



*Welcome to the*

# United Church of Dorset & East Rupert

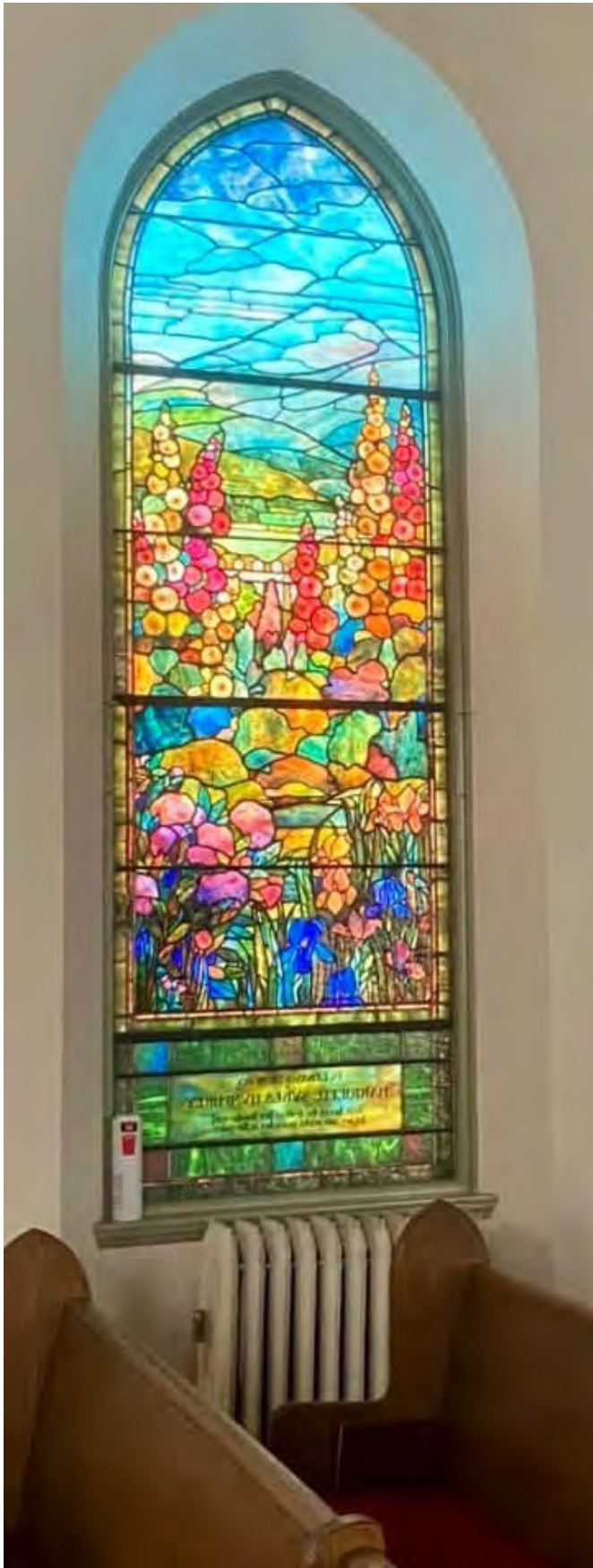
*2026 PROFILE*

*We welcome you, and are glad you have arrived at this place.*

Through creating this profile we have tried to understand where we have been, where God is asking us to go next, and what kind of person might lead us there. In what follows we have attempted to give voice to that process of discovery, and hope it stirs your interest.

Perhaps you will most want to know how we worship, or what we believe, or what we sense God is calling us to become. If how we have described these draws you in, please explore the profile more thoroughly. We hope you will discover a common theme running through this document: we love this church, and so seek a pastor who will love it as well.

Our Search Committee is comprised of people with very different life experiences and faith journeys, even someone with no belief in God at all. But all of us cherish the church as a welcoming, safe, and thoughtful community in a world often set against love, against compassion, against deep life meaning. We hope you might join us in this place, and help us to new vistas.



---

# Table of Contents

---

<i>Our Community</i>	3
<i>Our History</i>	5
<i>Our Congregation</i>	7
<i>Our Values</i>	10
<i>Missions</i>	11
<i>Sunday Worship</i>	12
<i>Christian Education</i>	14
<i>Church Finances</i>	15
<i>Support</i>	17
<i>Epilogue</i>	18

After reading our narrative, we strongly encourage you to review our more detailed information on the UCC form.

[UCC Profile](#)

---



*Church Street in Dorset Village*

## Our Community

The physical beauty of the Dorset region is so striking that it seems impossible to doubt the goodness of God’s creation—though February does give us pause. The church itself sits on the green of Dorset Village, a lovely New England hamlet; across Mount Aeolus is East Dorset, whose Mad Tom Road is the main thoroughfare of that historic village. Both, like neighboring East Rupert, are nestled between the Taconic and Green Mountain ranges. We and our neighbors have woven ourselves into a fabric of community that encompasses a wide range of life and work experience, including many tradespeople, creatives, and small-business owners; our retired friends have diverse backgrounds that belie the rural area we call home.

Dorset can claim a place at Vermont’s founding. While the Vermont Constitution was signed in Windsor, it was in Dorset at Cephias Kent’s Tavern that locals crafted the beginnings of Vermont statehood. The story of Dorset melds our pre-revolutionary settlement with its history of agriculture and marble quarrying into our current iteration as an arts and outdoor tourism hub.

Recreational opportunities abound. The Appalachian and Long Trails offer excellent, panoramic hikes; for those less ambitious there are many other local trails for walking or mountain biking. Ski ar-

reas at Bromley and Stratton Mountains are nearby, and grade-schoolers ski once weekly for free. Riley Rink in Manchester—six miles south, and the major commercial and shopping hub—offers ice hockey and skating. Manchester’s Rec Center provides Dorset residents with multiple sports fields, a swimming pool, skateboarding, basketball, tennis, and pickleball, as well as a stadium field. Those wishing to increase their blood pressure will find ample opportunities for golf at four local courses, one of which is public.

For those seeking exercise of mind and spirit rather than body, the Dorset Playhouse hosts professional theater in the summer and local amateur productions the rest of the year. Two local music programs—the Manchester Music Festival and Taconic



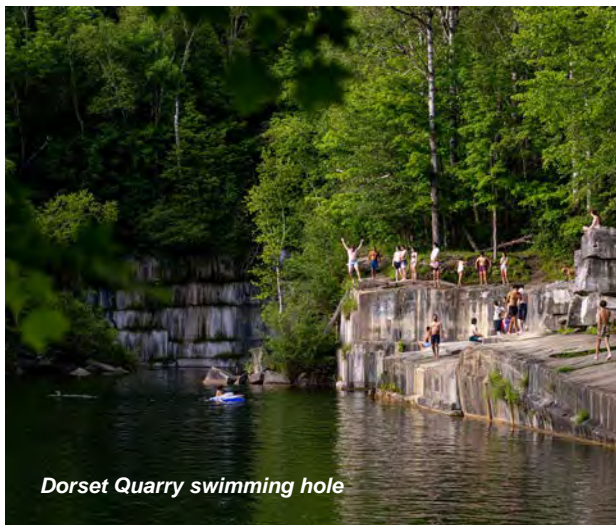
*Looking down Church Street*



*Burr & Burton Academy*



*Dorset's acclaimed rural beauty*



*Dorset Quarry swimming hole*



Music—offer concerts and music instruction. Also in Manchester is the Southern Vermont Arts Center, featuring a newly expanded museum of regional art, a performance space, and broad-based arts education. The year-round Dorset Farmer's Market connects us to those regionally who work the soil and supply our food. Finally, Manchester's Northshire Bookstore is one of the finest independent bookstores in the state; John Grisham named it as top-ten nationally.

Our region is also known for its strong school system. Dorset has a well-regarded elementary school; additionally, three private elementary schools are in Manchester. Secondary-school students may choose Long Trail School in Dorset or Burr and Burton Academy in Manchester; each has unique strengths and personalities, and both are currently funded by our local school board. For those of us decades beyond traditional schooling, a local academy of lifelong learning features lectures, discussion groups, field trips, and virtual concerts.

Our villages are compact, and local businesses can be reached on foot or bicycle. Dorset Village boasts two fine general stores, three in-town restaurants, two inns, and a host of bed-and-breakfasts. The Village Public Library and Bley House Museum display our culture and history. East Dorset Village is home to the Wilson House, a renowned center for those in recovery.

# Our History

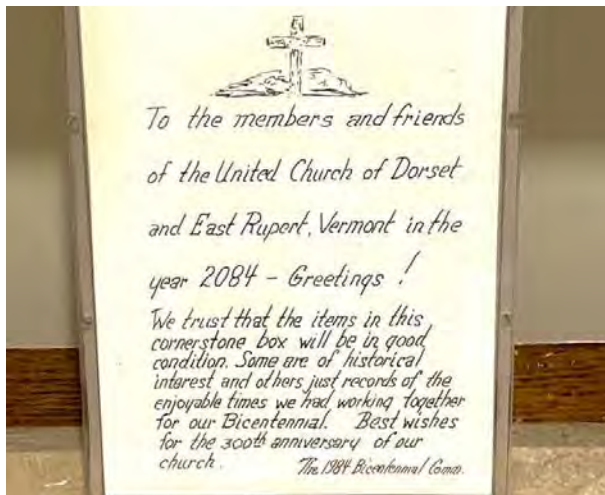
Local histories tell us that the first European settlers of Dorset held worship services in their cabins starting early in the second half of the eighteenth century. By 1773 Deacons led regular services in their homes, or in what townspeople called “The Lord’s Barn,” located in the northwest corner of the current Maple Hill Cemetery. As religious worship became more structured, locals formed the Congregational Church of Dorset on September 22, 1784.

The nascent church served not only as a religious institution but also as a court of secular and ecclesiastical justice. Records show that William Manley pled guilty to “Making Disturbance on the Lordes Day by Laughing,” and was accordingly “foin’d two pounds”; more recently, laughing has become acceptable. Then as now, Vermonters’ behavior occasionally reflected the wildness of their rocky habitat. When an early minister is said to have reprimanded one of his flock for swearing, the unabashed congregant allegedly replied, “Pastor, you know how it is, you do a little prayin’, and I do a little cursin’, and we both know that no one thinks any less of us for it.”

By the early nineteenth century the Dorset Church was the most continuously operating institution in the town, and served as a cohesive influence in the tiny outpost. The Reverend William Jackson, installed in 1796, gave it consistent leadership during this period. Rev. Jackson shepherded the church through a major calamity when the Lord’s Barn burned to the ground during a fierce winter storm in 1832. He led an immediate response in the effort to build a new wooden church, which townspeople dedicated in our current location on Dorset Village Green in February 1833.

Disaster struck again in 1907 when a fire destroyed that much-loved wooden structure. The church community once again proved resilient, constructing the white marble and





largely fireproof structure in which we still worship—and laugh and occasionally curse—dedicating it in August 1910. It was during this time that the church drove the creation of the Dorset Village water system, which provided excellent potable water as well as enhanced fire protection.

In more recent times two significant settled ministers have blessed our church. In 1968 the church community installed the Reverend Hal Miller, who led the church until 1997. A decade into his tenure he oversaw the expansion of Sunday school rooms and office space in a first-floor addition; the church updated the kitchen and furnace simultaneously, and completed all work debt-free. In 1998 the Reverend Dr. James Gray answered our call and pastored our community until 2024. A revitalization of energy and commitment marked his tenure: church membership nearly doubled; pledging increased tenfold; congregants participated in adult book studies and Bible classes for the first time; we instituted free church suppers; and youth participation grew with canoe trips, youth group, and faith and nature camps. Rev. Gray also was a driving force in the rejuvenation of the Interfaith Council to foster dialogue among faith communities in our local area, as well as the renewal of the Southwest Association, which united all UCC churches in our larger region.

Reverend Gray's time with us engendered not only a new dynamism but also the physical growth of the church building. Movement between floors of the church was difficult for those with mobility challenges, and increased use of the building—by members and the wider community as a meeting space—taxed its small footprint. Church lay leaders created plans to add a second story to the back wing and also provide elevator access to all floors of the church. The congregation and wider community responded generously to the capital campaign to fund this work, with 140 families donating \$1.6 million. The church completed the project in 2021, on time and on budget—a miracle of no small proportions.



## Our Congregation

### Congregation + Community

Despite socioeconomic, educational, and cultural differences, the church community has created what many feel is a family—including the occasional odd uncle. We may be at our best when we combine our talents to work toward a common goal; our twice-annual Rummage Sales are prime examples. Each event folds in more than 100 volunteers from throughout our area to offer low-cost clothing, books, household items, and other attic treasures in a carnival atmosphere. The Christian Education Committee adds a concession stand for breakfast and lunch offerings, as well as a general food sale. This happy melee keeps countless items out of our landfills, offers essentials to families who otherwise could not afford them, and generates over \$15,000 per event with proceeds used to support the church's budget as well as a diverse range of community organizations. In the end,

nearly every person associated with our church is involved by either donating, sorting, selling, or buying.

Other examples of our community-creating labors include spring and fall clean-up days; holiday food sale fundraisers; and a weekly quilting group (christened “The Holy Sew and Sews” by our former pastor) who annually create a beautiful quilt for raffle.

Our church believes that where two or three are gathered in His name, Christ is present—and nearly as often so is food. The Hospitality Committee supervises Coffee Hour after worship each week and has overseen the publication of two cookbooks in recent history, with talk of another. For memorial services and funerals, the committee provides a reception at families' request. These unflagging foodies also oversee the picnic which is the culmination of the Memorial Day service and parade.

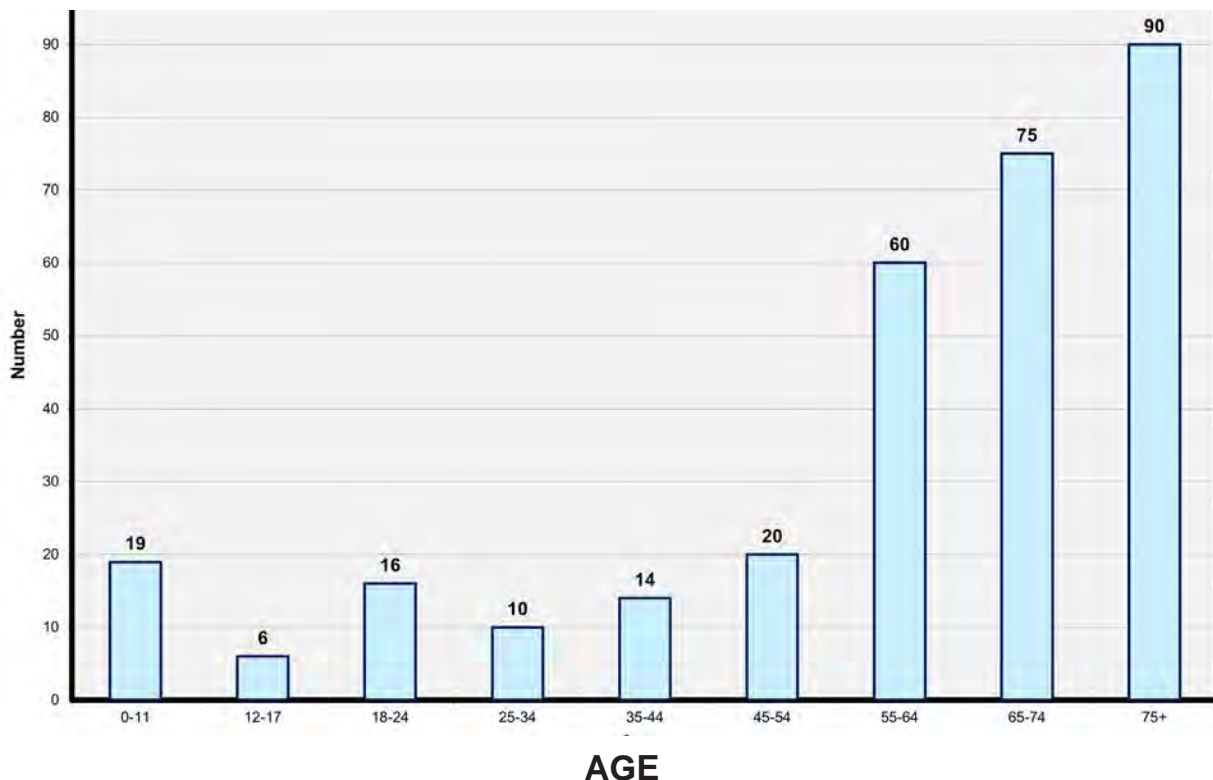
Multi-generational Christmas Nativity Pageant



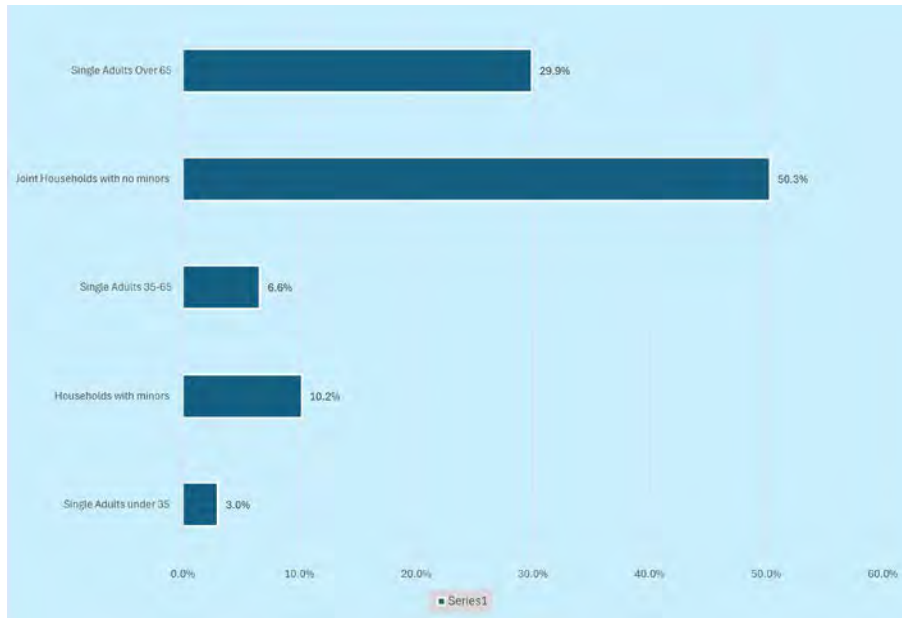
## DEMOGRAPHICS

Of the approximate 310 active participants in the life of our church, 148 are members and the remainder—about 162 people—have chosen to be active without becoming members. Once members, our congregants seem to like it here: 86 (58%) have been members at least ten years, with a number over fifty years, and our oldest member over eighty years—as well as we can remember; 28 (19%) have been members between five and ten years; and those of less than five years total 34 (23%).

We are an older congregation, with nearly three-quarters (73%) of our active participants over the age of 55. The graph below shows the age distribution of the congregation based on our church directory.

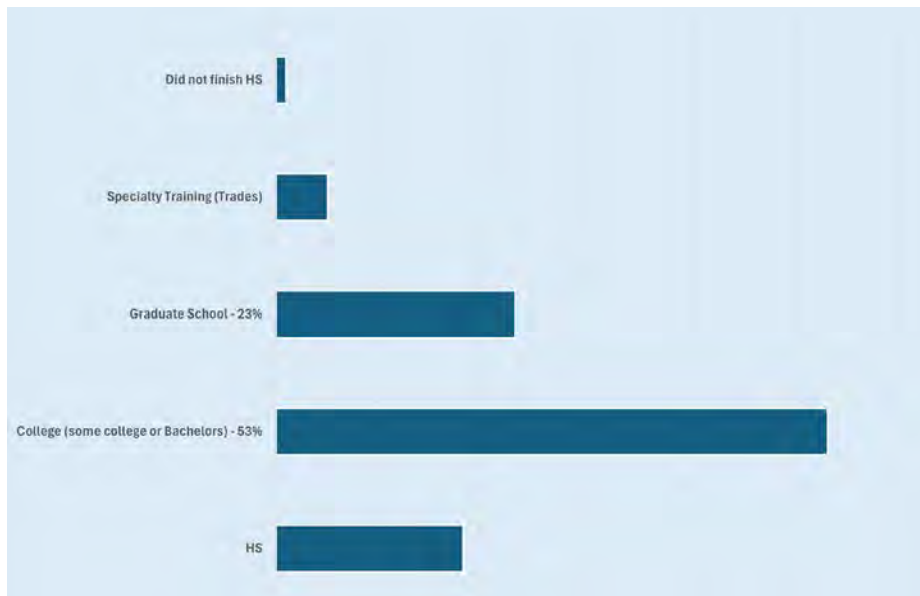


Because we don't record many data points on our church population, we have extrapolated the following information from the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey for the towns of Dorset, Rupert, and Manchester. We believe this data should serve as a representative sample of our church population since most of our church community reside in these towns. As shown below, we estimate that about half (50.3%) of our households are from joint households with no minors, while an additional 30% are single adults over the age of 65.



### HOUSHOLD TYPE

In addition to being older, our congregation is also highly educated. More than three-quarters (76%) have some form of higher education, which includes some college classes, a bachelor's degree, or a graduate degree, and nearly a quarter (23%) have an advanced degree.



### EDUCATION

Finally, the Census ACS data indicates that despite the age of our members, nearly half (49%) are employed full-time, while 12% are employed part-time and 39% are retired.



## Our Values

To summarize the core beliefs of an organization comprising over 300 Vermonters is not a simple task, but our church’s mission statement gives good insight into our common values. Here is the statement in its entirety:

*The mission of this open and affirming Church is to instill in its congregation the consciousness of the presence of God in each individual, to worship God, to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, to celebrate the Sacraments, and to encourage the application of Christian values both individually and collectively. The Church community strives to exemplify responsible stewardship of God’s creation and to render loving service to all humankind in the search for righteousness, justice, and peace.*

An examination of the phrases contained in the statement reveals shared values:

- ✚ “this open and affirming Church”: Over twenty years ago our membership voted to officially welcome persons of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions into the full life of our church.
- ✚ “the presence of God in each individual”: Since each of us contains the spark of the divine, we are each by definition worthy of love and respect, no matter what we look like or from where we have come.
- ✚ “the application of Christian values both individually and collectively”: We as individuals should demonstrate Christ’s nonjudgmental love, compassion, humility, and forgiveness in our lives, and our church as an institution should champion those values as it operates in the greater world.
- ✚ “responsible stewardship of God’s creation”: We accept the challenge to care for the world God has created for all life.
- ✚ “search for righteousness, justice, and peace”: The church has an appetite for the difficult work of social justice.
- In preparing for the search and call process, our church held a series of group interviews with our congregants to understand how they feel about the church as it is now and how it could be better in the future. The opinions we heard largely mirrored the values of the mission statement, but with more nuance. Here are some key findings:
  - ✚ Strong support for the church’s open and affirming stance continues. Our church supports the only PFLAG chapter in Vermont and so provides referrals and other resources to people throughout the state; its membership has doubled in the past twelve months.
  - ✚ Although like much of rural Vermont we are in general racially (though not socioeconomically) homogenous, it is important to our congregants that we continue to welcome all people, of all backgrounds, at all stages of their faith journeys.
  - ✚ The feeling of connection and community within our church is a critical part of what our congregants treasure; many feel their closest relationships are with other members of the church community. Further, the scope of activities and programming provides both members and the wider community with many ways to connect meaningfully with church life.
  - ✚ This important connectedness might conflict with the concurrent interest in politically charged aspects of social and environmental justice, support for which many—though not all—of our congregants embrace. Like the country as a whole, we are unsure how to move forward in a loving and respectful way. Our newly formed Truth and Justice Vermont group is an attempt to do just this, and time will tell whether that impulse has been successful.



## Our Missions

Everywhere we look there is need—sometimes terrible need—in our community, in our nation, and throughout the world. In response, our church works in the ways available to us to address some small part of the deprivation we see.

The church community spearheads several local initiatives. The annual Community Sharing Project provides Christmas gifts and food, most recently to 135 families in 2025, employing the volunteer efforts of more than 100 people and innumerable local donations. Last year the Kids Summer Lunch Program provided weekly meals to 245 children in 129 families who receive free or reduced lunches during the school year, but who get no such help during the summer; this effort reflects the work of several local faith communities. During the winter our church hosts monthly free Community Suppers, serving about 100 dinners to those who appreciate a warm meal and friendly conversation during the darkest months of the year. And our pastor manages a Discretionary Fund, underwritten by the donations of our members, that helps our most vulnerable neighbors during times of need.

Also at the local level we have been leaders in the Interfaith Council, a group promoting dialogue between faith communities about local needs while sponsoring projects to meet them. Among these is Neighbor to Neighbor, a program that helps elderly residents remain in their homes by providing companionship, transpor-

tation to medical appointments and shopping, yard work, and more.

Internationally, our men's group supports a child's education in Kenya, and for the past decade our Missions and Christian Education Committees have supported through True Africa a Ugandan boy whose parents died of AIDS, providing funds for his education, food, and clothing. Part of our Missions budget is also earmarked for Global Ministries in support of a UCC missionary in Mexico. In the past year individual church members have also raised funds for other mission projects in Africa, Guatemala, Poland, and Ukraine.

Additionally at the international level we partner with SERRV, a fair-trade organization that supports artisans throughout the world by developing products that reflect local crafts and materials, while teaching skills and providing income. Our SERRV Committee buys these crafts and sells them after worship services and at church events. Profits are used to fund diverse mission needs, such as relief for survivors of floods and fires, support for third-world students, or assistance to provide running water for a local church. On the regional level, the church makes monetary contributions to the Manches-

## Sunday Worship

Our Sunday worship typically fills the sanctuary with about ninety people (plus ten virtually) at different stages of their faith journeys. Some seek connection, many hope for uplifting music, but most attend to hear compelling preaching that shares biblical literacy and links scripture to current challenges. We hope our new pastor will help our range of congregants feel welcome while helping all glimpse larger spiritual truths. We generally follow a standard UCC liturgy, but are ecumenical enough to have chosen a Presbyterian interim pastor and are open to candidates from a range of denominations if the cultural and theological fit is strong. Here we serve communion on the first Sunday of each month, and all attending are welcome to share the sacrament.

We delight in the energy members bring to the call for announcements from the floor each Sunday; love to pass the peace that contributes to our sense of community; look forward to accessible inspiration in the children's sermons; and appreciate the thoughtful (and occasionally politically incisive) pastoral prayer led each week by a "retired" UCC minister-member.

Several special services during the year include intergenerational Sunday services: a Christmas pageant during Advent, and celebrations on Epiphany Sunday, Palm Sunday, and Easter. Special non-Sunday services include Tenebrae and Good Friday during Holy Week, two Christmas Eve services, and a more secular Memorial Day service that honors the sacrifice of local service members and culminates with a townwide picnic. We also participate in interfaith services on Martin Luther King Day and Thanksgiving, as well as an Easter sunrise service.



ter Community Food Cupboard, area fire departments, the Bennington County Multicultural Community Center, and many other mission-based organizations. Contributions come from our annual budget, rummage sales, and multiple additional events.

In 2025, our Missions and Christian Education Committees established a Truth and Justice Vermont group in response to disturbing national events and increasingly violent political polarization. The organization seeks to address pressing challenges in areas like free speech, voting rights, and immigration. Through our work with the Bennington County Multicultural Community Center, our church has previously supported immigrants navigating a new life in our region.

Our efforts at times feel grossly insufficient to confront the level of hardship we know exists around us. We look to our next pastor to help us best confront this distress while identifying emerging needs and opportunities.





## Music

The strong music program that undergirds our worship deserves special mention. Our music director is a trained organist and choral director who also plays a number of keyboard, string, and brass instruments. Melodies from the recently donated organ easily fill the church sanctuary. The adult choir can number up to twenty-five members, and the director has been able to stretch their abilities (sometimes a low bar) for challenging anthems. It is a democratic institution: any adult with sufficient interest and time is encouraged to join. Collaboration between the director and pastor connects the teachings of the service with its music; a long-time member observed that the service music “creates a deep spiritual connection” for him with the message of the day. The children’s choir, which sings monthly and is also led by the music director, is known more for its enthusiasm than its musical excellence; nonetheless, the congregation prizes its performances.

Beyond music for church services, the music ministry fosters fellowship with the greater community through activities like the townwide Christmas tree lighting and carol sing; choir concerts, often featuring singers from other choirs, and most recently serving as a fund raiser for another church; “spooky” Halloween organ performances during prime trick-or-treat hours; free drop-in concerts celebrating the birth of J.S. Bach; weekly sing-alongs at a nearby continuing-care facility; and community performances of the choir’s barbershop quartet. Beyond enhancing the worship experience, then, the music ministry serves as both a joyful artistic outlet and a powerful vehicle for community building.



# Christian Education

Our church is committed to providing Christian education to all ages. Our adult members want to deepen their faith journeys, while we also hope to attract more young families to our community by offering educational opportunities for children. Currently that program is managed by two half-time employees: the Christian Education Director, responsible for all aspects of education, and the Sunday School Coordinator, who manages the children's program. All initiatives additionally rely on the talent and enthusiasm of a group of stalwart volunteers.

When we baptize a baby in our church, we make a commitment to share God's love with that child, and to support the family so that the young person may grow in faith. To that end, our Sunday school offers nursery care and then church school for Pre-K through seventh grade; it is based on the Workshop Rotation Model (<https://www.rotation.org/>). Children participate in worship by serving as acolyte and beadle; taking communion; and performing with the children's choir, and in the Christmas pageant and Palm Sunday play. Children additionally engage in the life of the church by supporting mission outreach and in intergenerational activities, such as the Christmas tree lighting, Epiphany party, and Easter egg hunt. This path culminates in confirmation class through which young people declare their faith and officially join the church community.

Our church also collaborates with other area churches in a regional youth group called F.I.R.E. (Fantastic, Intelligent, Radical, Excellent) and to run the Summer Discovery Camp, a vacation Bible school. These opportunities help to provide a broad spectrum of youth with faith-based activities.

We continue to support our young adults attending college by funding annual scholarships; this past year those stipends totaled \$30,000, or \$3,000 per student. In addition to these funds, we sent them \$100 gift cards at Easter and Christmas to remind them they remain in our thoughts, and then will celebrate their achievements as part of worship during graduation season.

To ensure the safety of our children and youth during their time with us, and indeed to guarantee the welfare of all vulnerable people within our faith community, our church is vetting anti-abuse policies and procedures based on the UCC's national model. We are committed to implementing these during the spring-summer timeframe this year.



Sunday School



Teen canoe trip



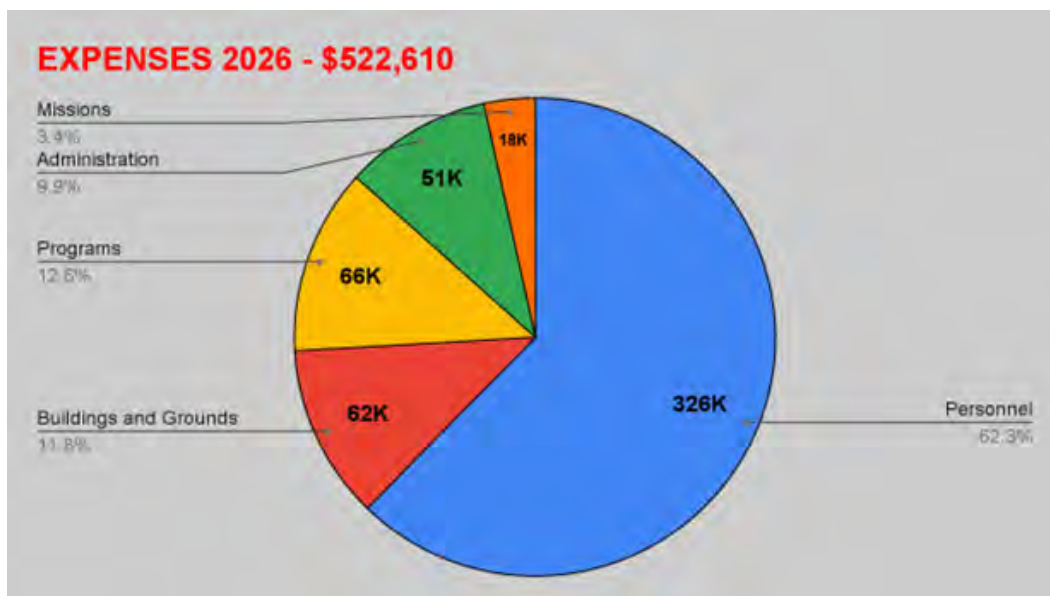
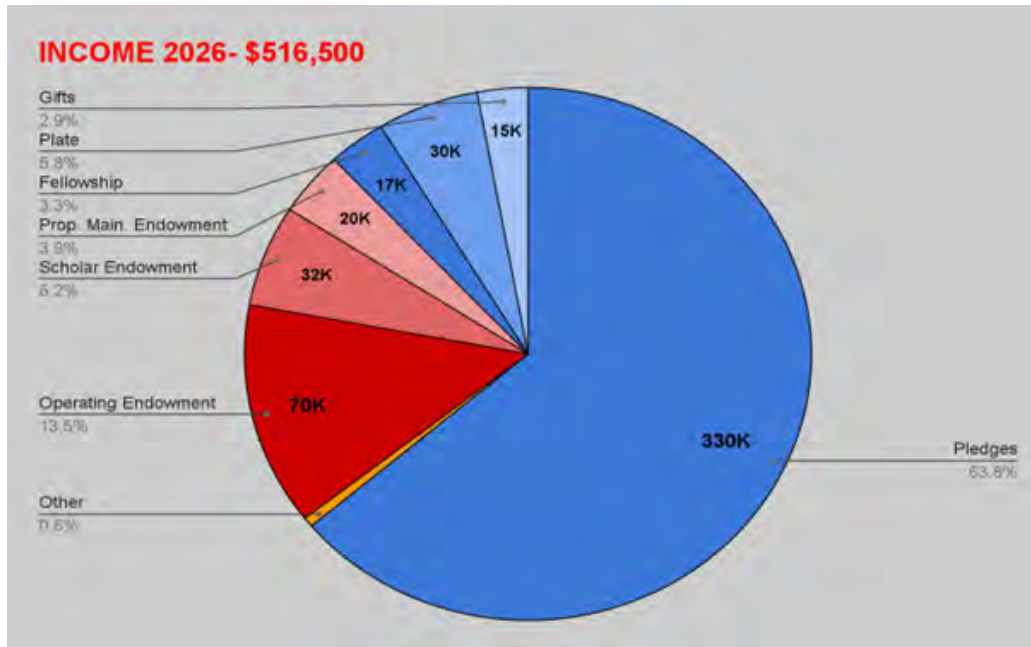
Scholarship recipients

Adult education also plays an important role at our church. Our pastor has traditionally led multiple adult book and Bible studies throughout the year that help our congregation grow our faith. Lay leadership organizes our Second Hour program; about once monthly, following Sunday worship, they present sessions on diverse topics including current events, mission work, and other topics that may be interesting for, or helpful to, our members. We also offer devotional materials both electronically and in print, as well as live-streamed worship services to those who cannot attend Sunday services in person. Our pastor also holds services for and makes regular visits to our most senior members who have moved to a local continuing-care facility, and our Music Director provides his ministry to this facility weekly.

# Church Finances

## Income And Expenses

Thanks to the generosity of members both past and present, our church is in strong financial shape. We project an income of \$516,500 in 2026. As the Income pie chart below shows, almost two-thirds of the budget is supported by annual pledges and other current giving; the remainder is supported by modest draws on our endowment funds that rarely exceed investment earnings, resulting in substantial growth in our endowment portfolio over the past two decades. Our projected expenses for 2026 are \$522,610 and include personnel (62%), programs (12.6%), administration (9.9%), buildings and grounds (11.8%), and missions (3.4%). For more detail, please see the Income and Expenses pie charts below, and the attached 2026 budget.



## Capital Campaign

In addition to annual giving, we completed a \$1.6 million capital campaign in 2021, with donations from 140 households that financed a major addition to the church building. This addition includes a chapel, three additional multipurpose rooms, a bathroom, and an elevator that allows access to the main floors of the building. The twin goals of the campaign were to make our church building more accessible and to create additional space for church meetings and the local groups that routinely meet here, including Dorset's community theater, the Dorset Farmer's Market, Alcoholics Anonymous, and many others.

We often benefit from other gifts and bequests, such as \$100,000 given to the church in 2025 to purchase a new organ. Our church is debt free; there are no mortgages on either the manse or the church building.



## Endowments

Our church is blessed with a significant endowment. These endowment funds are managed by the Trust Company of Vermont and overseen by the Investment Committee of the church. We have four endowment funds with a market value of \$2.4 million as of December 31, 2025. These endowment funds include monies that allow us to maintain our property without incurring debt, provide generous scholarships to a dozen or so college and graduate students every year, and supplement our operating budget.

The Investment Committee is in the process of developing a long-range investment policy. This policy will develop guidelines to ensure that the endowment funds are responsive to the church's current and future obligations, allowing for needed investments while maintaining a substantial hedge against any future financial challenges.

## Manse

One of our most cherished assets is a 3,000-square-foot, four-bedroom, four-bath manse located next to the church in the heart of Dorset Village. The manse includes a deck, a recently upgraded kitchen opening to a spacious dining area and living room with fireplace, an adjoining family room, and one bedroom on the first floor. It has a fair market value in the \$1 million range, almost triple the median home price in our county. We invested more than \$40,000 on upgrades in 2025, and hope that our next pastor will follow tradition and move into this home; the cost of housing in Dorset makes the manse an attractive part of what we can offer. While the manse is next to the church, it is separated by a dense hedgerow, reinforcing our strong tradition of respecting the pastor's privacy.

## Conclusion

Our strong financial position reflects our community's commitment to ministry and mission, and demonstrates the congregation's willingness to finance our expansive sense of what is possible in supporting the church. This security in turn allows us to meet or exceed UCC guidelines for minister compensation.

# Support

We look forward to supporting our next pastor! What follows is a primer of the structural assistance that person can expect from our church.

## Lay Leadership

As a UCC church, we entrust ultimate authority to our congregation, and this policy has in turn created active and committed lay leadership. These leaders direct the wide range of church activities through more than two dozen boards, committees, and subcommittees. Groups that work particularly closely with the pastor are the Cabinet, the ultimate authority and policy-making body that comprises representatives from all standing committees; the Board of Deacons, which, with the pastor, is responsible for the spiritual welfare of the church community; the Board of Trustees, which directs all financial affairs of the church, including the hiring and firing of staff (except the pastor), and the care of church property; and, the Pastoral Relations Committee, which works to support an open dialogue between the pastor and lay leadership. We additionally invite the pastor to participate in meetings of any other committees s/he believes are important or simply wants to attend.

## Volunteers

The term “leadership” implies there are people who are led, and our church is blessed with many of these worker bees as well. Our regular volunteers are no doubt the lifeblood that powers our church week in, week out, through the many events and services of the ecclesiastical year. Although they mostly are represented by the roughly 300 active congregants who form the nuclear part of our church family, in fact they come from throughout our area, from other faith communities, or from those without belief. Regardless of from where they come, sustain us they do.

## Best Practices

With encouragement from our interim pastor, we are using this transition time to thoughtfully analyze our processes, and so have best practices in place or under discussion to effectively support our next called pastor. Examples include discussing and instituting an anti-abuse policy to protect all vulnerable congregants; training deacons how to respond to active-shooter situations, and (with other interested members) instructing them in CPR; better aligning our budget process with our



*From left to right: Tom Salmon, Music Director; Gretchen Lima, Christian Education Director; Leslie Mazzucco, Bookkeeper; Paula Nassivera, Sunday School Coordinator; Rev. Dr. Mark McDonough, Interim Pastor; Jordan (Skip) Dickinson, Pastoral Assistant; Kimberly Perkins, Office Manager.*

stewardship campaign and Annual Meeting; and even the simple act of accounting for the offering collection every week. We understand that we have much still to learn, in both earthly and spiritual realms, but hope to start our next pastor on firm procedural footing.

## Staff

We feel blessed with a competent staff who, though all part-time, impress us with their dedication to our church. They volunteer for rummage sales and other church events, and in a pinch even transport members to medical appointments. In the past year we have reorganized the office to better serve the needs of the church community, with an office manager and a bookkeeper. Both people are cross-training on the broad range of office responsibilities so they can assist with the various needs of the pastor and our congregants nearly forty hours every week. Our Music Director is a Berklee-trained musician who has collaborated smoothly with our interim pastor on many facets of the worship experience. Our education staff represents decades of Christian education expertise and works hard to bring the assurance of God’s love to the full spectrum of our congregation. In all, our staff are an integral part of our church community and a strong foundation on which the pastor can build.



Wherever you are going, God has already been there  
and paved the way for you.

*Matt 6:27-30*

## Epilogue

Yes, it's true: we've been bragging, but we hope you will forgive us. Our unwitting vanity stems from our love of this church, and, though not exactly young, we're a little like those who have just fallen in love—blind to our faults. A more truthful telling of our story would be that, like people everywhere, we are sometimes courageous, wise, and faithful, but just as often timid, foolish, and willfully deaf to the voice of God. After all, we are merely dust, and to dust we shall return (though in the Vermont spring, to mud we shall return). We are fully aware of, and grateful for, the many blessings God has given to our church, perhaps especially, inspired pastoral leadership. Though we often strain to discern the future God has set before us, we sense that there is much more we can do as a community of faith. After all, thirty years ago a new settled pastor arrived with his family and set us on a fresh path of growth and change. If you can help us see the new road God has prepared, and join us on that journey, we hope to hear from you.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**UCC PROFILE** We encourage you to review more detailed information that we provide on church demographics, finances, and many of our programs in the standard UCC online profile. You can access that profile at [UCC PROFILE](#)

**REFERENCES** You may wish to contact any of the following references. These people are not active in our church, but are community members with whom we have worked on local issues:

Paul Michael Brinker, Business Manager and Co-Executive Producer of the Dorset Players. Please email [paulmbrinker@yahoo.com](mailto:paulmbrinker@yahoo.com)

Scott Buckner, Cantor at Israel Congregation of Manchester. Please email [vermontcantor@gmail.com](mailto:vermontcantor@gmail.com).

Cindy Loudenslager, owner of the Dorset Union Store. Please contact Cindy at [cindy.loudenslager@gmail.com](mailto:cindy.loudenslager@gmail.com) or (802) 379-3982.

Kevin O-Toole, Dorset attorney. Please call his offices at (802) 867-5711.

**2025 ANNUAL REPORT** More than just scintillating reading, this document includes reports from more than a dozen committees and boards, as well as an overview of our 2026 budget and other financial information. You can access it at <https://dorsetchurch.org/annual-report/>

**WEBSITES** Our church website is <https://dorsetchurch.org>. You can find out more information about our local community on the Town of Dorset's website at <https://www.dorsetvt.com>

For details about our candidate-review process, please contact our corresponding secretary Steve Holman at [steve.holman@holman.com](mailto:steve.holman@holman.com)