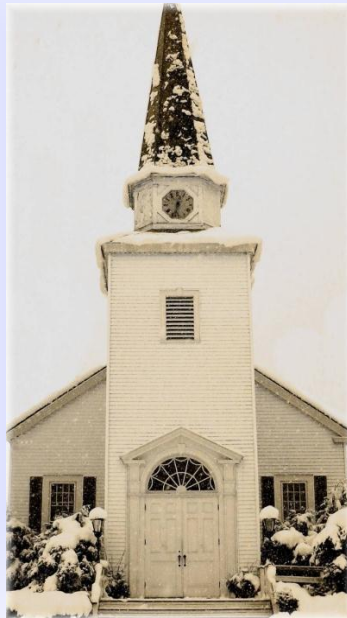




Keene Valley Congregational Church United Church of Christ



2010 Annual Report

February 27, 2011

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	<i>To Do</i>	<i>Done</i>
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AGENDA FOR THE 2011 ANNUAL MEETING

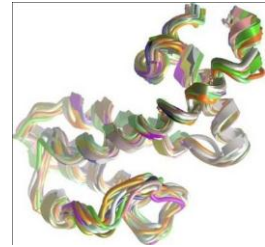


- I Lunch
- II Call to Order
- III Opening Prayer
- IV In Memoriam – Tolling of the Bell
- V Declaration of Quorum
- VI Acceptance of the Minutes from 2010 Meeting (Motion)
- VII Election of Officers and Church Council (Motion)
 - Moderator: Jim Marlatt
 - Vice Moderator: Carol Blakeslee-Collin
 - Treasurer: Fritz Sabbow
 - Clerk: Pam Gothner
 - At Large: Charity Marlatt, Ingrid Carman, Mike Curran
 - Music Ministry: Bill Reed
- VIII Acceptance of Annual Reports (Motion)
- IX Presentation and Acceptance of the 2011 Budget (Motion)
- X Discussion of Coffee Hour Model
- XI Strategic Planning Project – The First Step
- XIII Items for Agenda for the Next Congregational Meeting
- XIV Last Thoughts
- XV Closing Prayer

MINUTES OF THE KVCC ANNUAL MEETING - FEBRUARY 7, 2010

- I. Carol Blakeslee-Collin, Assistant Moderator, called the meeting to order. She thanked all the contributors for the luncheon.
- II. Milton Dudley led the assembled in prayer.
- III. A moment of silence was observed for the reading of the necrology.
- IV. Carol announced that we had a quorum.
- V. Elizabeth Derr moved that the minutes of the 2009 Annual Meeting be accepted moved. Karen Glass seconded. Motion passed.
- VI. Susan Doolittle moved, Ethel Webb seconded that the Nominated of Officers be elected. Motion passed.

Moderator:	Jim Marlatt
Vice Moderator:	Carol Blakeslee-Collin
Treasurer:	Fritz Sabbow
Clerk:	Pam Gothner
At Large:	Charity Marlatt, John Spear, Ingrid Carman, Melissa LaVallee
Music Ministry:	Linda Coe
- VII. Annual Reports – Liz Jaques moved to accept. John Spear seconded. Motion Passed
- VIII. 2010 Proposed Budget – There was discussion on the budget. Fritz hopes that we will have a “net zero” budget for 2010.
- IX. Harrison Caner moved to accept the 2010 budget; Susan Doolittle seconded. Motion passed.
- X. Paul Martin asked that there will be an entry in future reports stating the 4th quarter value of the Endowment Fund.
- XI. Dan Mason, Buildings Interest Group Facilitator, presented the schedule of events for the capital projects. The timeline and budget estimates are posted on the bulletin board and on line at www.kvvi.net/~kvcc.
- XII. Bernie Webb was thanked for his service as Facilitator of this Interest Group.
- XIII. Carol Blakeslee-Collin recognized Milton for the presentation of the carpet sample recommended by the Carpet Task Force. People were invited to come forward and view the sample. Discussion followed. It was noted that this process began a year ago with the Carpet Task Force bringing three samples to the Congregation. There were several viewing and discussion opportunities in recent weeks. By a large margin one sample was preferred. This sample was presented to the Congregation.
- XIV. Louise Gregg moved that the carpet selected by the Task Force be approved for installation. Susan Doolittle seconded. The motion was passed with a vote of 25 for and 0 against/abstained.



XV. Strategic Planning - Milton Shared about the Strategic Planning Steering Committee that was in the process of being formed. The Committee consists of: Carol Blakeslee-Collin, Ingrid Carman, Phyllis Buchanan, John Spear, Bill Reed, and Milton Dudley, (ex officio). There is still a desire to have a person representing our younger Congregation on the Steering Committee.

This Task Force will find or develop a model and method for the Congregation to take an intentional and serious look at our Church and its mission for the next five years and beyond. The process is intended have the Congregation consider worship, education, social action, fellowship, as well as the management of our property and finances. We will also address how changing demographics, other organizations, the town and other factors impact the Church. The goal is to have input on all issues from as many of our members and friends as possible.

I. Future Agenda Items for Congregational Meetings

1. Sanctuary Windows
2. Fellowship activities as a Congregation
3. Shrubbery in the front of the church
4. Support of the UCC special offerings
5. Moving forward with the Memorial Garden



XVI. The 2011 Annual meeting will be held on following worship on Sunday, February 27, 2010 with the Annual Reports due to the office by February 1.

XVII. After a closing prayer by Milton the meeting was adjourned.
Respectfully Submitted, Elizabeth Jaques, Recorder

ATTENDING:

Carol Blakeslee-Collin	Betsy Stinson	Susan Doolittle
Milton Dudley	Fritz Sabbow	Elizabeth Derr
Rob Hastings	Harrison Caner	Karen Glass
Judy Caner	Jenifer Deming	Andrew Derr, III
Jimm Collin	Charlotte Lichtenberg	Sarah Prince
Ingrid Carman	Elizabeth Jaques	Debby Rice
Carolyn Galbraith	John Spear	Paul Martin
Betsy Whitman	Louise Gregg	Bernie Webb
Dan Mason	Sallie Joachim	Ruth Kuhfahl
Laurence Shipp	Leslie Shipp	Ethel Webb
E M Woltner	Alana Both	Brett Lawrence
Tom Both	Anne Hurd	Kathy Kernan

THE STATE OF THE CHURCH

Rev. Milton Dudley



As of February 27, the date of Annual Meeting, I will have been the minister at KVCC for 4,173 days. My longest previous tenure was 1,825 days. If all goes as planned, with your affirmation, I will spend 940 more days as your minister. Why is this important? Why do I bring it up? Am I anxious for the date to come? (*No*). Can ministers really retire? (*Yes*).

This faith community has a legacy of long term ministers; Frederica Mitchell 29 years and Bud Gassett 17 years. KVCC has been a vital institution in Keene and the North Country and will continue to be in the years to come. How you prepare for the future - utilizing the strengths and talents of the congregation - understanding your heritage and your destiny - will be crucial to the success of the emerging church.

Every minister dreams of a serving a faith community like KVCC, but it is the experience of few. Yet, even with the dream comes certain realities. The first is “burn out”. It happens no matter how supportive the congregation is or how healthy the minister is. The nature of ministry is intimacy. Ministers work at profoundly personal levels with their congregations, experiencing the peaks and valleys of life and death. It cannot be avoided. It can be tempered, but never escaped. Stress and distress are not failures of congregation or the minister; just a reality.

The second reality is age. I arrived here during my 48th year and am now in my 60th year. There is no way to reverse that trend. Age happens, even if my beloved “Boomer” generation tells itself, *“Sixty is the new forty”*. The third reality is the truth that John Robinson spoke to the pilgrims as they set out on the Mayflower, *“I am very confident the Lord hath more truth and light yet to break forth out of His holy word.”*



This church, spiritually, physically and fiscally, is in good shape. And, when compared to other churches, it can be said to be in “great shape”. Financially we are a sound operation in an era of economic uncertainty. The number of small and medium size congregations unable to meet their budgets is soaring. Many have closed, more have cut back their ministries, and the future is not rosy. Due to a number of factors we are blessed financially and on course to remain strong for many years to come. Our budget has doubled in ten years. Our income has doubled in ten years. The endowment has grown 500% (and we are going to need it). In 2009 we received a (self-funded) stimulus package and this year bequests brought in over \$120,000. Our pledges jumped a sizable number, yet the per capita pledge amount was down. That trend, while good in one sense, will continue to be a challenge in another.

The leadership at KVCC is strong, even too strong, at times. We are a congregation full of people who lead and that makes for interesting dynamics. The four cornerstones of the church - Education, Mission, Worship and Fellowship - have leaders who are sharing their talents and time. They are not people who have been cajoled or guilted into filling a “vacant” slot in the organization. Our model is to ask people to serve in areas that bring them life. We may still resist and stumble over the words “Interest Group” and “Task Force” but the work is getting done by people who find life energy in their efforts.

I remember in the old KVCC by-laws that the minister was the “spiritual leader” of the congregation. I feel much more like the “spiritual conductor” of a faith symphony. Much of the spiritual leadership in this congregation comes from Rob, Betsy, the choirs, guest artists, lay preachers, ushers, storytellers, educators, activists, coffee hour participants, and anyone who takes an idea and runs with it. I admit to standing back and marveling at what is happening here. I’m happy to claim my part in our success, but it is a “shared” success and in the church, there is no better kind. My role has evolved much more into that of one who creates an atmosphere or stage for people to test their gifts, find a new voice, and share that with the congregation. I love my role.

OK, enough singing our praises. One of the truths that we cannot avoid, brush aside, or cover up with accolades, is, *“We can do better”*. If we are daring enough to look for it, every strength and success exposes a weakness or unfilled need. I am not suggesting sack cloth and ashes here, but as a healthy congregation, we must recognize the need inside and outside our doors, and challenge ourselves to meet that need, or in biblical terms, love our neighbor.

One more (huge) thing... **We are having fun!** Never underestimate the power of having fun.



What shall we do in the next 940 days? What will be done in the 940 days after that? We will act and we will reflect. We will worship and then act some more. We act based on our understanding of God’s teaching about a radical faith response to our neighbor’s needs. What will this look like in 2011? I haven’t got a clue and wouldn’t tell you even if I did. It is in the acting, reflecting, worshiping and playing together that we arrive at an answer, transient though it may be. If UCC theology is correct, the Spirit of God moves in and among us when we gather. Therefore, we must gather often and in different configurations, to hear the questions and struggle living out the answers.

There has and will always be a dynamic tension between the will of God and the decisions

of the faith community. One might believe that if we truly knew God's will, we would never have a split vote, only unanimous votes to the sounds of the heavenly host singing praises in the clouds. Don't get snared by that judgment. Even unanimous votes are never truly unanimous. Therefore, embrace the certainty of a lack of unity in thought, action or vote at KVCC. While we like to be on the winning side, we must admit that we often learn more from the losing side.

That will be important to remember during the Strategic Planning Project. We are planning for an unknowable future, with faith in an unseen God, for a community and world that needs God's love, but doesn't have a clue what the love is. We are to be models of that love and that is quite a yoke to bear. So let's go forth boldly remembering that no person, church or religion has an exclusive claim on God's truth.



CHAPLAIN AT LARGE

Rev. Jenifer Hale Deming



I have continued my current ministries, added a new one and hope to add more. I continue in the immensely rewarding ministry at Adirondack Correctional Facility both on Sunday morning for worship and at a Monday evening Bible study. We now have a keyboard player which will really enhance worship. The inmates have requested an extra half hour on Communion Sundays once a month. This makes a total of 2 hours for the service. I have started a new DVD study series that has Spanish subtitles.

I continue going to Adirondack Medical Center to make chaplain visits to the patients. Pastor Steve, the new head of pastoral care, is an interesting person with whom to work. We had a good chaplain's retreat at my house where we got to know him better.

I am now doing prayer and pastoral visits at Horace Nye individually rather than trying to get everyone in one place. Many residents are mostly confined to their beds. Giving individual attention is very important. I continue to preach on rotation at their Protestant services. This past year I organized a healing service which was very well received, but I have to organize it sooner this year in order to have enough clergy to anoint the congregation in a timely manner.

I continue to assist Milt with pastoral care when he is away and at Horace Nye and Adirondack Medical Center. I have continued as chaplain of the Keene Valley Fire Department. I had a Bible study for about half a year in my home which was not well attended and discontinued after the beginning of summer. I have started a Bible study at the KV Neighborhood House on Tuesday afternoons at 3:00 pm. All are welcome to come and learn or contribute along with the residents. I still miss a weekly prayer group. Is it a question of priorities?

In addition to offering the front part of my house for Gordon-Conwell students and their families to use for vacation, I would like to offer the front part as a quiet place for a day or few days of a quiet place. I am currently taking an online course in Crisis Intervention through Empire State College. I wonder how a crisis hotline could be started in our area.



COMMUNITY MINISTER

The Rev. Katrina R. B. Wagner, D.Min.



The questions posed for us to consider are provocative ones. Although my ministry in the valley is part time, KVCC is the church of my heart, and wherever I might find myself - in or away from the valley - I believe my "take" on KVCC would be much the same.

I like to think of KVCC as our common meeting place, one which brings us together from many walks of life to proclaim what unites us as followers of Jesus and what He might do if we could recognize His ways of living and loving in the modern world. Together, our voices break through boundaries to share new and innovative forms of ministry and renewal. Together, we are inspired by our collective visions to speak even more powerfully in and to the world of the 21st Century. There is an openness in our church which embraces many voices to be heard respectfully, creativity, and provides needed services with seemingly endless generosity.

We have an outstanding minister, exceptional leadership, a dedicated and competent staff, and a church family which is second to none in caring, sharing and willingness to walk the talk of their faith. We are not a church of cookie-cutter Christians, but always surprisingly new and innovative and not shy to take on many of the challenges we see before us, including adapting to the pressures of changes in the values and customs by which we are surrounded and must live in.

Slowly, but surely, we are beginning to understand that the (entire world) church is undergoing changes that will make our understanding of church, as we know it today, unrecognizable to any of us if we were to be around in a few hundred years. Like small fish in the ocean, we hardly know that we are swimming, much less the vastness of our realm. This in part can be explained because, in our "ocean", we are the in midst of experiencing what one forward thinking theologian, Phyllis Tickle, titled her book; *The Great Emergence: How Christianity is Changing and Why*; (Grand Rapids, MI, Baker Books). For the long haul, she offers sound insights, thus assurance. There are also numerous other books on this topic, but her work offers a great beginning.

Then, for guidance addressing our more immediate questions: What kind of church are we? What do we want to do/ be? How do we fit who we are and are becoming with a larger/world faith perspective? I've found the work being done at ProgressiveChristianity.org extremely helpful. To my mind, their ministry reflects a great deal of where many of us already are in our heads and hearts.

From a personal/private perspective, I like to think of my Faith as a living process and not a series of fixed ideas, religious dogmas or in any way limited by the confines of a⁹ denomination. I love the way the UCC has become increasingly more inclusive-not only of other Christian stances but also the gifts of others' beliefs and traditions.

In the same way, my view of Spirituality is that it is the search for eternal wisdom but not the Wisdom/Word itself. Each of us have our ways of being with God, gaining insights, strength, and guidance, while also lamenting from time to time, asking for forgiveness, and giving thanks. Whatever we offer of ourselves is perfect. I don't think we need to worry too much about how we pray, only that we do; and to open our hearts a little wider to accept as legitimate the ways of others for worshipping, praying and making their choices for their lives. Not only will we be happier, but it will be the best possible legacy we can leave the world, until millennia from now, our decedents show up to be a part of a church none of us would ever recognize.

Away from the valley, I'm active with The Kearsarge Interfaith Leadership Council, providing worship services at the Clough Center, a continuing care unit at the New London Hospital; inspirational articles to The Intertown Record, a local paper; and participation in ecumenical services.

In NH, Bill and I attend The First Baptist Church of New London and in both NY and NH during the past year I have been a guest minister for Sunday services, officiated at memorial services and baptisms, advised on an ordination service and a church's' needs during an Interim Ministry, and provided pastoral care.

The Society of St John the Evangelist ,based in Cambridge, MA and the practice of centering prayer continue to provide me with ongoing inspiration and spiritual guidance.

Faithfully yours.



MUSIC DIRECTOR

Rob Hastings, Music Director



The music program continues to evolve with our very active adult choir (sometimes more than 25 singers!) and hand bell choir. We even got some youth to join in the song with the wonderful Christmas Pageant. It is an ongoing struggle to get our young people involved on a regular basis in our music program due to their overextension in afterschool sports and activities.

The choir did a wide variety of music from Gospel to Bach. They worked diligently in practice and did a stellar job during the services. I am amused at the times in practice when they rehearse a new piece and I say to them "That was nice, but this time let's make it music!" and they do!

There were challenges for Betsy during her cancer treatments, not being able to accompany us. We eventually had to cancel music Sunday this spring. It makes me appreciate all she does even more! Many thanks to Amy Stoner for filling in for her whenever she could.

I would like to invite anyone that would like to sing, play, ding, or whatever musically turns them on, to join us in our music mission. It is a very relaxed atmosphere and there are no “rules”.



ORGANIST/PIANIST

Betsy Stinson



I want to thank everyone for your support, patience, and understanding during the last 10 months when I have had to take so much time off because of health issues. I have been able to do so without feeling stressed about it. I also want to thank Amy Stoner, Sam Fisk and anyone else who has stepped in and played the piano for Sunday services in my absence. K.V. Church has such a wonderful family of people and I feel very fortunate to be a part of it. With love and gratitude, Betsy.



SUMMER MUSIC

Milton Dudley



Trombones and trumpets and pipers, oh my! We continue to emphasize arts in worship and welcome guest artists throughout the year. Yet, summer has always been a special time for music because artists come to the North Country to vacation, perform and learn. For several years Ruth Pelmas scheduled our guests and we miss her. We thank Nancy Emrich for stepping up to assume this role. Nancy brings a wealth of experience and friends throughout the music scene, specializing in folk music and festivals. We enjoyed the artists that she scheduled last summer and are eager to hear the artists she brings in the summer to come.



MODERATOR

Jim Marlatt



This year has been a challenging one in light of the state of the economy. We have, however, made substantial progress on a number of fronts. The refurbishment of the sanctuary is now complete, having been repainted and carpeted during the year.

Our annual bazaar raised over \$11,000, a new record, which will support our ongoing church activities. The use of the 5th Sunday during each quarter, with a mission moment and lunch, to raise funds for specific worthy causes has been very successful, as a consequence of the generosity of the congregation. The Finance Committee has drafted a series of investment guidelines to more clearly delineate our goals and objectives.

During the year, we were the fortunate recipient of three bequests from the estates of members and folks from the greater church community. We have embarked on an information dissemination program to encourage members of the church community to consider including the Keene Valley Congregational Church in their estate planning.

Finally, a small group has gathered to initiate a strategic planning process for the coming five years. As this effort progresses you will be asked for your thoughts, and I encourage you to participate.



CHURCH COUNCIL

Charity Marlatt, Member At Large



The Church Council had a busy year, with many Task Groups implementing or completing projects. The refurbishing of our lovely Sanctuary was most significant. This beautiful space is now warm and welcoming to all who enter. Secondly, the Sunday School, provided by Mimi Woltner each week, has remained constant throughout the year and will be the foundation for increasing our youth involvement going forward. We also have provided weekly child care, during each worship service, for those children under age of five.

Two outstanding "At Large" members have resigned from the Council this year. We were very sad to see John Spear and Melissa LaVallee leave our group and want to thank each of them for their wonderful time and talent. Melissa has agreed to work on special projects during the coming year. She, along with other members of the congregation, will spearhead a monthly "Family Sunday" outreach to the young families in our community. She and I have also established a "call list" so we can communicate directly with these families and encourage their participation. At this time, we continue to reach out to the Keene Valley Neighborhood House and are trying to develop a greater Sunday participation from that group.

We look forward to welcoming new "At Large" members to the Council.



STRATEGIC PLANNING TASK FORCE

Bill Reed



In November, 2010, the Strategic Planning Task Group (Jim Marlatt, Carol Blakeslee-Collin, Ingrid Carman, Milton Dudley, Phyllis Buchanan, Bill Reed) was asked to spearhead an effort to revisit and update the church's strategic plan. To date we have met four times – in September, October, December, and January.

Our discussions to date have focused on:

- (1) What is a strategic plan? and what shape should our strategic plan take?
 - (2) What were the results of previous similar efforts in the church?
 - (3) What are some of our preliminary thoughts on the content of the plan?
 - (4) How do we engage the crucial thinking of the members and friends of the church in this planning process?
- (1) Our early research shows that the strategic planning process doesn't vary much from year to year or from organization to organization. It pretty much boils down to doing or defining the following:
- Taking Stock (What is the current situation in our church?)
 - Values (What do we value as a church community?)
 - Vision (How do we see our church in a perfect future?)
 - Mission (Why does the KVCC exist?)
 - Goals (What should we plan to accomplish in order to realize our values, vision, and mission?)
 - Implementation
 -
- (2) The 2009 Annual Report includes a "State of the Church" which we think is fine. The current constitution and by-laws of our church is dated 23 Feb 2003. It contains, among other things, a mission statement – one that we think can be improved. In 2005 a set of future priorities was articulated (for each of the ensuing five years). These have largely been accomplished.
- (3) and (4) We see our "preliminary thoughts" as a kind of warm-up to the real work that the congregation will undertake. At this writing, we are about to send our first communication to the members and friends of the church, asking for thoughtful reflection and specific input. We will monitor this feedback process in an effort to get the best, most thoughtful engagement and feedback that money can buy.

**Pondering Strategic Planning: Along the way we will be flooded with so much data that we will want to scream. Think of panning for gold. Along a creek is a series of boxes, shaking and sifting a steady stream of mud, rocks and water. At the end is a little pan with silt in it and tiny flecks of gold. Strategic planning is labor intensive and muddy at the beginning too. But, if done well, those shiny flecks of gold make all the work worthwhile.*



FELLOWSHIP INTEREST GROUP

Charlotte Lichtenberg, Coordinator



The special aroma of coffee brewing - that's the beginning of the fellowship time that follows our regular worship service at KVCC - every Sunday, or at least most Sundays! This past year was typical of the usual response to the call for volunteers to host this very special Coffee Hour. Mostly there were many 1-time volunteers but 1/3 of the thirty overall volunteers signed up 3 times throughout the entire year. Actually there were 45 different combinations of 1-3 persons and twice the same family joined together and hosted the Coffee hour! Imagine so many different generations working together! We also had a birthday celebration! The calendar year was rounded out with a few Sundays filled with luncheons.

Volunteers answered the call to help via the telephone, email requests and the sign-up sheet posted just off the kitchen. I have posted the list of volunteers so new comers could choose a partner with experience at fixing up the coffee urn and adding the extra things that complete this fellowship picture. The directions are still posted on the refrigerator. This listing does not include those persons who volunteered for the luncheons, memorial services or other special events such as the March Muffin Madness Sunday. We also appreciate the generous use of their time for our benefit.

"Thank you" - humble words of appreciation! This group of volunteers is truly the "icing on the cake," and wonderful artisans of the kitchen! "Thank you" to all the volunteers - appreciation for the oldest person who gives of their experience to the fresh outlook of the youngest. Yes, Gabriella, we can hardly wait until you grow up to be a part of this wonderful first class group!



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION INTEREST GROUP

Mimi Wolter, Teacher and Carol Blakeslee Collin, Facilitator



We started 2010 talking how we celebrate New Years', and how others around the world celebrate New Year's (darkness, winter, traditions, mittens, bright colors, animals, song, feast). In February we celebrated Chinese New Year, learned symbols of traditional Chinese beliefs of Confucianism and Taoists, made paper bag Year of the Tiger puppets with good luck wishes. On St Patrick's Day we talked about Roman Catholics, the bible, and the rosary. We made green play dough and read a story of St. Patrick. On Palm Sunday we made palm leaves and performed a skit with Jesus and a donkey procession. Easter was especially fun, with decorating paper baskets, and an egg relay with stops at the Mount of Olives, temple courtyard, upper room, Gethsemane olive grove, and the tomb. Earth day was celebrated by talking about creation stories and creating a terrarium. Father's Day and Mother's Day were both celebrated by making cards and a gift for members of the congregation. In between celebrations, children learned about the Book of Genesis.



BUILDINGS INTEREST GROUP

Dan Mason



What We Have And What We Do?

In January 2010, I was offered the opportunity to become the Building Lead for KVCC. This was a timely event, as KVCC was closing in on the completion of its capital campaign. Our efforts focused on the sanctuary where we installed new carpeting, we selected beautiful paint choices and repainted the entire sanctuary, refinished the sanctuary woodwork, increased the door size from the sanctuary to the Van Santvoord room, and added new wall/doors in the Manse. My thanks goes out to Marcy, Rob and Carolyn for their dedication to the painting task. Through their efforts and the efforts of others, we learned that we were able to remove, and then relocate the church pews to their previous positions, without a single error. We also learned that the church bell tower is 7 inches off center (obviously this was on purpose when it was constructed over a century ago). We learned that removing the modesty rail was a good thing. And lastly, thanks to Frissie and Bill for centering the cross... times have changed.

We were also able to accomplish several things thru the generosity of others. The first being the installation of a new sanctuary ceiling fan and second being the construction and completion of a new church sign. Both of these are fine additions to the buildings and our thanks goes out to those who took a leadership role in making these happen.

As always, we continued to fix, clean, organize as time permitted during the year. This included removal of debris, metal stands and other odds and ends. We addressed the Department of Health issues with our kitchen's sink and our refrigerator to ensure compliance, and we repaired various door knobs to ensure bathroom doors and interior doors would close and latch. These may be the routine stewardship our building needs but they are no less important than the other tasks accomplished in 2010.

What We Would Like To Do or Become

Work remains on the capital project. New choir chairs are on order. We are working to select, purchase, and install sound system. This decision will come before the congregation when the Sound Task Force is ready with their recommendations. In 2011, separate from the capital project, we will be painting and repairing the bell tower. Funds for this came from the 2010 Bazaar and Quilt show and the Buildings Group is very thankful the congregation authorized this effort and provided the needed funding.

As with any building, we always have some new repairs to address, new ideas to pursue and there will be even newer things that come up in 2011. We added a suggestion box where all can contribute their ideas and needs for the building and grounds. These are posted and progress was made on some in 2010 (new church sign for example). Two building items from the suggestion box, which deserve mention, are a request to replace the sanctuary windows and add lighting in the parking area. We will be looking for volunteers to assume leadership for these tasks in 2011 and bring recommendations forward to the congregation for decision.

How Does Faith Play Role?

Within the Building tasks before the congregation, there are three areas faith that are consistently embedded within what needs to be done; stewardship (of the facility), fellowship (amongst the congregation) and setting an atmosphere conducive to worship. The work to refurbish the sanctuary provides us with a beautiful serene simple setting for worship and experiencing our faith. We, and this is said purposefully, because your Building Lead cannot do this alone, have been given the opportunity to steward a Building that was constructed long ago. We steward and honor this building on behalf of those who did this before us, those who are with us now and those in the future. This building has been and continues to be part of the lives of many past and current year round and seasonal people and families. Its history is on the pews, the Van Santvoord Room, the doors, the manse, etc, for all to see and witness. Each touch of a door, even to close or open, is a simple form of stewardship. Our stewardship goal is to leave them a building that is somewhat better than when we assumed the role.

Fellowship is always about those who are here now. Although the tasks may take longer than expected or not be as challenging as you might want, the fellowship between all involved is a strength that builds on itself.

Our building not only serves our congregation, but it provides a place for the community, from quilters meetings to quiet solace - an open place for all. There is always more to be done, and with the care of stewardship and the grace of fellowship, we will progress.

** Pondering Strategic Planning: Along the way, we will have opportunities to share opinions and ideas about the church, manse and garage. Each structure requires maintenance and repair. What are the projected costs of this maintenance and care for our buildings? What are the best uses for them? How can we be creative with our buildings? Can the Congregation do anything to bring affordable senior housing units to Keene and Keene Valley? Even if it can, does it want to do so?*



GROUNDS INTEREST GROUP

Ingrid Carman, Facilitator



Thanks to the dedicated efforts of many volunteers the church grounds continued to evolve and bloom. With the cutting back of the front lawn to allow for the new village water lines and sidewalk, the front grounds took on a new and improved look.

This year's accomplishments included:

- Planting by the town of 4 trees those removed on Route 73 to allow for the cutting back of the lawn, installation of the new sidewalk and safe parking.
- Reinstallation of the granite steps and re-fabrication and reinstallation of the railings by Luck Brothers (rather than replacement of them).
- Removal and replanting or disposal of more native daylilies from the manse bed
- Thanks to the efforts of Andy Derr and Elizabeth Davidson the Prie Dieu area near the back kitchen door was cleaned out and many new plants were installed. Rocks were moved around to give this area a wonderful overhaul.
- Other beds on the grounds were cared for by Sarah Prince (the east side of the garage), and Jim and Charity Marlatt (the front manse bed).
- The large sugar maple in front of the Van Santvoord Room was cared for by the removal of its dead branches. It does have a fungus however, and based upon the annual costs involved, it was decided to do nothing about it at this time.
- A dying tree near the parking lot was also removed before branches from it could break off and land on cars that regularly park there
- A site for the proposed Memorial Garden was decided upon – behind the church between the sanctuary wall and the kitchen wall. This area received an initial clean up and weeding.
- \$1,500 was appropriated by the congregation for the Memorial Garden Task Force to begin its work in earnest in 2011. This group is headed by Katrina Wagner.
- \$4,000 was appropriated by the congregation for the removal and replanting of the front overgrown shrubbery. Efforts to remove the shrubs in the late fall of 2010 were sidetracked and will now be undertaken as soon as conditions allow in 2011.
- Plans for replanting will be sought in early 2011 so that spring planting can take place
- Ryan Hall mowed the lawns weekly

Again no formal meetings were held. Input was given via emails, conversations with volunteers while working on the grounds or at church on Sundays. Once plans are received from 3 landscapers for the front planting, a meeting will be called to decide upon the company to do the planting.



MISSION AND SOCIAL ACTION INTEREST GROUP

Karen Glass, Facilitator



Lunches, mission moments, a concert and the dispersal of funds were the activities of Mission and Social Action this year. On October 30, Dan Berggren offered a great concert to raise money for Little Peaks. The following day, Sunday, Dan led the church service, which was followed by a fifth Sunday lunch also raising money for Little Peaks. There were many children and parents attending the service and lunch. Another fifth Sunday lunch was held to raise money for the Saranac Lake Community Store which is very near its goal of \$500,000. A fifth Sunday lunch was also held to raise money for a resident at Neighborhood House. In May there will be another lunch for Habitat for Humanity.

There were many Mission Moments this year highlighting global, national, and local needs. Most significant were the Advent Mission Moments. At that time, MSA offered the congregation an opportunity to give to four organizations during the holiday season. This year the focus was placed on Town Giving (presented by Pat Hickey), World Hunger (presented by Harrison Caner), Pennies for Peace, (presented by Hannah Peabody) and the Wounded Warrior Project in memory of Tara Plotino (presented by Tom Both).

In addition to the above projects, MSA disperses the money in the line item of the church budget to mission. This is done through a process of prioritizing the requests, discussing where requests overlap and assigning amounts to each grant. It is a serious, thoughtful but energetic discussion. The decision was as follows:

Ausable Valley Habitat for Humanity	\$900
Neighborhood House Resident	\$500
Work Training Grant	\$600
Creative Healing Connection	\$600
Totem Project	\$600
Pakistan Relief Fund	\$500
Mountain Lakes Services	\$500
Families First	\$500

** Pondering Strategic Planning: Along the way we will be discussing the role of “mission” in our church; its definition (from hand-outs to hands-on), its place in worship, education and fellowship, sources of funding and its relationship to the operating budget, how decisions will be made, what role the United Church of Christ has in our mission, what it means when we give locally, nationally, and globally, and conversation around personal mission giving and corporate mission giving.*



SANCTUARY TASK FORCE & MURAL PROJECT

Milton Dudley



It was only one year ago that we were worshipping in the Van Santvoord Room while the Sanctuary was being renovated. It was rather fitting that the last service in the Sanctuary was a Memorial Service and the first service in the renovated Sanctuary was a wedding (don't you just love it when the Spirit moves through the cosmos like that?)

The results were simply stunning. "Simply" because the integrity of the Spartan Congregational Meeting House was preserved, and "stunning" because it has museum-like quality in the best sense of that word. All the walls and ceiling were repaired and painted with four shades of white. The shades of the new paint change with the light inside and out. A new carpet was installed and the newly painted pews and pew racks were put back with precision. The door into the choir area was enlarged to ease moving the piano and the change is unnoticeable. The pulpit and lectern swapped sides, the wood floors were refinished, and a beautiful lighted ceiling fan that matched the chandeliers was installed. The remodeling, painting and restorations were done with meticulousness and beauty. We are thrilled with the results!

The restoration of Ray Strong's Van Santvoord Room mural has been high on the agenda of the church since the Capital Campaign. A donor came forth during the Capital Campaign and made a pledge to cover the costs of the restoration.

We selected a highly recommended restorer who had worked on the Gettysburg Diorama. Ms. Debra Seldon came to Keene Valley, assessed the mural, and provided us with a detailed plan and estimate.

Last summer Ms. Seldon spent twenty-two days restoring the mural. The results were indescribably good. You must see it! Most notable is the sky with its shades of blue and billowy clouds. The subtle greens of an approaching spring are more apparent and the trees have a crisp and delicate look to them. Ms. Seldon provided the church with a detailed report on the mural, its history, her work and what we can expect in the future. This report, with before and after pictures, is available in the Van Santvoord Room. We thank her for her care and for teaching us about this mural.



KEENE ECUMENICAL FOOD PANTRY

Pat Anderson, Coordinator



The Keene Ecumenical Food Pantry was formed some years ago to assist and supplement food budgets for those who occasionally need a bit of help. Over the years the Keene community continues to be most generous, and 2010 was no exception. We continue to be amazed and grateful for the volume of donations that come from neighbors, commercial donors, and distant friends. The food donations enhance the choices we're able to offer and the financial donations help us keep our shelves stocked.

We continue to supply healthy snacks for children at the Keene Library (thanks, Judy), and also help by supplementing the snack program for the KCS, (thanks, Alana). This past year we have served from 2 to 4 families per week with at least 2 bags of food including meat. At the holidays of Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas, we offer food for an entire meal, and sometimes breakfast items as well. Thanks Linda, for help with filling bags.

We are open once a week on Wednesday mornings from 9 to 11 AM, and are available at other times as necessary. Many thanks to our committee: Alana, Judy, Linda and Carolyn, who take turns shopping and stocking the shelves, and 'filling in' when needed. Thanks also to George, who is our treasurer. Tom and Dave (spouses) also pitch in and help with the grocery unloading, and Dave occasionally tends the Pantry when my schedule becomes over-crowded. Thanks to Carolyn we're able to take advantage of many canned good sales this year.

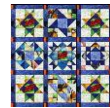
We are able to deliver food to families in an emergency, but we find it works best for families to come into the pantry to see what's available and make their own choices. We are located in the Keene Library. If coming to the pantry on Wednesdays doesn't work, you are welcome to call Pat at 576-9964 or Carolyn at 576-4405 to arrange another time to visit the pantry.

Thanks again to a very supportive community that makes our work possible.



BAZAAR AND QUILT SHOW

Alana Both and Milton Dudley



VENUE	NET	EXPENSES	
Baked Goods	\$676	Two Tents	\$474
Jewelry	\$3,850	Four 8' Plastic Folding Tables	\$459
Lynne Detmer's Jewelry	\$210	Rental of Garage Bay	\$100
White Elephant	\$1,708	Purchase of Knives to Sell	\$78
Dinner/Lunch	\$1,869	SUB-TOTAL	\$1,111
Quilt Show (net)	\$3,062		
Quilt Raffle	\$564	INCOME	\$12,044
Misc.	\$105	EXPENSES	- \$1,111
SUB-TOTAL	\$12,044	GRAND TOTAL	\$10,933

The 2010 Quilt Show and sale held in conjunction with the KVCC annual bazaar continues to be a crowd pleaser and generates a fair amount of revenue for the church's programs. This year the Quilt Show was the recipient of an antique quilt to be raffled as a fundraiser. Lorraine Duval was the generous donor of the hand pieced log cabin wall hanging, circa 1870. Julie Robinson, Red Barn Antiques, Jay, NY, evaluated the quilt and so graciously sold a significant number of our tickets. Our Christian Education Interest Group, Quilt Committee members and their family members donated their time selling raffle tickets to support this benefit.

We were not expecting another record year in 2010. We were missing one of our favorite vendors (Sid Ward) and this year the weather had been nice for all the summer events in the area. Little did we know that lurking in the Gently Used Jewelry venue were some hidden gems (literally). Thanks to the sharp eyes of our volunteers, several items were taken to NYC, assessed, and sold for over \$2,200! All venues did well this year and we are ever grateful for everyone who volunteered and to the North Country for its continuing support.



PASTOR'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

Milton Dudley



The PDF allows me to immediately address a need in our community without going through an approval of funds process. This means that the Congregation must put its trust in my decisions to disperse funds. There are immediate social service needs like transportation, food, medicine, turned off utilities and emergency housing. There are scholarship needs for people taking courses, purchasing materials, attending workshops and visiting foreign lands as an educational experience. Each spring KCS hands out many awards and scholarships. The PDF makes sure that the minimum of any award is at least \$100. Then, there are the opportunities to do something randomly generous like paying for lunch, giving a small bonus for work well done, or recognizing an unseen effort with a small “thank you” gift.

The PDF does not receive any funds from the operating budget. Donations are made directly to the PDF and if I need to shore up the account, I put out an appeal. This Congregation and community have been very generous and trusting. Consequently, I was able to take care of many needs that might have gone unmet. Each month I provide a report to the Treasurer detailing donations and expenses. The people and specifics are kept confidential, but are subject to review by the Treasurer if warranted.

The current balance in the fund is just over \$1,500. If you run across a need in our community, please let me know and I will respond confidentially.

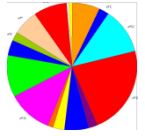
I thank all who gave to the PDF this year.

** **Pondering Strategic Planning:** Along the way, we will be assessing our need for professional staff. You might be surprised to learn that our church has 11 employees this year. Are we paying fair and just wages? What happened to the volunteers who historically helped run the church office and do the cleaning and maintenance tasks? What would it take to endow the wages and benefits of our staff? We will need to be careful to talk about the “position” and not the “person” currently doing the job. Around money, things can get personal real quick.*



TREASURER AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Fritz Sabbow, Treasurer



This fiscal year was a very busy and productive year for the church Finance Committee and the church finances. First of all, I wish to thank the committee members – Harrison Caner, Sam Fisk, Debbie Rice, Bill Serjak, Larry Shipps, along with our council chairman, Jim Marlatt and Milton for their many hours of attending meetings and participating on ad hoc meetings to help in managing the funds in the church's treasury. They all were very valuable in helping make financial decisions and provide an even stronger overview to the church's finances through the year. Some of the accomplishments this year included:

- > A full review of the church's insurance program. We have consolidated all our insurances with Peter Lynch at the Gordon Pratt Agency in Lake Placid. Peter met with the Finance Committee early in the year, addressed our insurance concerns, and most importantly, reviewed our insurances to get the best protections needed.
- > Our monthly financial package was better detailed to track how we were performing on a monthly basis against our budget. A report on the Endowment funds was created allowing us to watch our monthly cash flows there as well.
- > We met quarterly with Charlie Cowan and Galen Crane from Janney Montgomery Scott, our investment advisory service. They helped answer our questions during a volatile investment time and provided us very sound guidance on managing our portfolios safely and securely.
- > We created a policy for bequests and restricted funds for the church which was approved by council.
- > With the use of better financial reports, we have responded to managing the Church Bazaar funds as approved by the congregation, have supported funds held for future building repairs, and have supported the spending of funds for the Sanctuary project. Our financial tracking has never been better!
- > We provided statistical information to the Strategic Planning Task Force for use in their decision making and priority assigning.
- > We updated the KVCC Investment Policy to better reflect today's market conditions and our fiduciary response to our endowment funds fluctuations.
- > We tracked a very successful pledge campaign and have seen a 10% growth in the number of contributors over recent prior years.

Our accomplishments for this year will help us with ongoing areas of work in the next year. Our goals for 2011 will include a continuing review of our investment decisions for the purposes of safety and future growth. We will also continue reviewing our proposed 2011 budget and seek to reduce expenses where practical. We realize we will be challenged with church membership in moderate growth, aging buildings and programs and service costs that continue to grow over time.

As always, I welcome your thoughts and comments on all the financial areas we address or need to address in the future. Thank you very much for all your support for the church, its community and our legacy.

FINANCE REPORT AND 2011 PROPOSED BUDGET

Keene Valley Congregational Church
Net Income from Operations:
 (Amounts in Dollars)

	2009 Actual	2010 Budget	2010 Actual	2011 Budget
Income and Transferred Funds				
Church Collections				
Open Plate	45,142.54	40,219.00	38,367.75	32,700.00
Pledges	66,056.00	69,481.00	70,731.00	77,300.00
Stimulus 2009 Fund Drive	10,085.00	-	-	
Rental Income	10,200.00	10,500.00	9,900.00	9,900.00
Use of Facilities	370.00	-	750.00	500.00
Memorials/Business Donations	675.00	600.00	905.00	-
Miscellaneous Income and Gifts in Kind	291.67	300.00	1,604.60	1,000.00
Endowment Income (Intr & Dividends)	42,500.00	41,600.00	41,600.00	42,760.00
Income from Operations	175,320.21	162,700.00	163,858.35	164,160.00

We anticipate income to modestly grow in 2011. Our pledge funds increased along with the number of individuals pledging, but some of those funds had been given in prior years as part of our open plate. We look forward to more individual's pledging in future years to help secure our ongoing operating funds.

Expenses

Pastoral Expenses				
Pastor's Wage, Housing allowance, employment taxes and pension contribution	64,750.22	67,528.00	65,952.44	67,844.00
Pastor's family health coverage costs	18,271.92	23,200.00	23,351.50	21,110.00
Other contractual reimbursements to Pastor	3,482.00	2,150.00	3,029.95	3,500.00
Substitute Pastor Fee	525.00	800.00	300.00	600.00
Total Pastoral Expenses	87,029.14	93,678.00	92,633.89	93,054.00

Expenses here include the Pastor's wage, housing allowance, Federal and State employment taxes as well as health insurance costs and other reimbursements per his contract. It is anticipated we will have a reduction in the total health insurance costs due to a change in their insurance policy coordinated by the Burnham Agency. This will help offset a modest increase in wage for 2011.

Staff Payroll				
Music Director, Organist, Secretary and Bookkeeper wages & taxes	20,404.40	19,164.00	19,462.33	20,270.00
Music substitutes, music program supplement	525.00	500.00	1,600.00	1,600.00
Christian Ed Program and Nursery Care	1,410.00	5,580.00	3,492.14	4,600.00
Disability and Worker's Comp Insurance	899.00	1,200.00	966.68	950.00
Total Staff Payroll	23,238.40	26,444.00	25,521.15	27,420.00

Expenses here include wages for our Choir Director, Organist, Bookkeeper and Secretary. A modest wage increase is included for 2011. Also included here is Nursery care and Christian Education, which grew as a new initiative in 2010.

Buildings & Grounds				
Buildings & Grounds Interest Group	915.06	400.00	67.32	400.00
Custodian Service	4,155.00	3,568.00	5,457.00	5,400.00
Snow Removal / Lawn Care	1,710.00	2,000.00	3,458.00	2,725.00
Other Alarm Service Costs	-	-	573.00	573.00
Reserve for Major Repairs	10,500.00	-	-	-
Repairs & Maintenance: Routine general maintenances	8,381.04	-	1,752.48	2,300.00
Total Buildings & Grounds Expenses	25,661.10	5,968.00	11,307.80	11,398.00

Budget levels were created out of known reoccurring bills with some slight increases. Task force leaders were solicited for their opinion of their budget levels. No budget for the reserve for major repairs was made due to the reserve appearing adequate for 2011.

Ministry

Christian Ed Interest Group	346.33	240.00	97.19	200.00
Worship Interest Group	232.95	300.00	453.10	350.00
Mission & Social Action Group (3% Contributed funds)	4,237.35	4,611.00	4,600.00	4,583.00
Fellowship & Other Worship Svcs	28.47	60.00	836.49	300.00
Music Dept Expenses	348.89	360.00	534.35	500.00
Total Ministry Expenses	5,193.99	5,571.00	6,521.13	5,933.00

Budgeted levels were determined based on current year spending. Some non-reoccurring expenses were eliminated.

Property Expenses

Water - Manse	425.00	425.00	270.00	270.00
Water - Church	536.00	536.00	670.00	670.00
Heat - Manse	3,688.97	3,400.00	3,058.02	3,650.00
Heat - Church	6,226.63	6,150.00	4,717.66	6,225.00
Electric - Manse	755.75	780.00	603.06	633.00
Electric - Church	423.44	600.00	863.78	907.00
Telephone - Church	750.96	780.00	729.69	730.00
RE Property Taxes	1,222.86	1,223.00	1,278.88	1,279.00
Liability & Fire Insurance	3,084.00	3,700.00	3,115.00	3,700.00

Keene Valley Congregational Church

Net Income from Operations:

(Amounts in Dollars)

	2009 Actual	2010 Budget	2010 Actual	2011 Budget
Internet Service	495.00	480.00	330.00	300.00
Propane - Kitchen	486.18	650.00	807.92	650.00
Total Property Expenses	18,094.79	18,724.00	16,444.01	19,014.00

In 2011, it is being expected that our heating (fuel) costs will increase over recent years due to the higher fuel prices seen late in 2010. Other property expenses should come near 2010 levels.

General & Other Expenses

Copier Service	1,901.05	1,800.00	1,338.50	2,700.00
Postage	61.71	240.00	422.40	350.00
Supplies	2,063.21	2,400.00	3,105.45	2,000.00
Total General and Other Operating Expenses	4,025.97	4,440.00	4,866.35	5,050.00

For 2011, our expenses should be mostly in line with our costs realized in 2010. Our office equipment were improved on in 2010, making our out of pocket costs more reasonable in 2011.

Church Wider Obligations

Essex UCC Association	1,575.00	1,575.00	1,350.00	1,350.00
OCWM	5,000.00	6,000.00	5,000.01	6,000.00
Conference Expenses	-	300.00	-	-
Total Church Wider Obligations	6,575.00	7,875.00	6,350.01	7,350.00

In the budget process, we wished to bring the contribution to the Church's Wider Mission to the level in years prior to 2009, when we reduced it to the \$5,000 contribution level.

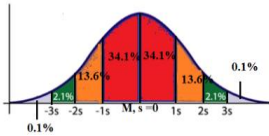
Operating Expenses	169,818.39	162,700.00	163,644.34	169,219.00
Net Operating Income	5,501.82	-	214.01	(5,059.00)

For 2011, we anticipate this year's budget to have a shortfall of \$5,059 due to continuing initiatives in our Christian Education program, an increase in wages for our staff and Pastor, as well as higher energy costs due to the current economy. We did not foresee the shortfall could easily be covered by revenues for the fiscal year until we make special steps above the budget plan to provide for more in the fiscal year. An effort during the year to remind our members of the costs to maintaining this church community will hopefully reduce or eliminate our foreseen shortfall.

Respectfully submitted by:

Keene Valley Congregational Church Finance Committee

Did you know... the Van Santvoord Room, church organ, and mural were given in memory of loved ones? Some gifts were beyond the congregation's ability to ever afford and have truly enhanced the life of our faith community. It is our commitment to lovingly care for these gifts in memory of the donors. We have a "Wish List" of improvements that we would like to do, but lack the funds: (1) Energy Star Sanctuary windows, (2) Repair/Restore the bell and clock tower, (3) Purchase an electronic organ, (4) Improve the driveway, smaller parking area, and add lighting to the path from the parking lot to the rear entrance. If you would like more information, or have an idea of your own, please contact Milton.



2010 STATISTICS

Pam Gothner, Clerk



BAPTISMS	Autumn Lee Whitney, Zeus Kitty Pepe Dillon, Gabriela Rose Porter Gill, Nathaniel Sidney David, Samuel Brannon Hamilton
NEW MEMBERS	Carolyn Galbraith, Kathleen Murray, Fritz Sabbow, Susan Willnus, Deborah Brown, Neal Brown, Charles Poletti, Charlotte Poletti
WEDDINGS	Cobb/Jones, McKane/Estes, Keller/Barnhill, Dubois/Riehs, Donohue/Grimsley, Stern/Danforth, Weld/Brown, Weld/Kaussen, Holtzhauer/Lyons, Boyle/Estes, Smith/Roberts, Cantwell/Jackson
DEATHS	Darlene Abbott, David LaBarge, Donald Mack, Dorothy Irving, Elaine Edmonds Gross, Florence Banks, Gail Hall, George McClelland, Harold Crawford, Herman "Woody" Cole, Iredell "Idy" Iglehart, Jacob Dwight, Joelle Grinker, John Andrews, John Henry Smith, Patrick Jaques, Robert Hamer III, Ruth Harris Pelmas, Tara Plotino, Tarry Wilcox, Warren Ashe, Mary Petrafesa, Robert Willnus