



# Barre Congregational Church

## United Church of Christ

### Stewardship 2015



## Spiritual Narrative Budget

Thirty Park Street is a home to our members, our families – actual and in spirit – and our community. Our church does indeed look like a Currier and Ives quintessential New England church with all of the permanence that our predecessors envisioned. But our church is much more than a historic building. It is a vibrant and living body engaged in many activities for both our members and congregation and for our community as a whole.

It takes very practical effort and investment to preserve a church building, and to enable a church community to grow. We have a hundred-plus-year-old legacy to preserve and pass along to the generations to come. How much is that worth to you?

**What** is a narrative budget? It is a presentation of the financial needs of the church in direct relation to the spiritual work that we do, in English prose rather than line items.

**Why** are we presenting this year's Stewardship campaign in this format? It reconnects us to the reasons we have all come together as this church body, and shows us the value of our church.

**How** will this work? We are presenting the work of our church under three main categories: Worship, Fellowship, and Christian Education. Together these capture the life of the Barre Congregational Church. Each in turn draws from four basic categories:

- **Minister** - which accounts for our pastor's time.
- **Facilities Support** - the operation and maintenance of our physical building.
- **Administrative Support** - the time of the church staff and associated expenses.
- **Program Support** - the resources (Facilities and Administrative) that support the additional work of church committees with the minister and other volunteers.

*“Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”*

Luke 6:38. NIV © 2011.

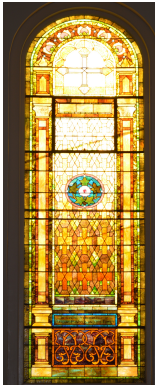
# Worship

It's 9:25 am. The aroma of brewed coffee wafts its welcome, winding up the staircase into the front foyer, known as the Narthex, where people are greeting each other. The front, back, and Fellowship Hall doors all beep cheerfully as the security signal announces the arrival of another of God's beloved into our faith community.

Deborah Page is playing the Prelude on the pipe organ, a piece that may have been written centuries or just a few years ago. Somewhere in your soul, perhaps, is an ancient memory of God's own voice, breath-filled, sending vibrations through the floorboards of our church home, embracing you once again.



The sounds of children's voices and feet, the rustle of people organizing themselves into their pews but only after they've exchanged greetings and hugs with one another. The Choir put on their robes and check their music one last time before taking their place in the Choir Loft.



Worship has already begun, the people in prayer, reading their bulletin or Bible, centering themselves by looking at the stained glass windows that link us to more than 180 years of faithful worship at 30 Park Street. The young and young at heart get settled for the time we willingly devote each week to the worship of our Loving God made known through Jesus Christ and present with us always through the Holy Spirit.

**Who among us** is lonely, frightened, overwhelmed, tired, feeling unappreciated, or who is having a great day, feeling happy, relieved, grateful, or expectantly awaiting another experience of God's amazing grace? For a moment each week, our singing, giving, praying, and working together is part of an ongoing legacy of service in Christ's name that many other Christian churches around the world no longer have. We take seriously the need to come together regularly, to share the cost and joy of discipleship, to support each other in good times and bad, and to affirm the life-giving benefits of being part of this beloved community where Jesus Christ is our Servant Savior, the Leader we follow in faith. Pastor Deborah says, "I've stood at the foot of the stairs before funerals, weddings, baptisms, Confirmation and new member welcoming services. Each time, I feel the blessing God intends for all – a sense of belonging, of peace and well-being because of the identity I have as part of Christ's beloved family."

**Think** of the hours of preparation that go into one hour of worship each week. Think of how many forms of ministry are needed to bring about this intentional time devoted to God, to being with God.

- Deacons have met and discussed aspects of worship and member needs.
- The Organist and Choir Directors have researched music, rehearsed with the Choir and Bell Choir, and often have made arrangements for guest musicians that entail additional practice time.
- The Secretary has worked with the Pastor to develop the bulletin, for example: finding educational material for the back cover, checking with committees and groups to update the calendar, refining the service content before running off and folding the bulletin.
- The Pastor spends easily 16 hours a week in worship design and preparation that includes reading the Bible and other resources, on-line research, sermon writing, editing and rehearsing, developing a Time With the Children that includes talking with Sunday School teachers or CE members, choosing hymns and meeting with the Organist/Choir Director, contacting Deacons and coordinating with other service participants, and prayer.
- In addition, there are weddings (and prenuptial conferences), funerals, and Christmas and Maundy Thursday services.

**Each point of contact along the way** extends the power of our worship time and the importance of being a beloved community. Our worship is more comfortable because

- The Sexton keeps the building and restrooms clean.
- The furnace and oil give us heat in the winter.
- We have electricity for:
  - the lights,
  - cooling fans in the summer,
  - the elevator for handicap access.
- The Walkways and parking areas are clear of snow.
- Flowers remind us of the beauty of God's world, candles help us to focus.

**WORSHIP** To continue to provide for the Worship needs of our congregation, we need: 48% of the minister's time and effort, the Organist and the Choir Director, 38% of the Facilities Support to keep our building functioning, 57% of the Administrative Support provided by the church staff and office, and 52% of the total Program Support provided for our committee volunteers, **for a total of \$84,216 in the coming year.**

48%	Minister	\$32,200
100%	Organist and Choir Director	\$10,812
38%	Facilities Support	\$18,093
57%	Administrative support	\$23,807
52%	Program Support	\$10,115

**Worship is the central act that distinguishes a gathered community as a church.** It is appropriate, then, that all parts of our life together – praising God, proclamation, fellowship, service to one another, mission, teaching and learning – come together for forms of worship throughout the year.

**Can you envision a future** of re-carpeting the sanctuary, making the front sanctuary doors air tight to decrease heat loss, and repainting the walls? How about installing improved lighting and a new sound system that could be heard in the Nursery and Ladies Parlor? Maybe new hymnals? All within the next 3 years? This future can be a reality with increased giving to establish a budget line item for capital improvements that would enhance our worship.

## Fellowship

**Our Church Building**, which we refer to simply as “church” for short, is the most obvious symbol of the Barre Congregational Church, United Church of Christ. It is the “big white church with the big white steeple” on Barre common. It is the classical New England church that calls to mind tradition and permanence.

It is the structure that houses each of our members and visitors every Sunday morning, and for special worship services as on Christmas Eve. It shelters mourners during memorial and funeral services, and joyful friends and families for weddings and baptisms.

**It is also the building that welcomes and provides a safe and comfortable gathering place for the many organizations and recovery programs that need a place for their people to meet, speak and freely relate to one another.**

**Our monthly church suppers** bring together members of our community for *food and fellowship*, prepared and served by the church Supper Committee for family, friends old and new, and guests, who provide *fellowship* before, during and after the supper.

**The Community Friendship outreach suppers** that we have once a month have a *tremendous value for those who share a meal with us*, including the many volunteers from our church who help cook and serve the meals. Our Missions Committee organizes, prepares and serves these free meals as an act of Christian Fellowship working with the Barre Food Pantry and the Quabbin schools to reach out to the Quabbin community.



**The monthly Food Pantry** is another area of *fellowship*. Our church is home-base for the Barre Food Pantry – an organization that was in serious jeopardy of becoming “homeless” and was unable to operate when its first church-host, the Christ Episcopal Church in South Barre, had to close its doors due to flagging membership and funds to keep the church viable. Volunteers from our church and our pastor greet and help the participants that come to our church's Community Room for needed food supplies. It may be once a month, but it is a vital component of our *fellowship*.



**Fellowship Hall** and the kitchen downstairs enable us to host *Women's Fellowship* events. It's a space for *wreath-making* at Christmastime and for the church *Christmas Fair*.

**Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops** call our church home, as do the **Maplewind Orchestra** performers who practice in the sanctuary each week. Our children can find a place to study and learn to play an instrument.

**We now provide a home for our community's two AA, Al-Anon, and Narc-Anon meetings.** The *fellowship and support* work of these groups is vital to the health of our community. By serving them we help ourselves.

**In addition, our Minister and volunteers go out into our community**, to reach out and bring *fellowship* to those who can't come to us, or haven't found a church. We provide support to the newly formed, local Drug Response Coalition organization. We visit those who aren't able to travel from their homes and attend special recognition functions and ceremonies, such as Memorial Day commemoration.

**All of these people and organizations call our church “home”.** And so do we. But these acts of *Fellowship* take time and effort, of our Minister, and you, who volunteer and join in. Through our church, we all provide support to these efforts in space and resources as well.

**FELLOWSHIP** To continue to provide these acts of Fellowship by you, our congregation, we need: 23% of the minister's time and effort, 53% of the Facilities Support to keep our building functioning, 30% of the Administrative Support provided by the church staff and office, and 38% of the total Program Support provided for our committee volunteers, **for a total of \$60,161 in the coming year.**

23%	Minister	\$15,459
53%	Facilities Support	\$24,870
30%	Administrative support	\$12,490
38%	Program Support	\$ 7,342

**Our church home requires upkeep.** All of the same things that any personal home needs, our church home needs, and then some. Having a sexton to clean the facility is vital in maintaining a healthy and inviting environment for all of the members and guests that use our church facility. There are electricity, heating oil, water, and sewer costs to keep the building functioning and welcoming to those who come through our doors. And then there are all of the other myriad facility needs that we sometimes take for granted until they don't work anymore, like the boiler and the oven hood in the kitchen. Lightbulbs, tile repairs, carpet cleaning, paint for clapboards as well as walls and doors, roofing, gutter maintenance, windows, driveway and walkway maintenance, plumbing fixtures – including repairing burst pipes – the list truly can go on and on. And none of this contemplates the cost associated with hiring professionals for these projects when our own dedicated and talented volunteers need to call upon someone else to help get the job done.

## Christian Education

**Education provides the foundation** for the growth of our faith. From September to May, our weekly Sunday School gives our children, from toddlers to high school, their introduction to the Bible, to the history of our faith, and an opportunity to watch and learn what it means to be a Christian. Our Adult Bible Study does the same for us “big kids”.

The work of the volunteers who choose and arrange the curriculum is augmented by the volunteer efforts of all the youth and adult teachers who give their time and talents every week.

Through our Christian Education program we support such endeavors as the Crop Walk and the Heifer Project. Working with the organist and the choir director, the children participate in Children's Choir, and our multi-generational Bell Choir. There are opportunities for Youth Group, if you want to get involved! Summer activities include Vacation Bible School.

**Christian Education** To continue to provide a Christian Education for our youth and ourselves, we need: 6% of the minister's time and effort, 8% of the Facilities Support to keep our building functioning, 14% of the Administrative Support provided by the church staff and office, and 10% of the total Program Support provided for our committee volunteers, **for a total of \$14,655 in the coming year.**

6%	Minister	\$ 3,079
8%	Facilities Support	\$ 3,945
14%	Administrative support	\$ 5,745
10%	Program Support	\$ 1,886

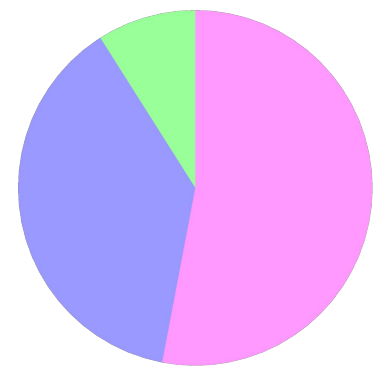
Would you be willing to support efforts to expand the opportunities for middle and high schoolers in our community for fun, safe and positive activities? With enough help from you, we can provide our Youth Group leaders with the resources they need. We're setting our goals high!

## Our 2015 Commitment to: Worship, Fellowship, and Christian Education

Your commitment for the 2015 Stewardship campaign is in your hands. What kind of pie do you like? Worship? Fellowship? Christian Education? Or perhaps all three?

Discover the amazing flavors of our spiritual meal. The old adage is “give until it hurts”, but stewardship means “give until it feels good.” Our church is providing us with the opportunity for spiritual growth and a stronger connection with our community, especially those who need us most, and a deeper relationship with God.

This is about our lives, our community, and the life of our church.



■ Worship  
■ Fellowship  
■ Christian Ed.

**What is the value of that to you and your family?**