voice themselves and dependant on others to speak for them. **Are we ready to rise to the occasion in truly supporting the work of justice in our church and community?**

- **How Long Can We Sit on the Plateau?** In preparation for our Church Council retreat held back in September, at which time we asked ourselves the question, "What is the current reality for the UMC of Auburn?" I prepared a statistical look at where we are today in comparison to 1995. What became clear is that we have been on a plateau for at least ten years- neither growing nor shrinking in size although some of our programs have suffered quite a bit. Although we have received many new members in this period of time (243 in all!) we have also lost many members in this same time frame (157 in all). Likewise, in 1995 our average attendance was 165 in worship while in 2005 our average attendance was 161. In 1995 our average attendance in Sunday School was 89 while in 2005 it was 45; in 1995 our youth groups numbered 44 youth while in 2005 we no longer had a youth group; and while in 1995 there were 7 youth confirmed, in 2005 no youth were confirmed for the second year in a row. **Are we ready to move off of this plateau before we fall off? Are we ready to rise to the occasion?**

Many people have expressed concern this fall that perhaps this will be my last year as pastor of the UMC of Auburn. As a clergy person in the United Methodist Church I am appointed for one year at a time only and eligible to be reappointed elsewhere with each new year. While it is my hope to continue as pastor here I also know that this is something that is beyond our control. What we can control is whether we will follow where God leads us and whether we will be faithful to the mission and ministry that God has for us here in Auburn. We are a church with enormous, yet-to-be exhausted, potential. It is my hope and prayer that the year 2007 will see us begin to scratch the surface of that potential and become the congregation that we are fully capable of being?

Are you ready to rise to the occasion?

Your Partner in Christ,

Pastor Rich

2006 MEMBERSHIP REPORT

TOTAL: as of December 31, 2005

577

<u>TOTAL NEW MEMBERS:</u> December 31, 2005 – December 31, 2006		13
RECEIVED BY PROFESSION OF FAITH: including Confirmation	5	
RECEIVED BY TRANSFER FROM OTHER UM CHURCHES:	4	
RECEIVED BY TRANSFER FROM OTHER DENOMINATIONS:	1	
REINSTATED FOR THE PURPOSE OF TRANSFERRING MEMBERSHIP:	3	
<u>TOTAL REMOVED FROM MEMBERSHIP:</u>		11
REMOVAL THROUGH VOLUNTARY WITHDRAWAL:	1	
REMOVAL THROUGH DEATH:	5	
REMOVAL THROUGH TRANSFER TO OTHER UM CHURCHES:	5	
*REMOVAL THROUGH TRANSFER TO OTHER DENOMINATIONS:	0	
* REMOVAL BY CHARGE CONFERENCE ACTION	0	
TOTAL MEMBERSHIP 12/31/06:		<u>579</u>
BAPTISMS:		9
AFFILIATE MEMBER: (do <u>not</u> count as an additional member)		2
AVERAGE WEEKLY WORSHIP ATTENDANCE: 2000:		151
	2001: (Sunday only)	157
	(17 Saturdays only)	36
	(Combined)	169
	2002: (Sunday only)	156
	(Saturdays only)	24
	(Combined)	180
	173 corrected 2/3/04	
	Through December 31st, 2003: (Sunday only)	152
	(Saturdays only)	26
	(Combined)	166
	Through December 31, 2004: (Sunday only)	145
	(Saturday only) (38)	23

	(Combined)	161
Through December 31, 2005:	(Sunday only)	141
	(Saturday only)	26
	(Combined)	161
Through December 31, 2006:	(Sunday only)	138
	(Saturday only)	24
	(Combined)	153

RECEIVED BY PROFESSION OF FAITH:

Burkley, Carla Anne (4/9/06)
Dow, Adam (11/19/06)
Dow, Tonia (11/19/06)
Talpey, William Blight, Jr. (4/9/06)
Thurm, Christine (11/19/06)

RECEIVED BY TRANSFER FROM OTHER UNITED METHODIST CHURCHES:

Beechum, Lois (11/19/06 – from Bartlett Memorial UMC of No. Jay, Maine)
Blanchard, Nancy (11/19/06 – from Lake Gibson UMC of Lakeland, Florida)
Hall, Lynda C. (11/19/06 – from First United Methodist of Porterville, CA)
Smith, Marjorie (4/9/06 – from Grace Linn Memorial UMC of Hartland, Maine)

RECEIVED BY TRANSFER FROM OTHER DENOMINATIONS:

Manson, Donna M. (11/19/06 – from St. Mary’s Episcopal Church of Falmouth, Maine)

REINSTATED FOR THE PURPOSE OF TRANSFERRING MEMBERSHIP:

Gagnon, Brandon (3/15/06)
Gagnon, David (3/15/06)
Gagnon, Terry (3/15/06)

REMOVED FROM MEMBERSHIP THROUGH DEATH:

Bouley, Helen M. (11/2/06)
Reynolds, June R. (2/18/06)
Russell, Blanche S. (6/19/06)
Spiro, Beverly Mae (1/10/06)
Trask, Natalie R. (6/29/06)

REMOVED FROM MEMBERSHIP THROUGH TRANSFER TO OTHER UNITED METHODIST CHURCHES:

Curtis, Joann (3/9/06 – to First United Methodist Church of Spring Hill, Florida)
Gagnon, Brandon (3/16/06 – to First United Methodist Church of Mount Holly, North Carolina)
Gagnon, David (3/16/06 – to First United Methodist Church of Mount Holly, North Carolina)
Gagnon, Terry (3/16/06 – to First United Methodist Church of Mount Holly, North Carolina)
Miller, Cheryl (3/6/06 – to Good Shepherd UMC of Gray, Maine)

REMOVED FROM MEMBERSHIP THROUGH TRANSFER TO OTHER DENOMINATIONS:

WITHDRAWAL/VOLUNTARY REMOVAL FROM MEMBERSHIP:

Johnson, Francis Arlene (1/31/06)

CONSTITUENT MEMBERS WHO DIED THIS PAST YEAR (not included in totals)

Ames, Byron G. (10/11/06)

Boothby, Willie Dean (7/6/06)

Munroe, Perry (12/31/06)

BAPTISMS:

Anderson, Gregory Blaine, Jr. (12/10/06)

Buiniskas, Chelsea Nicole (7/16/06)

Finnegan, Makenzie Phyllis (2/19/06)

Fulgham, Saphryn Kien Humason (3/12/06)

Morin, Logan Tyler (11/19/06)

Morin, Paige Marie (11/19/06)

Peck, Marin Lucy (6/11/06)

Pendexter, Andrew David (6/18/06)

Scholer, Emily Colleen (3/26/06)

AFFILIATE MEMBERS:

Bady, Elizabeth (Gary) (7/15/04)

Foss, Karl (11/21/04)

**SUBMITTED TO THE CHURCH COUNCIL
JUNE 11, 2006**

CHURCH COUNCIL

Eric Howes.....Chairperson
Donna Manson.....Recording Secretary
Richard A. Cullen.....Pastor
Gladys Chapman.....Director of Christian Education
Ruth Cannon (2007).....Lay Leader
Barbara Newbauer (2008.).....Lay Leader
(2009).....Lay Leader
Ruth Cannon.....Lay Member Annual Conference
.....Reserve Lay Member Annual Conference
Paul Farnsworth.....Chairperson, Board of Trustees
Dick Gleason.....Chairperson, Finance Committee
Tom Reichard.....Chairperson, Pastor-Staff Parish Relations Committee
Gary Adams.....Church Treasurer
Melissa Buzza.....President, United Methodist Women

NOW TEAM

Lay Leader: Ruth Cannon (chairperson)

Pastor: Richard Cullen

Director of Christian Education: Gladys Chapman

United Methodist Women's President: Jeanie Sasser

Work Area Chairpersons: Outreach (David Sysko); Missions (Claire Cote); Education (Cheri Logan); Worship (); Music (Nancy Lander); Committee on Sexual Diversity ()

Member-at-large: Erin Conant

ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

Lay Leader: Barbara Newbauer (chairperson)

Pastor: Richard Cullen

Finance Chairperson: Dick Gleason

Trustees Chairperson: Paul Farnsworth

Staff Parish Relations Chairperson: Tom Reichard

Member-at-large:

CONNECTING TEAM

Pastor: Richard Cullen (Convenor)

Lay Leaders: , Ruth Cannon, Barbara Newbauer

Church Council Chairperson: Eric Howes

TRUSTEES

Chairperson: Paul Farnsworth

2006-2007

Dave Waters

2007/2008

Paul Farnsworth
Dave Sargent

2008/2009

Chris Conant
Jane Thomas
Chris Woodford

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Chairperson: Dick Gleason

Ex Officiis: Auditor, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Lay Leaders,
Lay Member to Annual Conference

2006-2007

Dick Gleason
Deb Trautman

2007/2008

Don Malpass

2008/2009

Judith Johnson
John Davis

PASTOR-STAFF-PARISH-RELATIONS

Chairperson: Tom Reichard

Lay Leader: Ruth Cannon

Lay Member: Ruth Cannon

Ex Officiis: Lay Leader, Lay Member to Annual Conference

2006-2007

Sharon McGilvery
Tom Reichard

2007/2008

Julie Farnsworth
Stan Rice
Eric Breidenstein

2008/2009

Kathleen Cormier
Shirley Keene

WORK AREA: EDUCATION

Chairperson: Cheryl Logan

Ex Officiis: Director of Christian Education (Gladys Chapman)

2006-2007

Chris Conant
Janice Meserve
Cheryl Logan

2007/2008

Barbara Hardison
Kay Little

2008/2009

Lyn Heath
Edie Jordan
Audrey Grant

WORK AREA: OUTREACH

Chairperson: David Sysko

2006-2007

Helen Shelton
David Sysko

2007/2008

Ruth Cannon
Janice Meserve
Clay Manson

2008/2009

Sharon McGilvery
Sharon Folker
Donna Manson

WORK AREA: NURTURE

Chairperson: Lucille Webber

2006/2007

Pam MacDonald
Kathy Gleason
Stan Rice
Marilyn Rice

2007/2008

Beth Woodhead
Betty Young
David Young

2008/2009

Cherri Waters
Lucille Webber
Colleen Scholer
Donna Bain

WORK AREA: WORSHIP

CHAIRPERSON:

Ex Officiis: Norma Rice-Gould, William Buzza, Mitch Thomas, Sarah Dow

2006-2007

Ruth Cannon
Libby Reichard
Nancy Lander

2007/2008

Lynda Janelle
Rosemary Malpass
Will Talpey
Scott Efland

2008/2009

Nancy Holler
Melissa Buzza
Julie Ouellette
Hilarie Morris

WORK AREA: MUSIC COMMITTEE

Chairpersons: Nancy Lander

MEMBERS: Norma Rice-Gould, Mitch Thomas, William Buzza, Sarah Dow, Rev. Richard Cullen

At Large Members:

2006-2007

Nancy Lander

2007/2008

Libby Reichard

2008/2009

Diane Higgins

WORK AREA: MISSIONS

Chairperson: Claire Cote

2006-2007

Claire Cote
Joyce Pollard

2007/2008

Maria Tirrell
Cindy Bragdon
Marci Kenison

2008/2009

Betty Dexter
Lois Beechum
Avis Baird

WORK AREA: SOCIAL JUSTICE

COMMITTEE ON LAY LEADERSHIP
CHAIRPERSON: Rev. Richard A. Cullen

Ex Officiis: Lay Leaders, Dir. Christian Ed., Lay Member

2006-2007

Marcia Akers

Donna Bain

Cherri Waters

2007/2008

Pam MacDonald

Dick Babb

Holly Sysko

2008/2009

Beth Woodhead

COMMUNION STEWARDS

CHAIRPERSON: Holly Sysko; Elizabeth Meid; Lynda Janelle (Saturday service)

CHURCH HISTORIAN:

THE BEACON: Jim Sargent, Editor

WEBMASTERS: Don and Rosemary Malpass

Annual Conference 2006

Our Vision Statement

**Transformed by the Holy Spirit,
we will become united in trust
as we boldly proclaim Christ to the world.**

The 2006 New England Annual Conference, held at Gordon College from June 8-11, 2006, was especially meaningful for me because of the focus on social justice issues, which have long been a passion of mine. The theme for this year's conference was "Seeking Wholeness" as symbolized by a labyrinth with much word play surrounding the terms *Wholeness* and *Holiness*.

Highlights of the 2006 Conference for me included:

The Reflections of the Retirees, including several who expressed their concerns about the current policies of the church and their hopes for a future in which all will be fully welcomed and included in its mission and ministries.

Participation in an early morning outdoor communion service organized by the Conference Committee on Reconciling Ministries, *Fast and Feast*, including an opportunity to express sadness and dismay about the church's continuing discrimination against Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender people.

A celebration of the 50th anniversary of full ordination rights of women, including the introduction and recognition of 196 women elders in full connection in the New England Annual Conference, the highest percentage in the country.

The dynamic preaching of the Wilbur Ziegler Award winner, the Rev. Martin McLee of Boston's Union United Methodist Church who, referring to the phrase "Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors", challenged us to kick open the closed doors of our churches and extend a fully inclusive welcome to all.

Finally, the time to connect with clergy and lay friends that I often see just once a year.

I look forward to the 2007 Annual Conference will include the responsibility of electing lay and clergy members to represent New England at the 2008 General Conference. It can be a long and complex process, but ultimately rewarding. Also in 2007, Krista Gary Atwood, a former member and director of Christian Education here in Auburn, will be ordained as an Elder in Full Connection. I hope that her many friends in our congregation will travel to Massachusetts to support and honor Krista at this very special occasion.

Thank you for the years that you have allowed me to be your Lay Member of Annual Conference. It is a great privilege and responsibility which I have sincerely appreciated.

Grace and Peace,
Ruth Cannon

**Church Council Annual Report
Auburn United Methodist Church**

December 2006

This has been a year of transition for the Church Council as Wanda Sprague completed her term as Church Council Chair in June and some new committee chairs joined the council. We thank Wanda for her steady, wise leadership over the past few years, particularly during the process that resulted in us becoming a reconciling congregation.

In October the Church Council met at Empire Grove for a half day retreat skillfully facilitated by Dick Babb. We thank Dick for helping us make this such a productive time together. The purpose of the retreat was to agree on goals and plan our work for the year ahead. The Council decided that we will strive to take on more of a leadership role in the life of the church. Too often the Council has reacted to issues as they came up rather than providing guidance and leadership at an early stage. To help us become more proactive, the Council will work to establish a greater presence in the church by initiating a dialog with the congregation. The intended result is for the congregation to know the direction of the Church and to assume ownership for fulfilling the mission. Our goal is regular updates in the Sunday bulletin and the Beacon.

Other priorities the Council identified:

- Taking leadership to determine the possibilities for the Christian Education Director position which Gladys Chapman will retire from in June. What do we and the congregation want this position to be? Gladys is now working closely with the Church Council and the Staff Parish Relations Committee as the process for selecting her successor gets underway. Expect to hear much more about this significant change in our church early in the new year.
- Increasing the visibility of the Church in the community. Our Church is very involved in mission work, and we should be doing a better job of getting those stories known. It was good to see press coverage of the New Beginnings restoration project completed under the leadership of the United Methodist Women. More of that kind of publicity is needed - let's not hide our light under a bushel!
- Making the Church experience more relevant for young people. While there is much to be done in this area, Pastor Rich has taken the lead in starting a group for youth in grades 6-12. This includes youth from our church, High Street Congregational and the West Auburn Congregational Church. The group has met 4 times this fall with about 15 youth attending each meeting. Pastor Rich and others are also planning another summer Youth Mission Trip, this time to Ottawa, Canada.

In the near future the Council will be working with Pastor Rich and the Staff Parish Relations Committee to implement the background check policy approved by the Council in 2005. Background checks will be required for any new staff members. Volunteers such as Sunday School teachers and adults who help with the youth group will be asked to fill out a self-disclosure form. These policies are intended to provide a safe and secure environment for all members of the church community, especially our children, and are a reflection of the world we live in. In January Pastor Rich will meet with Sunday School teachers and other youth volunteers to educate them about the need for the self disclosure form.

The major effort of the Council in the coming months will be providing leadership in the process of selecting a new Christian Education Director, looking at ways to increase the number of pledges in order to improve financial planning, and meeting the goals we identified at our fall retreat.

We encourage you to come to Church Council meetings and also to let members know your thoughts on any of the important issues before us.

Along with myself as Chair, members of the Council are: Pastor Rich; Director of Christian Education Gladys Chapman; Lay Leaders Barbara Newbauer and Ruth Cannon; Finance Committee Chair Dick Gleason; Treasurer Gary Adams; Chair of the Board of Trustees Paul Farnsworth; Chair of the Pastor-Staff Parish Relations Committee Tom Reichard; and President of the United Methodist Women Jeanie Sasser.

We look forward to a healthy give and take as together with the congregation we strive to fulfill the mission of the United Methodist Church of Auburn, “to embody Christ’s love through a commitment to serve God by fulfilling the spiritual, emotional, and physical needs of our congregation and of our local and global communities.”

Respectfully,

Eric Howes
Chair, Church Council

2006

During the past year I have been available to do blood pressure checks monthly, as well as answer questions regarding medications and different diseases. I have also served as the nurse consultant to the pre-school. I have done a CPR class for the pre-school teachers, as well as doing some in-services for them.

In November we had a small flu clinic in conjunction with Interim Home Health. Both members of the congregation and the community at large attended this clinic.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lucille Webber, RN, MSN, Congregational Nurse

Nurture Committee Report 2006

The Nurture Committee had its first meeting in September. At this time we established that our mission was to provide nurturing to the entire congregation. We brain stormed what we are currently doing and what we would like to accomplish.

Some of the goals and results that we have are:

1. Improve the coffee hour after church. Under the direction of Marilyn Rice with the help of Jackie Pratt we now have a very inviting Coffee and Conversation time after the church service.
2. Babysitting for young families during the holidays on a Saturday afternoon. We have done this for 3 days.
3. We will be providing Christmas cookies for some of our seniors that cannot cook for themselves anymore.
4. We will provide gift-wrapping for those who need help with it before Christmas.
5. A survey will be given to the congregation for suggestions on what we can do to show our support to them.

As this is a new committee we are still finding our way. We hope to have suggestions from the congregation on how we can meet the many needs that they have.

Respectfully Submitted
Lucille Webber, Chairperson

LAY LEADERS' REPORT December 3, 2006

Sometimes it makes sense to retreat. This year two of our church groups did just that: distanced themselves from the day to day details of the operation of their organizations.

The Auburn United Methodist Women traveled to Rockcraft for an overnight exploration of their relationship to God. In those beautiful surroundings they experienced the richness of God's world through nature, friendship, and spiritual growth.

The Church Council retreated to Empire Grove for a day to evaluate its role and the direction of the church. The group came away with a new commitment to shape the church's growth positively, rather than simply to react to the nuts and bolts problems brought to its attention. Our church can be more visible, more vital, and more inviting, in spite of the competing voices in today's stressful world.

Both the UMW and the Council found fresh perspectives in the unaccustomed environments of Rockcraft and Empire Grove. The attendees dressed casually, there were no assigned seats, and the walls of the meeting places could not entirely protect us from the storms of late summer and the chill of early fall. Through the expert leadership of Wanda Sprague and Dick Babb, we listened to each other and found that our old colleagues and friends had new things to say. And our newer attendees became friends.

As the year draws to a close, we lay leaders, Ruth Cannon, Barbara Newbauer, and – until his term ended mid-year -- Eric Howes, can think back on the many opportunities we have had to assist Pastor Rich in serving Holy Communion, welcoming new members, and attending baptisms. We have tried to keep in frequent touch with the committees and work groups that keep the church programs humming. We have met with Pastor Rich in small and large group settings to report and plan. Ruth and Barbara have engaged in formal study through a course for lay speakers. Ruth has continued to connect with other United Methodist churches and the wider church organization. It sounds like we have been busy, and while that is true, we also observe that so many other committed members of our church family give so much of themselves to our faith and mission.

While we all work so hard, let us remember to take care of our own health and spirits. Remember that we need to regroup in new places and share ideas in new ways. Sometimes it makes sense to retreat!

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth Cannon
Barbara Newbauer

Music Committee Annual Report

December 2006

The music ministry at the United Methodist Church in Auburn continues to be alive, strong, and vitally important. The many music programs strive to best use the varied talents in ways that offer praise to God by inspiring, encouraging, and ministering to those in the congregation as well as in the greater community. This ministry is delivered through the Saturday and Sunday worship experiences, concerts, festivals, cantatas, music lessons, and many other ways. Children and adult choirs, handbells, vocal soloist, instrumentalist, and other musical specials all play an important role in this church.

The music leadership within the church has remained constant since 2005. It includes Norma Rice Gould, Church Organist; Mitch Thomas, Saturday Worship Service Music Coordinator; William Buzza, Church Bell Choir Director; Sarah Dow, Wesleyan Singers Director; and Claire Cote, Children's Choir Director.

Norma Rice Gould continues to be the "corner-post" of the music ministry within this congregation. She does this on a weekly basis by setting the mood for worship, leading the congregation in musical praise, and never fails to touch listeners with her beautiful gifts during offertory, special musical pieces, and many other times. Norma also coordinates countless special musicians throughout the year; accompanies the choir and numerous soloists; spreads her musical message to those at local church campgrounds; and plays at numerous special services, concerts, weddings, and funerals. Norma continues to share her musical talents in the form of teaching as well. She holds piano and organ lessons at the church as well as student concerts which has encouraged new families to join and become active members of this congregation.

The music at the 4:00 Saturday Service continues to be an integral part of the music ministry within the church. In its 6th year, the Saturday Service includes no less than 8 songs that are sung by the congregation with more at times! Mitch Thomas selects the songs and leads the singing from the piano with the support of other talented musicians. These gifted individuals include Jeff Munson, Harry Coddington, Jr, Ruth Cannon and Norma Rice-Gould, Kathy Bliss, Kristen Thomas and Andrew Cotterly, and others. Other musicians and singers are always welcome to join the music team on a regular basis or even for a one-time appearance.

This year, the Saturday Service added a new screen and projector so that the words to all the songs, responses and various liturgical images could be beautifully and boldly displayed throughout each service.

Mitch is also busy in other music ministries. He continues to represent our congregation serving as the New England Conference Director of Music (he is going into his 5th year in this role). He is also about to go into his 25th season directing the Music-Theater Camp at Mechuwana.

The Children's Choir blessed the congregation regularly in 2006. Something delightful happened whenever the children sang; smiles appeared, cameras snapped, people craned their necks to see each little angel singing, Mommies and Daddies mouthed the words, and spirited warmth could be seen and felt by all!

Claire Cote continued to direct these little cherubs. She held choir practice during the regular Sunday school to make sure as many children that wanted to would be able to participate.

The Bell Choirs including the *Auburn Methodist Ringers*, *Spirit Ringers*, and *4 Park Avenue* were again busy in 2006. The clear ring of the bells was heard during Sunday services, church concerts, bell festivals, a wedding, and outreach concerts. The *Auburn Methodist Ringers* again participated with the Androscoggin Chorale in two community concerts in Lewiston and South Paris and *4 Park Ave*, the bell quartet, performed for shoppers at LLBean in Freeport.

The Wesleyan Singers led by Sarah Dow shared their gift of song at most Sunday services throughout the year. They bought and dedicated special pieces of music to honor past choir members and sang at a memorial service. The many dedicated singers in this choir find joy when they are given the opportunity to minister musically to the congregation and community. They are always looking for new members to add to this music ministry!

At the annual UMC Songs and Sounds of the Season Christmas concert on December 1st the bell choirs, Wesleyan Singers, Norma Rice Gould, William Buzza, Claire Cote, Kari Coffin, and Mitch Thomas brought the joy of the season to a standing-room-only crowd of 300 or so. “Frosty the Snowman” even made a special appearance! A freewill offering brought in more than \$X for the mission work of the church and 35 pies were baked and served at the pie social after the concert. What an amazing outreach ministry!

Other Holiday gifts of music were presented by Mitch Thomas and Friends when they offered their musical celebration of Christmas on December 23rd. Norma Rice Gould together with other musicians shared their talents at a concert on December 24th at 10:30 p.m.

Like a hug, music touches us, warms us all over, and makes us feel loved. The music ministry within the United Methodist Church of Auburn is like a hug from your favorite child. It continues to be an essential part of The United Methodist Church of Auburn. Raise a joyful noise!

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Lander - Music Committee Chair

Outreach Committee—Annual Report 2006

This year is one of transition for Outreach, which will apply its members’ gifts toward welcoming and sharing God’s love with the wider community. This year

the committee consists of: Ruth Cannon, Donna Manson, Helen Shelton, Janice Meserve, David Sysko, and we welcome three new members: Sharon McGilvery, Clay Manson and Sharon Folker. Ruth continues to serve as our committee treasurer, staying in communication with the church treasurer and keeping us informed about our budget.

Outreach Committee members take turns weekly at the Welcome Booth and serve as Outreach greeters, with specific emphasis on looking for newcomers to make sure they feel welcome and know what our church has to offer. We give them a Welcome brochure, invite them to sign the Guestbook, and follow up later in the week with a cookie delivery. Sharon Folker is coordinating these deliveries, receiving from the church office the names of people to be visited, fulfilling the delivery or notifying a fellow committee member to assist. We make the packages attractive and informative with gift bags, tissue paper, brochures and Welcome postcards.

Outreach programs and activities continue throughout the year:

Our **Pie Social** was held immediately after the Christmas Concert in December and continued to be a popular event. Some advance publicity, including a schedule of upcoming events and a photo of the Bell Choir, seemed to be affective and the concert was very well attended despite bad weather. We served about 240 slices of pie to Church and community members. Many thanks go to the wonderful bakers in our congregation!

In 2006 we had another very successful “**Welcome Newcomers’ Spring Luncheon**” in April, immediately after a Sunday church service. This proved to be an excellent way to get to know newcomers, having some fun and good food. We mailed postcard invitations to 26 newcomers/ families and followed up with a phone call the week before. We were pleased to serve a delicious lasagna luncheon to 37 church newcomers and “seasoned” members, who enjoyed a brief mixer activity to get acquainted before the meal. We plan to repeat this luncheon next spring.

The **Ice Cream Sundae Social** is funded and hosted for by the Outreach Committee and follows the Spring Bell Concert in May. Returning to its usual Friday evening spot, the 2006 version was enjoyed by many from the church and beyond.

Other responsibilities of the Outreach Committee:

The 2005-06 committee developed guidelines for distribution of publicity to the various media outlets. These steps are carried out by the Church Office staff and should benefit the wider Church. We also budget the funds to pay for the **Newspaper Ads** for our church services that appear in the local paper before Christmas and Easter.

The Church's **website**—www.auburnmethodist.org—falls under the umbrella of Outreach, but is maintained by others in the church.

Sign: The committee took an interest in development of a proposal to construct and install a new, lighted roadside sign to enhance identity of the Church and its events. Recommendations were passed on to the Trustees and the new sign is currently under construction.

Friendship Pads and Visitor Information Cards: The committee provides and will continue to maintain the Friendship Pads and Visitor Information Cards for church services. These help identify visitors and afford a way to be sure newcomers and visitors are welcomed by a cookie delivery and receive a personal letter from the Pastor.

Formerly Outreach responsibilities, The Miss You Ministry, homebound visitation, and provision of Care Notes and Upper Room literature are now part of the new Nurture Committee.

A word of thanks—Janet Irish's hard work and meticulous record-keeping as previous committee chair continues to serve beyond her term, providing guidance and inspiration.

Respectfully submitted,

David Sysko
Outreach Committee Chair

Missions Committee Annual Report 2006

The Missions Committee wishes to thank Jackie Pratt for her service with us over the past few years and would like to welcome the following new members – Marcy Kenison,

Avis Baird and Lois Beechum who joined previous members Betty Dexter, Joyce Pollard, Maria Tirrell and Cindy Bragdon.

Our Lenten project was in aid of the Katrina Church relief and we raised \$X to help purchase choir robes, bibles and hymnals for churches in the stricken area of Louisiana.

Other missions we were able to support in 2006 included the following:

New Beginnings	\$X
Good Samaritan Singers	\$X
High Street Food Pantry	\$X
Salem Economic Ministry	\$X
United Methodist Economic Ministry	\$X
The Root Cellar	\$X
Rural Community Action Ministry, Leeds	\$X
Habitat for Humanity	\$X
Rural Mission	\$X

Other thanks go to church members who took on some coordination of local Missions projects:

- Food Pantry coordinator – Eric Howes
- Soup Kitchen (3rd Sunday) coordinator – Avis Baird
- Soup Kitchen (3rd Thursday) coordinator – Cindy Bragdon

In reviewing my last annual report, I listed some goals for my full first year as Missions Committee Chair. These were:

- Host a Volunteers in Mission (VIM) Awareness Sunday
- Start an adult mission team
- Involve the children in our church in more mission projects
- Challenge each family of our congregation to actively participate in a local mission project

And what have we been able to achieve?

Well, we had two VIM Sundays in 2006. Our first helped us understand what types of Mission projects are available to us through the United Methodist Church, no matter what age we may be.

The second talked about Mission opportunities through Rural Mission, Inc – an organization that has a Volunteer Work Camp project serving residents of John's Island, South Carolina. Two of our church members will be volunteering at this camp with other adults from Maine later on this winter.

Also, many of our church members spent some backbreaking hours at two New Beginnings residential homes in Lewiston. Thanks go to Jane Thomas, Chris Conant and Bruce MacDonald for coordinating this effort and I look forward to working with them on many more!

And why does our church have a Missions Committee? Pastor Rich recently gave me an article that I thought I would share with each of you that talks about why we plan outreach ministries for our congregation.

Is there a way that you and your family can get involved?

From the *Alban Weekly* - Week of 1/1/2007

What is the Mission of "Missions"?

Dan Hotchkiss

Most congregations engage in some form of social ministry—or believe they should. Some call it missions, others outreach, social action, or benevolence. From relatively modest actions like collecting canned goods for the local food bank to major projects like building a house in partnership with Habitat for Humanity, the collective contribution of churches, mosques, and synagogues to the welfare of the needy is enormous. By contributing, they set an example of generosity and faithful stewardship.

But why do they do it? If the question seems impertinent, let me rephrase it: Why, exactly, should a congregation feed the hungry, clothe the naked, heal the sick, or free the oppressed? For Christians, I have almost answered my own question: in these words Jesus taught that service to "the least of these" was necessary for salvation. He was not saying anything especially original. For Jews, charity (*tzedakah*) is a basic part of being a good person. In these traditions, as in others, it is pretty clear that individuals ought to help others.

But why congregations? When other social agencies exist to help the needy, won't they usually have more expertise and skill? Why not simply encourage members to give time and money to the best nonprofits in each field of service? Some congregations take a sort of clearing-house approach: they collect money and write checks and recruit volunteers but do not organize outreach ministries of their own. By soliciting their gifts and passing them along, the congregation sets a good example and guides its members' stewardship of time and money.

Most congregations, though, feel called to organize for service on their own. Instead of—or in addition to—relying on other charities, they claim some piece of the action and engage directly. The Salvation Army puts service to the poor at the top of its priority list each day-and attains a level of professionalism rare in a church.

Typically, though, socially active churches cast a wide and shallow net: a soup kitchen

downtown, a mission trip to Haiti, socks for servicepeople, quilts for hurricane survivors, plus a contributions budget dispensed to many worthy causes local and denominational. A few brave congregations go beyond helping individuals and families and advocate changes in government or corporate policies that are among the causes of the suffering they see.

Why do they do it? In budgeting and planning for this work, most congregations say their mission is to help others. That's a good answer. For many congregations, though, a better answer is to say the purpose of social ministry is instead to change the lives of its own members.

The mission of a hospital is to heal the sick. I am suggesting that for many congregations, a better analogy would be a medical school, whose mission is to train doctors and nurses. Medical schools (and their associated teaching hospitals) treat lots of patients; you can't train doctors without giving them a chance to practice. The purpose of the medical professions is to heal. The purpose of the school, though, is not to heal but to create healers.

Some of my church clients have found it fruitful to reframe their social mission from "We serve the needy," to "We transform our members into Christian disciples who live lives of service." It is a small but important shift. Some existing outreach ministries continue without change. But the criteria for initiating, evaluating, staffing, and funding social ministry change quite a bit.

For instance, if our main goal is to change our members' lives, we will not be satisfied to write a check from the church treasury. We would prefer to send some of our people along with it so they can engage in the kind of service that may change their lives.

Few visitors arrive at congregations' doors hoping to be transformed—least of all to be made generous. But most do have at least a vague desire to be of service. Once they are surrounded by people for whom generosity with time and money have become a way of life, in a congregation that offers manageable entry-point opportunities to serve, the transformation comes.

Many congregations already act as though the mission of their missions program is to change their member's lives. They send people of all ages overseas on mission trips. Usually the work accomplished by the missionaries does less good than a good agency or local leaders could do with a check for the cost of the trip. But the trips continue, largely because of the testimonies of those who return: "My life was changed." How would the trip be different if transforming the participants were the congregation's primary goal rather than a side-effect?

In congregations that see social ministry this way, I see a greater emphasis on personally connecting with the "beneficiaries" of the work, person to person. Several congregations, for example, have built ongoing relationships with villages in Latin America, including mission trips, sustained financial support, and even pen-pal relationships between members and the people of the village. (To find examples, search the Web on "Guatemala Partnership.")

When congregations focus on transforming their own people into servants, they may find ways to link their social ministries to members' work lives. As good as Habitat is, getting a lawyer or physician or accountant to spend a day swinging a hammer, most of the time volunteer service remains a leisure-time pursuit. What would happen if a congregation partnered with a poor community nearby and offered to provide professional services? That is the formula used by the Jericho Road Project (www.jerichoroadproject.org) which links a church in affluent Concord,

Mass. to social agencies and businesses in nearby Lowell. Volunteers do what they do professionally: "from board building organizational assessment, and strategic planning to marketing strategy, grant-application writing, and Web-site development."

By linking social ministry to members' work lives, congregations can provoke reflection on how work itself might be transformed into a social ministry. Transformation becomes more than a change of heart—it extends into the economic sphere where a changed heart can sometimes find its greatest point of leverage.

Congregations can and do make a difference to the lives of those they help through the outreach ministries they sponsor. But they make an even greater difference in the lives of their own members. In planning outreach ministries, it is important to remember that the lives we can transform the most may be our own.

Dan Hotchkiss is a Senior Consultant at the Alban Institute. "What Is the Mission of 'Missions'?" originally appeared in the September 2006 issue of Clergy Journal (www.logosproductions.com) and is reprinted with permission.

**Annual Report, Committee on Sexual Diversity
United Methodist Church of Auburn, Maine
2006**

This has been a year of celebration, reflection and change for the Committee on Sexual Diversity.

Early in February, we celebrated the 2nd anniversary of our church's vote to become a reconciling congregation, with a light lunch, music, sharing and fellowship.

The main challenge we faced this year concerned what our role in the church would be in living out the above vote. We had been through a four-year process of learning, and of providing learning opportunities about becoming a reconciling congregation to the people of the church, culminating in the vote two years ago. Now, how would we live out this commitment to being an intentionally welcoming church to all, including people of different sexual orientations?

To help with our discussion, we invited others from the church to come to a meeting where we thought about different options for our group. Finally we came to the decision that we would disband, in the hope that a new work area, one focusing on social concerns, would be formed. It would deal not only with the issues our committee was committed to, those of being welcoming to people of diverse sexual orientations, but also with other social concerns.

In this last report of the committee, thanks are due to Pastor Rich for his pivotal role and his support throughout this process, and to the committee members for all their hard work. Thanks are also due to the congregation for being willing to wrestle with what were new ideas to some, and for finally voting in favor of becoming a reconciling congregation.

We hope that we will continue to grow into an ever more welcoming and justice seeking community.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Holler

Annual Report of the Trustees – 2006

The trustee began their new year in October 2006. The Trustees at that point included the following individuals:

Chris Conant

Rich Cullen (pastor)

Paul Farnsworth (chair)

Dave Sargent

Mary MacMahon

Jane Thomas

Dave Waters

Chris Woodford

The last of the Church's immediate maintenance concerns with has been addressed with the completion of the new steeple installation in August of 2006. The trustees elected to use \$X received from the Conference capital campaign to help prepay the loan used for the pressing maintenance issues.

A new sound system, speakers, cable and amplifier, was installed earlier in 2006. Included with this was an assistive listening system. The headsets have proven popular and additional ones have been purchased.

A new double-faced internally illuminated ground sign with space for changeable lettering has been ordered from Neokraft Signs. The sign will be placed on a short brick base with a planter and landscaping around it and be located by the road. The sign is being funded by a memorial gift and the landscaping by a separate memorial gift which had been designated for landscaping.

Submitted by Paul Farnsworth, chairperson

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN 2006 CHARGE CONFERENCE REPORT

The 2006 year has been a spiritually enhancing and mission filled year for the UMW. We have focused on our Mission:

“the organized unit of the United Methodist Women shall be a community of women whose purpose is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ: to develop a creative, supportive fellowship; and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church.”

Missions: Listed below are key missions that the UMW has supported with other organizations in the Church, as a UMW, or as individual Circles.

- New Beginnings for Boys & Girls– This is a mission that was a joint effort between the Mission Committee, Men’s Group and UMW. It was a mission that allowed members of the church to be a part of a mission team 2 weekends during the year and/or provide monetary or material donations. The UMW provided a monetary donation to support the refurbishment of the girls’ apartments and lunches for the volunteers. The Oct. UMW meeting was set aside to provide volunteers for the refurbishment of the boys’ apartments.
- 2005 Christmas Giving Tree- The UMW provided a monetary donation for families identified in need at Christmas. Each circle also took names of 1-3 families and had volunteers shop for the specific requests. This project is in process now for the 2006 Christmas Giving Tree.
- Our unit has given \$X to the General Board of Global Ministries through our District treasurer. We have elected recipients of the Mission Recognition Pin that will be recognized in 2007. The Gift in Memory was given in memory of Sallie DeWolfe, Walter Sargent, and Beverly Spiro. The Gift in Mission was given in honor of Bruce McDonald who worked tirelessly on the mission work at the New Beginnings Apartments for Boys and Girls. There will be a collection for the World Thank Offering in December. Other designated donations given were to the Call to Prayer and Self Denial, Patron Mission Enrichment Weekend Investment Fund, and the Mechuwana Adopt-a-Cabin. Lucielle Webber, past president of Auburn UMW, is a member of the District UMW. She and Sharon McGilvery provide a communication link for our unit and the District.
- Youth Mission- the UMW is committed to supporting the spiritual group of our Youth. The UMW along with individual circles provided monetary support for the annual Youth Mission trip in 2006 to York, PA. The UMW recognized the graduating seniors in May during a Church service with the presentation of a small gift and a reception following Church. Each circle put together and sent a care package for those attending college. The students

expressed an appreciation for the care package and for being remembered by their Church family.

- Plans for 2007
 - Christmas Giving Tree
 - Pledge to General Board of Global Ministries
 - Support Youth activities
 - Local Mission support- to be determined

Spiritual Growth & Fellowship: The UMW and the Individual circles continue to be vital part of the Church life. The UMW meets monthly as an Executive board or a program for all members Sept. through May. The four smaller Circles of members – Martha, Priscilla, Rachel, and Ruth met on a monthly basis.

In 2007, the UMW will be re-organizing into 2 smaller circles. There will be a circle that meets at night- Ruth Circle and a circle that meets during the day- name to be determined in Dec. Key activities for 2006 are listed below.

- UMW Women’s Sunday in January. The subject was: “The Angel Within All of Us”. The service was conducted by different members of the UMW. The message was eloquently delivered by Cherie Waters. 2006 UMW officers were installed during the service.
- April Program for UMW was led by Helen Neff. It was a display of her Underground Railroad quilt top. The program was a history of the Underground railway told through symbols used on the quilt. She lead the group in spiritual songs representative of the period.
- May Banquet for all members of the UMW
- UMW Retreat held in September. The idea to have a retreat was raised in Feb. and from that a planning committee was formed and a retreat at Rockcraft Reteat Center was planned. The retreat was a very enriching event for those that attended. Thirty-three women participated in the “Finding God Together” event that was well facilitated by Wanda Sprague. There was a unanimous response that the objectives to provide opportunity for Spiritual growth and renewal, build relationships among women in the church, and to have fun were more than met. Success of the event was due to the efforts of the Planning committee, Wanda Sprague, and the women that attended that made this possible. The location and weather also made this possible as during the day we were able to enjoy the sunshine and the view of the lake. Late afternoon we experienced a thunderstorm with a beautiful rainbow over the lake. That was topped off with a power outage just as we sat down for supper and continued into the next morning. We made the best of it by sitting on the large porch facing the lake with a beautiful moon singing songs and telling stories. “Surely the presence of God” was felt by all that attended. The response was so strong that it was agreed before we left to set aside the same weekend in 2007 for another retreat at the same location.
- In December the UMW Christmas Banquet will be an ethnic potluck. Everyone will bring a dish that has special meaning to them at the holidays and will share their stories.
- Plans for 2007
 - Jan. 21st UMW Sunday- “ UMW in Mission”
 - UMW retreat at Rockcraft –Sept. 8th and 9th . Theme- to be determined
 - Re-organization of 4 circles into 2 circles

It has been a spiritually rewarding and fun opportunity to work with so many talented, spiritual and genuine women. My thanks to the UMW Executive Committee, circle members, and everyone that has worked tirelessly and lovingly this year.

Jeanie Sasser
UMW President 2006

2005 Financial Audit

516 Pond Road
Lewiston, ME 04240
December 1, 2006

Finance Committee
United Methodist Church of Auburn
439 Park Street
Auburn, ME 04210

Members:

At the Church's request I have reviewed the Church's financial activity for 2005. The Church's expenses have been paid in a timely manner; the vast majority of expenses were paid appropriately. I thank Treasurer Gary Adams for his time and effort in supplying the financial records for review. I have posted Gary's responses that I received 1/8/07 below the comments to which they apply and Rich Cullen's response of 12/5/06 regarding budget reports.

I tested expense payments for the month of October 2005 and found one instance of payment off of statement rather than invoice and two (Checks 7318 and 7321) where I did not find an invoice or statement. These represent a small percentage of budgeted expenses, but the general accepted practice is to pay off of original invoices.

Treasurer's response: This has been changed, now if any committee member requests a check it has to be a written request (on occasions, committees request checks with no invoice or bill).

I do not fully understand how the payment system functions: In reviewing the December 2005 bank statement to the check register, checks 7367-75 are dated 11/23/05 and checks 7349-64 apparently are dated 11/28/05. It appears checks are entered with a payment date, but the system records when they were entered in the system for future payment and not the payment date. I also noted that the payment system seems to generate a higher number of voided checks than I have encountered in other systems.

Treasurer's response: Checks are entered into the system when the bills are paid. There were some misnumbered checks that were entered in November and December which were voided when the bank statement was reconciled.

It appears the postage account with USPS functions on a check less basis. I had difficulty reconciling activity to the debits to the bank account. The issue may be in staff retaining the records provided by USPS to account for the draw downs on the account.

Treasurer's response: This has been changed and receipts are collected and matched to the check.

The Church offers a pre-school program. The church in general has a limited number of employees, but this program probably creates the most new employees. New employees and the Church are required to complete a Department of Immigration and Naturalization Form I-9 to validate the employee's eligibility to work in the United States. In my review, it appears I-9 forms were not completed for two part-time employees and in another case the form does not indicate the required forms of identification were employer verified.

Treasurer's response: Forms W-2 and I-9 are all handled through our payroll company. When new employees are hired these forms are completed and forwarded to the payroll company before their first check can be issued.

Auditor's cautionary note: The church bears the responsibility for the forms being correctly completed. I suggest the forms be reviewed for completeness and a copy be retained in the church's employ files as INS will request them from the church. Being a church is not a defense in this matter as far as I know.

My understanding is that periodic budget reports and budget activity are not distributed on a regular basis. The budget and activity are indicated to be reviewed by the Treasurer and the Pastor. There is a disadvantage to this arrangement in that the opportunity for some of those who received income or authorized payments to validate the income or expenditures is not utilized. Monthly distribution of reports might be an excessive burden, but quarterly distribution of expenditures to the larger budget centers/areas would help detect potential miss-postings of income or expenses.

The pastor indicated his support for quarterly sharing of committee expenditure reports.

Respectfully submitted,

Larry S. Cannon

**United Methodist Church of Auburn United Methodist Women
Charge Conference Treasurer's Report - December 31, 2006
Submitted by Ruth M. Cannon, Treasurer
(see church office for more information)**