

“ACC ARCHIVES GUIDE” & LISTS as of February 2022

Names of ACC [first 4 are from the Manual 1915, p. 17]

United Religious Association of Farmington -1818

The Third Church in Farmington 1818-1838

The Second Church of Christ in Avon 1838-1841

The Congregational Church in Avon 1841-

The East Avon Congregational Church of Avon, Connecticut 1907- Annual Report/bylaws 1907.

The Avon Congregational Church, 1921 - (p. 141, Annual Report for 1921)

The Avon Congregational Church in Avon, Connecticut, 1943- (1943 bylaws)

“The early records of the church, under its present organization, have been lost, and their place can be supplied only imperfectly by the records of the Society connected with it...” Wrote Moore in his history of Ct. churches, a copy of which is at the UCC-CT archives in Hartford. Moore then went about writing histories of local churches.

ACC Historians

ACC’s archives were established on May 5, 1931, when **Ethel Hodge Rowe** (1893-1974; Mrs. Charles B. Rowe) was appointed historian. She served until at least 1964. Says a newspaper clipping in the ACC archives Green Notebook, the church will begin keeping a record of “*church doings.*” In 1933 she reported that she has been keeping the scrapbook (see also Annual Report 1931, p. 159), and placed legal papers of the church in the Ensign-Bickford Company vault. Annual meeting report May 4, 1943] She reported that it was complete at the Annual Meeting on May 4, 1937, p. 178). She placed it in the vault of the Ensign Bickford Co; In 1938 she reported that the church records had been photostatted and put in the Ct. State Library. She was still historian in 1974; she died October 6, 1987:

Marian Hunter, 131 Climax Road, assisted Fran MacKie on writing Avon: A Historical Story. She organized much of the collection. The Avon Free Public *Library’s* history room is named in her honor (The Marian Hunter History Room). There was a loose plaque in the history room (found by Nora Howard 2009) that said “*Hunter-Johnson Archives*.”

1965: **Barbara Rettig** was historian, perhaps overlapping with Marian.

1988-2009: **Betty and Dwight Douglas**. During this time, Lisa Johnson helped preserve some of the oldest records, placing them in acid-free boxes (where they still are) and identifying them. Lisa was long-time director of the Stanley Whitman House in Farmington, retiring in 2018.

2009 -2010: **Gail Alvord and Nora Howard** spent about a year sorting and filing and improving the archive’s organization, in the basement storage room.

2009 - **Nora Howard** elected church historian. Still serving in 2022....

ACC ARCHIVES

Originally, church records were customarily kept by the minister at his home. Over time, as the record size grew, perhaps they also were at the home of the church clerk.

In 1999, Rev. Ed Falsey showed Nora Howard the ACC archives room. It was a small closet in the basement by old classrooms.

In 2003, a room was set aside for the church archives. It was located in a former basement classroom, under the meetinghouse. It was named in memory of Michael Covert, son of Norma Goralski. Mr. Covert was a talented carpenter and a generous donor of his time and talents to ACC. The plaque on the room said “In recognition and appreciation for his talent and artistic contributions, this room was designated in honor of Mike. The room was overseen by historians Dwight and Betty Douglas, and Dwight built the bookshelves. It had three fire proof file cabinets with twelve drawers, purchased through the Special Gifts Fund around 2004.

In August 2015, most of the archives were moved to the Education Office, on the second floor of the new wing. This provided safer storage, an air-conditioned room, and easier access for volunteers and researchers. New lockable filing cabinets were provided by the Avon Free Public Library History Room, which no longer needed them. Some archives remain in the basement room and will be moved to the Education/Archives Office.

In 2022, ACC’s records from 1798-mid 1900s were transferred to the Avon Free Public Library, with the full approval of the ACC Steering Circle and congregation.

History of ACC Items

Balcony: The baseboard heating for the balcony was installed by Roy Read and Roger Winslow 1983-1985. [August p. 5] (There is more balcony history throughout this list.)

Bell: [From a news clipping, 1919, in the Annual Report for 1919 at ACC, pp. 136-137, "Days of Foot Stoves Recalled by Avon Church Celebration"]

"In the beginning of Bela Kellogg's pastorate he went into his study in the house now occupied by Dr. E.W. Kellogg, drew up a subscription paper, signed his own name for \$25, then with horse and wagon started out to secure pledges. He returned home with several hundred dollars pledged and the bell was soon purchased and hung. At the end of forty years the society noted to rehang it, but before the end of the year 1865 it had to be recast as well as rehung, for one day early in that year the joyful news flashed across the country that Richmond was taken and the Civil War was ended and the bell was rung with such zeal and vigor by overjoyed citizens that it was badly cracked and put out of commission. In 1869 it was reinstalled and cost \$348.25, as \$214.20 was allowed for the old bell metal. The original cost was around \$500. Its clear musical tones have rung out now for a century for all occasions, a favorite diversion of July 4th being to ring the church bell."

Bell cast in Albany, NY, and hung in the steeple in 1820. Rang to call for Sunday services, meetings, funerals, patriotic celebrations (1820-1954, except for when the bell was broken, 1865-1869).

1823 Minutes say bell was fixed or altered as shall be judged best.

1859 Minutes" The bell was 'repaired and rehung.'

1865: bell rung "with such zeal and vigor" [Kelly, 11] at close of Civil War that it cracked.

Information about bell in receipts in church History File for 1860s.

March 1869: in History file 1860s. Small paper noting March expense of 'repair furnishings and bell.' 75 cents.

April 30, 1866. Expense list in History File 1860s, "Bell-rope for church \$6.65."

Dated April 16, 1869, Westfield. For transportation of merchandise from East Albany. To the Boston & Albany Railroad. 1 Frame, 1 cask rope, 1 bell & yoke. Weight of 1,800. Fee \$6.30.

Dated April 16, 1869, East Albany, NY. — To the Hudson River Railroad Company, for transportation from Troy, NY, via the Westfield & Canal Railroad. Fee \$1.80.

Dated Avon, April 20, 1869. Transportation from Avon to carry the bell from Westfield, Ma. (1 frame, 1 cask, 1 bell and yoke) for \$8.64.

1869: Bell recast by Troy Bell Foundry, Troy, NY, to fix this crack, (in Litchfield). Church paid for it April 24, 1869, and it was valued at \$585.20. ACC paid for it in cash (\$371) and with the value of old bell metal of \$214.20).

The original bell was cast in Albany, New York and installed in 1820. The cost of about \$500 included hanging it in the steeple. Except for a four-year period, it rang from 1820-1954 for Sunday services, meetings, funerals, and patriotic celebrations. In 1954, the church began to use carillon bells of pre-recorded hymns on rolls - donated by C. Frederick Woodford in memory of Mrs. Elsie Bishop Woodford. The carillon music system was dedicated on October 24, 1954. The four years of silence occurred after Civil War General Robert E. Lee surrendered on April 9, 1865. The original bell was rung with such vigor at the news that it cracked. It was recast (using the original metal) It was raised to the steeple in June 1869, and is marked by the manufacturer: "Jones & Company, Founders, Troy, N.Y. 1869." In 2018, ACC member Bruce Elliott obtained the Jones & Company catalog for 1870, and estimated that the present bell weighs about 700 pounds, and is designed to be turned slightly to avoid wear and prevent cracking. *Catalog online at Cornell University Library, Music library. Photograph by NH, April 1, 2010, ACC Archives.*

Frank Hadsell 1858-1949), age 11, wrote in diary, June 1869, of seeing the new bell hung, with crowd assembled on church green. "Breathlessly I watched the bell ascend as the men pulled on the rope, fearing it might fall."

1954: The bell was retired from use, as the church began to use carillon bells of pre-recorded hymns on rolls - like a piano with rolls. From the quantity of hymns that the church purchased, it seems that hymns peeled out from the steeple quite often. They were played every evening at 5:55 pm and on Sunday mornings. Given by Mr. C. Frederick Woodford, in memory of Mrs. Elsie Bishop Woodford. Dedicated Oct. 24, 1954.

In April 1976, the *Farmington Valley Herald* carried the story of Walter Read, with help from his brother Roy, who put in about 25 hours to restore the bell. Reinforcing, tightening, and replacing parts of the 1,500 bell. Cleaning and polishing, and putting in 67 feet of new rope. The rope was put around the wheel and it runs all the way down beside the organ in the balcony. The bell needed new shock absorbers since the old leather ones had disintegrated. The seven-foot wooden bell wheel for the ropes was reinforced and tightened. Walter Read had been an ACC member for 53 years, and he, his parents, and his daughters were married there. The AACC music committee, led by Clifford Carlson, prompted reactivating the bell. The bell was rung (by Glenn Boswell, a teenager at the time) for the Easter Service on Sunday (April 18, 1976), and rededicated to the late and former organist of 40+ years at ACC, Lester M. Bradley, whose memorial fund supplied the funds needed to buy supplies for the bell's restoration.

The bell is now behind the louver shutters. The shutters were a later addition to the steeple.

In the late 1930s/early 1940s era, Bill Goralski wrote that "the only way we got into the Avon Congregational church in those days was through the basement door with a skeleton key on our way to ringing the church bell, then running off as fast as we could." [p. 52, Old Avon Center, Second Thoughts, 1989, pub. By Bill Goralski]

Bell Rope: Roy Read installed the Spire church bell, in 1976. 40-feet, along with new pulley parts. Value \$38.

Bible (stored in ACC Archives): Printed 1901. Presented in memory of Cornwall Talcott Millard, during the pastorate of Rev. Fiske (April 1901-April 1904).

Bible in the Pulpit: "The Pulpit Bible" given by Adelaide Smith, in 1919 on ACC's 100th anniversary. [1919 date is in Anonymous, "Our Legacy is in Many Parts."]

What Bible was used in early Avon? Rev. Evans Sealand, archivist of the UCC-CT Conference told Nora in 2006 that it was probably King James' Bible. It was the most used translation of the time by all the American Protestant churches. Other Bibles were Wycliff's Bible, the Geneva Bible, and the Bishop's Bible.

Bibles, Pew: donor Mildred August. [Anonymous, "Our Legacy is in Many Parts." No date; prob. 1960s or earlier.]

Candlesticks: purchased with Memorial Funds. 1970. Brass. [Where are these?: There are also two tapers that were purchased in 1987 with Earnest and Barbara Rettig funds, according to Special Gifts List of 1962-1991.] There are seven sets of crystal candlesticks from Lux Bond Green & Stevens store, 1988, purchased by Special Gifts from Betty Berger Memorial Fund.

Carpeting: Carpeting was installed: 1919, donated by Mrs. L.A. Coe; Replaced by red carpet over pad of hair and jute, installed 1959 (Janet Carville said she was the first bride to walk down the red carpet, July 1959; Replaced by red carpet installed 2010. In April 2010, as the old carpet was being removed, one seat was taken out to lay the new carpeting. Underneath, I found wide floorboards (9 1/4 inches wide) under the plywood. And remnants of green fabric. Possibly an early carpet pad? This is stored in the "Meetinghouse-Interior history file."

Carpeting on entry and stairs donated by Adelaide Smith [date unclear, but c. 1960s or earlier.

Carillon: 1986. Nine memorial funds used for it, as noted in the Special Gifts list of 1962-1991. Present carillon made/ installed by Verdin Company, Ohio. (1990s? Bon Smith did not remember the date but he was present for it.)

The Schulmerich Carillon was a memorial gift (installed summer of 1954) by C. Fred Woodford, descendant of an original church member, in "Loving Memory" of his wife, Elsie B. Woodford. There is a plaque in the meetinghouse for this. By December 1954 the church was buying more "rolls" of music for it. Carillon donor was possibly Mr. C. Fred Woodford, for in December 1962 he donated "rolls" of music for it to play. Made especially for ACC.

Cemetery: And from an undated 1919 news paper clipping in the ACC Annual report for 1919: Amos Wheeler, who donated the land for the meetinghouse, and also gave \$450 towards the \$5,000 permanent fund for the support of preaching here, also gave the society the first piece of land for the enlargement of the cemetery west of his house. In 1899 the second gift of land for its enlargement was made by Mr. F.M. Alford.

Chairs - The 3-chair set on the platform by Pulpit: Present chairs purchased 1896 with funds from the Ladies 'Aid Society. The chairs we use now [2015] are the 1896 chairs, as they appear in early 1900s ACC photographs. These chairs are probably # 1 and # 2 below. 1936-May 1937, there is a expense report for work of upholstering 5 pulpit chairs and pulpit cushions.

Replaced by more modern chairs: In 1957, committee approved purchase of 1 large arm chair for pulpit platform; 2 smaller arm chairs for pulpit platform, and 2 communion table chairs. Custom-made in appropriate size.

Chairs in Bob August's report, June 16, 1992:

- 1) Minister's chair, black walnut, Victorian Gothic revival, 1865. Value \$100.
- 2) Two deacon's chairs, black, walnut Victorian Gothic revival 1865. Each valued at \$200.
- 3) Two Empire side chairs, 1840, upholstered seat. Each valued \$100. [Are these the ones with the unattached upholstered seats? These were removed in August 2015 from sanctuary and stored in the basement archives room, because they are unsafe to sit on.
- 4) 2 modern maple ladder back chairs, estimated value \$800. At Rt. 44 end of sanctuary. Plaque on one says "In Memory of Donald C. Rae, Jr., 1918-1982.
- 5) 3 big ladder back chairs.

Chandelier: Installed in 1936, donated by Mrs. W.R. Hodge of Avon memory of her son Ernest M. Hodge, a long time superintendent of the Sunday School. Ernest died May 14, 1935. [Herbert] McIntyre wrote to the donor on Sept. 20, 1936 to say "we all loved and adored [him] more than tongue can tell....The Chandelier is beautiful and is a very fitting Memorial to Ernest as he and I often talked about getting a new center chandelier that would be in keeping with the old church...."[Letter from [Herbert] McIntyre to Ernest's mother, Sept. 20, 1936, is on p. 124 of green scrapbook and in file.] The chandelier was made by or sold by Plainville Metalworks for \$200 (as noted in the budget report). Sandy Lytle told Nora Howard in 2019 that Gladys August said to her to never polish the chandelier. The patina it already has is appropriate.

Chimney, at southeast corner. [This is listed in sources but Nora Howard couldn't find it, 2015] Not original, for there were no stoves in the church prior to 1826. See the square corner of the molding near the ceiling as it attempts to follow the curved corner of the brickwork. There was a chimney in the north wall (not the present one that was installed in 1952.) [August, p. 3]

Choir Robes: Janet Carville said (2010) the first choir robes were 1959-60. The Woodruff's left funds to buy them, and the Rev. Johansons procured them. The choir practiced a two-step kind of march in them, and were thrown off completely when the first music they walked to was "O Master Let Me Walk With Thee," a waltz-beat, said Janet.

Christmas Creche: Donated in memory of Howard "Jim" Smith, by his children & grandchildren. [From a 1990 Sunday Bulletin notice.]

Church School Worship Center: Donated by Adelaide Smith in memory of Barbara (Marshall?) [Listed in Anonymus, "Our Legacy is in Many Parts."]

Clock: from Avon Clock Shop in Old Avon Village, Special Gifts fund. 1977.

Columns: The columns under the gallery (that look like they are holding the balcony up) are not original. Not known when they were installed, but possibly after 1876 fire.]

The tall columns in the balcony are original. These have “Scamozzi Ionic” capitals. They were hand-planed rather than turned on a lathe. One can see the plane markings on the columns. They were spliced in two sections. The division line between the lower and upper portions of the column is visible about 4 feet above the lower floor of the balcony. [August, p. 3]

Collection Plates: Special Gifts list of 1962-1991 lists collection plates purchased through Prowe Family Memorial Fund, 1986.

Communion Service and Communion Table: Burnished aluminum. Special Gifts Fund. 1966.

There were several donations during the pastorate of Rev. Fiske (1901-1904).

- 1) a service with individual cups and table linen was presented by Mrs. Millard, afterwards Mrs. Thompson.
- 2) a mahogany table that was used in the meetinghouse and referred to in a speech of 1919 by Rev. Moulton.

Communion ware inventory (by N.E. Roberts, June 17, 1962) listed the following:

silver-plate items, engraved in memory of Herbert E. McIntyre, 1958:

[McIntyre was superintendent of Ensign Bickford Co's Avon plant (1930-1952), and secretary/treasurer of the Avon Water Company (1933-1934) when he resigned to become a water company director. During WW I he had served as treasurer of the Avon War Bureau. He was a member of the ACC, deacon, and deacon-emeritus; ACC treasurer for 16 years and Sunday school teacher for 20 years. President of the Avon Red Cross, head of the Avon Salvation Army, and a director of the library. Many photos in the ACC archives were taken by Mr. McIntyre.

6 trays with 37 gold lined chalices

2 bases

2 covers with crosses

(not in McIntyre's memory) - more silver plate

6 bread plates

2 covers with crosses

1 filler - 1 1/2 pints

1 filler without spout or bulb

2 bread plates; 2 vases 7 inches; 1 baptismal bowl; 1 pitcher (tankard)

4 aluminum trays, with space for 40 glasses; 2 aluminum bread plates; 2 wooden trays with space for 36 glasses

20 dozen glasses; 9 silver cloth bags; 1 frosted glass 1 quart filler

1 extra bulb; 1 table cloth; 4 bread plate napkins; 48 assorted doilie

Communion Flagon (on display) and four cups (no longer at ACC): purchased and donated to ACC by Thomas F. Bishop, first clerk of the church, May 26, 1819, from “Ward and Bartholomew,” Hartford. (\$45) BISHOP was the 4th grandfather of current ACC member (2019) Janet Read Carville, and Thomas Bishop was grandfather to legendary ACC member Chester R. Woodford, who lived to age 107.

In 1969, with the church's 150th anniversary coming in the fall, the church members were going through the old church records. Mrs. Peter Palmer, looking for early pictures of the church, found a receipt for the Communion flagon that had been found in the church two years earlier, during a clean up of the Communion furniture. It was the “Ward and Bartholomew” receipt, described above. Mrs. Palmer said that no one had any idea how the church got the flagon. [From an article in the Hartford Courant, Sept. 20, 1969]

Mrs. Palmer took the flagon and receipt to the Ct. Historical Society where Philip Dunbar identified the flagon as Sheffield Plate. He told her there had been a Ward & Bartholomew shop on South Main Street in Hartford. He said the flagon seemed of the 1819 period and that the shop sold such items. Mrs. Palmer told the Courant that the church sent the cups out for repair around the time of the Civil War and never got them back. [However, one large silver

cup is in the display case with the flagon, at the rear of the meetinghouse.] A handwritten list of church items, undated but 1966 or soon after, says there were four cups.

Conference Room: the addition on the north side of the meetinghouse. In 1928, there was an improvement to this area. A new kitchen was being built on the west side of the Conference Room, as a project by the Ladies Aid Society. Underneath the workers were excavating for Sunday school rooms. The new kitchen and excavation was dedicated April 15, 1928. (p. 152, Annual Report for 1928)

Cross on north wall. Donor is confidential and is listed in the archives files. This person is still a member of the church in 2015. The cross was designed by artist Clifford Jones at the request of the donors in 1953. Clifford Jones was there to make sure it was hung properly and caught the proper shadows. Built by Lars Hogbloom of Weatogue, Ct., builder of the 1952 church addition. Made of elm wood. Dedicated to the glory of God and anonymously in memory of a family member of the donor.

Curtains: Donated by Miss N.W. Williams and Mrs. H. Jewett [No longer in place; were probably for meetinghouse windows. "Drapes" donated by Godfrey & Betty Berger, and listed in Anonymous, "Our Legacy is in Many Parts."]

Dramatic Club. Formed in 1932 by the pastor. It had about 50 members, and did several short plays and readings during the year. (Annual Report for May 5, 1936, p. 174)

Driveway: Bob and Gladys August. [c. 1960s or earlier] The August's also donated the east parking lot, on the way to the Post Office. The plaque in the lot reads:

The parking lot is dedicated to the
cooperative spirit of the community
and to the generosity of
GLADYS and ROBERT AUGUST

Fan: Two ceiling fans & plexiglass storm windows. Installed about 1975 at a cost of about \$1,000. [August, p. 5]

Fellowship Hall: Voted in 1858 to build "a hall or conference room" on north side of the meetinghouse. This covered over the windows (including an arched window behind pulpit) on the north wall. This was replaced in 1953 with a new Parish House. In 2000-2001, the third fellowship hall was built, along with the classroom/office wing.

Fire severely damaged the meetinghouse in 1876. Repair work included painting the previously papered walls.

Flags: American flag, donated by the Tanneys [? spelling hard to read on handwritten list];
Christian flag donated with Memorial Funds.

Floors: plywood covering was put on floors in sanctuary and narthex in 1957. Vinyl tile (grey and black alternating pattern) was put on narthex floor 1957.

Flower Fund: Mrs Hadsell gave \$100 in 1970 (to be kept in separate account and not mixed with general funds).

Foundation and basement: the "original" basement was very modest, and by 1919 a part of the foundation threatened to collapse. In 1919, under the supervision of S.W. Eddy, superintendent of Ensign-Bickford, the foundation was rebuilt with additional supports. At the same time, the basement was fully excavated and finished.

Foyer: The balcony stairs were enclosed sometime after construction, probably in 1840. [Kelly, Early Ct. Meetinghouses.]

There are differences, said Bob August, in details about the doorways leading to the balconies. The baseboards of each wall enclosing the stairs are simple 1 x 4 inch boards. There is no back banding about the door casings. Door hinges are slightly different from hinges on doors going into the sanctuary or into the closet under easterly stairs. Doors & hinges for the central entrance were installed after 1858, for that was when weights were procured to keep

the inside doors closed. Note, however that the balcony doors appear similar to the easterly and westerly doors giving access to the sanctuary. [August, p. 3]

At the westerly and easterly ends of the foyer and at the right side of the doorway leading to the sanctuary, there are vertical enclosed raceways or wooden columns. It would appear that this is an enclosed column for it is in line with the columns upholding the west balcony. [August, p. 3]
Linoleum installed 1919.

Foyer Doors: The three doors are on the Rt. 44/West Main St., leading from the vestibule to the “audience room.” They are believed by author J. Frederick Kelly (p. 13) to be original.

Handbells: a memorial gifts: 1981 -1982 were handbells from anonymous donor and the Nellie Turner Memorial Fund and Percy Transue Memorial Fund., the Lillian Wagner Memorial Fund ; by Mal-Mark, New Britain, PA.

Handrails: for church steps. Donated by Ensign Bickford Company. Probably installed after 1938 hurricane and before 1949 dedication of new steeple. [Anonymous, 1987 “Church in Picture.”]

Horse Sheds: Dec. 3, 1827 the church asked Mrs. Wheeler and family if they objected to ACC building horse sheds on the green west of the meetinghouse. These sheds were built and sold to the highest bidder each year until 1873, when they were blown down. [Kelly, 12]

1926 ACC Annual Report, p. 150: the church wanted to repair the horse shed. A committee was appointed to find the former owners, or their heirs, and see if they would give it to the Church society or repair it themselves.

But Sept. 4, 1930 ACC minutes p. 157 said the Horse Shed had been removed. It had formed a barrier to the cemetery, so now a picket fence was needed, 4’ high, between that area and the cemetery. There will be a cement and stone bumper, 12-18” high, to protect fence from automobiles parked on the grounds.

“Shed” torn down 1999 (1999 Year annual report; is this the horseshed?)

Hymn Books: Hymn books and racks given by Mrs. Maud Ely Gibbons. Another record says the Hunter Family and a large group of others donated them, no date given. [Anonymous, “Our Legacy is in Many Parts,” lists these as a donation for the ACC centennial in 1919.]

Hymn Boards: Referenced in Bob August’s 1992 report. Valued at \$475 each. Special Gifts 1962-1992 list that hymn board (to right of pulpit) was made in 1988 by Walter Kusiak, Weatogue. Stained by Bob August. Hook by Roy Read. 1988. Installed by Bruce Elliott. To help choir have a clear view of the board from where they sat. Paid for with Memorial fund of Henry McLaughlin.

Hymnal racks were widened by Roger Winslow about 1972 to accommodate both the hymnals and the pew Bibles. The prayer card holders affixed to the rear of each pew seat were installed 1965-1975. [August, p. 2]

Land for the Meetinghouse and Cemetery: Land for the meetinghouse donated by the Amos Wheeler Family.

And from an undated 1919 news paper clipping in the ACC Annual report for 1919: Amos also gave \$450 towards the \$5,000 permanent fund for the support of preaching here. Amos Wheeler also gave the society the first piece of land for the enlargement of the cemetery west of his house. In 1899 the second gift of land for its enlargement was made by Mr. F.M. Alford.

Landscape: Edgar Brown donated shrubs; 2 dogwoods donated by Maud Ely Gibbons, 2 maples donated by Sunday School class for Buster Brown and Charles Hunter. [These all listed in Anonymous, “Our Legacy is in Many Parts.”]
Trees: Crabapple Tree, given by Junior Choir when Mrs. Bradley retired. Spruces by the ACC sign (c. 1960s or earlier) by Bob Thomas. Japanese Umbrella Tree north of Route 10 entrance (1990; Work Memorial Fund).

Lighting: Globes below balconies possibly installed in 1936 when the chandelier was put in [chandelier in memory of Ernest Hodge]. Photograph of church's interior shows earlier fixtures, and a different chandelier. This caused Bob August to observe that the new chandelier and globe lights may have been made at the same time. [August, p. 4]

On the fascia board immediately above each column supporting the balcony, there is a dutchman or patch of wood carefully fitted in to the fascia board, and hardly noticeable (about 14" x 12"). Bob August thought these patches were made when the earlier light fixtures were removed, and the present ones installed. Further, along the molding running above the columns supporting the balconies, there is a wooden molding with small inspection plates approximately over each column. Bob thought this molding was a wooden conduit for electrical wiring for older fixtures, and probably served the present fixtures. To see this, sit in a front row of the balcony, and lean over the railing. This conduit is clearly visible above the molding. [August, p. 4]

Mirror: [Nora could not find it, 2015] Oval mirror, black walnut, Victorian, finger carved. Referenced in Bob August's report, June 16, 1992. Special Gifts list said this was in vestibule, an oval antique mirror in wooden frame. Donated by Tuesday Crafters, 1980.

Misc: Pianos, rooms, furnishings over the years donated by Memorial Funds, Third Nighter's, Women's Fellowship, Trustees.

Mother's Club: Withdrew from ACC (as noted in 1941-1942 annual report, p. 198) in order to be non-sectarian.

Nursery School: New playscape at Avon Nursery School in 1998. (1998 Annual Report)

Organ: First there was a reed organ (c. 1865), then a pipe organ (1886, until the winter of 1918-1919), then another pipe organ (1919), and now the Austin organ. The Austin Organ was installed by Dec. 21, 1965, a memorial gift by a descendant of an original church member, C. Fred Woodford, of 215 Nod Road, Avon. Organ made especially for ACC by Austin Organs of Hartford. The construction/installation contract, \$30,400, dated July 13, 1963.

The organ that was at ACC in 1992 was a gift from C. Fred Woodford in 1954. At the time of the installation of the organ console at the south end (the Route 44 end) of the east balcony, and the installation of the enclosure for the organ pipes, there were significant changes. The molding at the ceiling around the pipe enclosure is similar to (not exactly the same) as the moldings that surround the sanctuary at the ceiling and wall junctures.

The organ which previously served the church had both the console and the organ pipes in the rear balcony. The organist had his back to the congregation. It must have been an awkward arrangement for the organist, who for 50 years was Lester Bradley, also the choir director. The choir sat on either side of the organ, and not in the western balcony as was done in 1992. [August, p. 4-5]. At the time of changes due to the installation of the organ, possibly an additional 2 feet of handrail was installed at either end of the railing crossing the rear balcony. There were changes to the pews to allow installation of the organ console. Communion cup holders at the base of the handrail which crossed the rear balcony are a reminder of the old arrangement. [August, p.5]

At the time of the installation of the organ console at the southerly end of the east balcony, and the installation of the enclosure for the organ pipes, there were several significant changes. The molding at the ceiling around the pipe enclosure is similar to (not exactly the same) as the moldings that surround the sanctuary at the ceiling and wall junctures. [August, p. 4-5]

There was also a piano (1902).

Painting and repairs: After the 1876 fire, it was voted in May 1876 to repaint the meetinghouse on the outside, and repainted/frescoed on the inside. Total cost \$1,202.54. (Of this amount, \$685 paid by insurance.) Repairs in 1876: labor for cleaning off paper and paint (\$65.25); 25 windows repaired (\$100); interior painting (\$163.98); Painting outside (\$179.38); Frescoing (\$252.50); paint and oil (\$128.60); joiner work (\$22).

1919: Interior painted again. — 1976: Interior painted again. — c. 2009: Interior painted again.

Parsonages: There have been six parsonages.

Pedestals: Two wooden pedestals, painted and stained by Charles Kilgore. October 1984. Noted in Special Gifts list, 1962-1991. Paid for by Harry Spock Memorial Fund and possibly general membership funds.

Pews: 1819: Rev. Stephen Hubbell's son, reminiscing about 1840-1853, said ACC had square pews on the outside (on the first floor) and square pews in the galleries (balconies).

1819: The meetinghouse contained both slips and pews, as indicated [Kelly 11] by a vote on Dec. 1, 1828, to sell both to raise money.] To raise money, pews were annually rented to the highest bidder from 1819 until between 1896-1900 [the pastorate of Rev. Fankhauser]. Rev. Fankhauser began the envelope system.

1833: In April it was voted to alter the [square] pews in the gallery for the benefit of the singers. Liberty was given to close the stairway leading to the gallery either at the top or bottom.

1854: The slip pews of today replaced the box pews in the 'body of the house. 'The metal numbering plates at the end of each pew suggest that they were at least fabricated later than 1830. [August, p. 2]

1860: seats in the body of the house were painted and grained.

1985: The handicapped, hinged pew seat feature on each front pew of the inner aisle were made about 1985. [August, p. 2]

Pew cushions: red cushions installed 1957 (although a conflicting receipt exists for brown fabric). New red cushions installed May 2010.

Public Address System, (date unclear, but probably 1960s or before): Memorial Funds

Pulpit, Original [Not the one in place today]: In his diary Frank Hadsell of Avon attended ACC and wrote in his diary. He described the "high old fashioned pulpit." [Hadsell Diary, Avon Free Public Library, Avon History Room.]

"1862 Rev. E.D. Murphy was our minister at this time.... In the later years of our stay at the Murphy house I went to Sunday school. Not that I wanted to - most boys don't - but I had to. Mother made me. I don't think S.H. [Samuel Hadsell, his father] cared one way or another about it. I don't remember that he ever went to church. We did not have a pew at this time and I sat in the gallery during service. The church faces south, the gallery runs the whole length of the church on both sides. At the north end, was the high old fashioned pulpit, now discarded. At the south or front end, over the vestibule were the seats for the choir. Now the pulpit was not as high as the choir seats, but high enough for the minister to see the singers very well."

Pulpit and Reading Desk: Pulpit given by Miss Nellie W. Williams, for church's 100th anniversary in 1919. Source for Nellie's gift is News clipping 1919 in Annual Report for 1919, p. 137.) Kelly wrote in 1948 (p.15) that "The pilastered reading desk of cherry that stands upon [the pulpit platform] is of early design and workmanship and may be of the same date as the church edifice itself." Kelly's book has a photo of the pulpit in 1948 showing it with a mahogany or varnished surface.

In Robert August's 1992 "Commentary on Interior Architectural Details" page 1, he wrote that it may have been Roger Rudder who painted the pulpit white. "It was probably in the 1950s that the interior of the church was repainted by Roger Rudder, owner of the Thomas Heywood Company, painting contractors, who did excellent work in very selective areas. Roger was a very strong-willed person and made decisions which he thought were appropriate, whether or not he discussed them with his client.... I am sure that it was he who had the pulpit painted white so as to lighten the interior of the church."

Pulpit area: Cracks in the plaster at the northern end indicate the earlier presence of four windows - corresponding in size and position with those in the side walls - but now closed up. There are traces also of a tall, arched opening behind and above the pulpit. The pulpit wall windows were closed in 1857 when the conference room was added at the back of the building. The present pulpit platform is not original. [All information in Kelly, Meetinghouses, p.15).

The arch and columns on North wall to rear of pulpit may have been installed at the time of the installation of the platform, and the platform may have been installed at the time of the installation of the pews.

The pilasters on the north pulpit wall, which line up with the pilasters of the galleries, are not original. They correspond in period and design with the arch back of the pulpit. [Kelly, p. 13]

The Congregational Church of Warren, Ct. is similar in style and date to ACC. It has a restored pulpit wall, so may be similar to how Avon's original pulpit looked.

Door on west side of ACC pulpit, installed 1952-53 at time of construction of new addition.

Chair rail on north wall, at end of the Deacon's pews: used to go along each side of the sanctuary between the windows both on the first floor and in the balconies. Evidences of re-plastering are visible.

The wainscotting on the north wall below the chair rail may be original. There are beaded molded boards at end of Deacon's pews below the chair rail on the north wall - but they are not the same design as the wainscotting along the front of the pews. They are also not the same design as along the edge of the platform. This is why the wainscotting on the north wall below the chair rail may be original. The wainscotting in front of the Deacon's pews may have been installed later, probably before 1854 when the pew slips were installed, and possibly the pulpit platform was installed at even a later date. The preciseness of the width of the beads of the wainscotting along the platform would indicate more precise machining than might be expected by the use of hand planes. [August, p. 2]

Pulpit Cross: Created by Roy and Walter Read about 1968 when Dr. James English, former Conference Minister, was ACC's interim minister. The wood and the piece of iron scavenged from a raft which floated down the Farmington River during the 1955 flood. [August, p. 4]

Pulpit Light: by Roy and Walter Read. [Created c. 1968? see above for Pulpit Cross]. The lamp came from one of the twin beds of C. Fred Woodford, longtime ACC member. [August, p. 4]

Roof: In 1819 it probably had hand-shaved shingles of native white pine or cedar. Roof reshingled 1860.

Rooms: Memorial Rooms donated for Charles Hunter and Alfred Herbert [date unclear, probably 1960s or earlier; listed also in Anonymous, "Our Legacy is in Many Parts."]

Shutters: In 1852, the Ladies Sewing Society and ladies of Avon were thanked for furnishing "the house," which meant making curtains. Shutters were added sometime after 1876. A photograph of 1912 shows the church with all the "blinds" tightly closed.

Signs: Outdoor ACC sign designed, built, and given by Charles and Nina Kilgore. [Date unclear but probably 1960s or earlier.] Sign insert given by the [Meables?] (There was a new ACC sign installed c. 2010.)

Silver Service [for serving at receptions, not a communion service]: Noted in Annual report of the year 1962 as a gift in memory of Julia H. Philips by her friends and family.

Tea/Coffee Service: Silver teapot, Reed & Barton. Special Gifts funds using several memorial gifts, 1988.

Stairs: The stairs leading up to the galleries (balconies) were probably rebuilt.

Steeple: 1818: The Congregational Church in Warren, CT. (1818) has a steeple that is almost exactly like ACC's.

1938: The hurricane of 1938 damaged the ACC 1819 steeple. An article in the Hartford Courant in the early 1940s (exact date cut off in the article, but probably September 1944) also said that the steeple had dry rot and had been leaning 'out of plumb' since before the hurricane. The top stages of the steeple (all above the belfry stage) were removed, according to this article. The old bell stayed in place.

John Anthony O'Neill of Avon (in 2010) had a home movie of a crane removing the church steeple after the hurricane. It may turn up with the help of his daughter, Heidi.

1949: Mrs. John L. Gibbons (Maud Ely Gibbons) of Avon started a fund to build an exact copy, which was set in place. The replacement-steeple's architect was Roy D. Bassette of W. Hartford. The contractor was Mr. Einar J. "Jack" Odegard of Waterville Road, Avon. The steeple was re-dedicated Nov. 20, 1949. Newly-wired for electricity, it was illuminated every night from dusk until 10:30 pm. The banner on the weather vane is original.

Steeple repainted 1990; repaired summer 1994/Valley Restoration/Torrington. Repaired c. 2006.

Steeple Medallion (wooden with hemisphere design)

Many churches like ours have a clock on the steeple, where our circular medallion/with hemisphere design is. At the time of construction in 1819, there were hopes for a clock there, but there was not enough money. The March 1821 minutes say the church was trying to raise funds for a clock for the steeple. They did not raise enough however, and in 1822 the portion that was raised was spent on Society expenses. The early 1800s was when Connecticut churches were expanding into foreign and "home" missions, and perhaps the ACC "hemisphere" represents a global outlook. [Suggested by Rev. Ken Fuller, 2010]

United Church - New Haven, Ct. opened in 1815; ours in 1819. It has the exact wooden medallion of ACC, and both churches were designed by David Hoadley. Even some of the interior features are the same - such as the soaring woodwork behind the pulpit (surrounding the cross on the wall) capped off by a little keystone shape.

Stove: The Society voted to put a stove in the meetinghouse (Dec. 4, 1826), during pastorate of original pastor Rev. Bela Kellogg. An additional furnace installed 1869. A new furnace as installed in 1901. Heat prior to 1826 was from foot stoves.

Study's Carpet and Furnishings: [The study removed during the renovation of 2000, but some furnishings may still be in use in places.] Items donated by Women's Fellowship Funds. [Listed in Anonymous, "Our Legacy is in Many Parts."]

Tables, set of two in the sanctuary, by the south entry door. "Two semi-circular Grand Rapids genuine mahogany tables, each \$175," referenced in Bob August report, June 16, 1992.

Tables, set of two in the narthex. Queen Anne table (old) a reproduction. Queen Anne table, reproduction 1992. Better quality than the older one. Cost in 1991 was \$900. Both referenced in Bob August's 1992 report. One was presented in memory of Cornwall Talcott Millard, from note found in the 1901 Bible (in archives). There is a plaque on it: "Bible & Table presented to the Avon Congregational Church, Avon, Conn, in memory of Cornwall Talcott Willard."

The second matching table: "In loving memory of Nels E. Liljedahl, November 27, 1913-July 29, 1990."

Table: L & G Stickley Library table, Mission style, oak. Less value than a Gustav Stickley piece. Referenced in Bob August's June 16, 1992 report. [Where is this in 2015?]

Table: oval tilt top, cherry. From Hitchcock Chair Factory, Riverton, March 1980. \$217. Gift of Barbara Donahoe in memory of Ada Whitlock. Special Gifts Committee said it was in Minister's Study when not in Sanctuary."

Tea Service, silver: The service and additions, In Memory of Julia Phillips, donated by Women's Fellowship, Couples Club, and Third Nighters. [In Anonymous, "Our Legacy is in Many Parts."]

Umbrella Stand: from Special Gifts Fund, 1978. Antique, if this is the same one in the Special Gifts list of 1962-1991.

Twelve (12) West Main Street: Purchased 1983 from O'Neill family.

Walls & ceiling: The side walls show evidence that a dado (lower portion of a wall decorated differently than the upper portion) originally extended up to the window stools. Before the 1876 fire, the walls were papered. Repair work after the fire included painting inside. In 1948, J. Frederick Kelly (p. 13) wrote that traces of the dado remained against the northern pulpit area wall. At the time of his writing (1948), he said that the church's walls and ceiling were painted "buff," and that all of the woodwork was white.

Weather-vane: new gold leaf put on in 2006. Old gold leaf original? Very worn down, said Bruce Elliott to Nora Howard, 2019. See Chester Case drawings for weather-vane dimensions. About 4 1/2' long. Weighs about 100 pounds probably.

Windows: 1819: Original windows had 20-over-20 panes of glass.

1876: After the 1876 fire, the original 1819 small-paned windows were replaced by 2-over-2 panes.

1959: the sash in the east & west walls on the main floor and in the balconies were replaced by John S. Eddy. The 20-over-20 pane windows are copies of the original 1819 windows. The funds for this restoration to the original type of sash were through gifts of memorial funds in memory of persons noted on brass plates under each window sill. [August, p. 2.] These windows in place in 2015.

The upper two windows on either side of the entry were installed in 1949, when portions of the steeple were replaced.

Windows at church entrance: The fanlights and the two lower windows on either side of the bay are original 1819 windows. The 20-over-20 windows in the entry date from 1963.

Windows and the plexiglass storm windows were installed in 1976 at a cost of about \$1,000 for both the windows and the ceiling fans. [August, p. 5] A plaque in the rear of the sanctuary by the silver communion set says "Storm windows given out of love for her church by Lena Wilde Brown."

Sources Used for this Report

ACC Archives files on Furnishings and Steeple.

Anonymous, undated list of "Our Legacy is in Many Parts," a handwritten list done in 1966 or soon after, of memorial gifts.

Anonymous, "A Church in Picture and Poetry," September 1987. Rough draft of proposed picture show about ACC.

August, Robert and Gladys, "Valuation of Various Antique furnishings of the Church," Report to the Church board. June 16, 1992.

August, Robert B. [and cited throughout this report] "Commentary on the Interior Architectural Details of the Avon Congregational Church, March, 1992."

Bob was a long time ACC member, and a lawyer. Bob wrote in his paper that he relied on Frederick Kelly's Early Connecticut Meetinghouses (New York, Columbia University Press, 1948, pp. 9-15 - ACC has a copy). "In each instance where [my] paper compares with his writing, I can confirm his statements. In some instances there is a reference with no reference in the Kelly work. In such a situation my comments are either original evaluations and occasionally are assumptions which need to be pursued further for precise confirmation. If I have not been able to confirm a statement, then I have made that statement based upon years of experience on my part, or with some other outside evidence which I felt could be reasonably considered."

Grant, Rev. Joel. "Sermon and Centennial Commemoration," 1919.

Hadsell, Frank. Diary, Avon Free Public Library, Avon History Room.

Marian Hunter, "Avon Congregational Church Historical Sketch," Oct. 18, 1974.

J. Frederick Kelly, Early Connecticut Meetinghouses (New York, Columbia University Press, 1948), volume 1. ACC is on pp. 9-15.

Mallary, Peter. New England Churches and Meetinghouses, 1985. [Copy in the Avon Free Public Library.

Moultin, Rev. James W. Historical Address (1919).

Rettig, Barbara. Onward: 1812-1982. Photography by John Kiser. A booklet on the history of the Avon Congregational Church.

Special Gifts List of donations, 1962-1991. In ACC archives.

Plaques at Meetinghouse Windows

There are 27 windows in the meetinghouse. There are plaques for 25 windows. Two windows do not have plaques. One of these is the window in the little room on the east side, by the balcony stairs; the second window is on the staircase going to the basement. Plaque inscriptions transcribed by Nora Howard, 2015

(Main Floor: clockwise when facing the pulpit. The brass plaque is under each window)

1. "Given in memory of their parents by Mr. and Mrs. Evald T. Johnson"
2. "Presented by Laura Lane Johanson - E. Jerome Johanson
Co-Ministers of this Church"
3. "Given in honor of their parents by Mr. and Mrs. Merlin D. Bishop"
4. "Given in honor of C. Frederick Woodford and in memory of Mrs. Elsie Bishop
Woodford by the Chester R. Woodfords"
5. (Still going clockwise, and now on the east wall)
"Given in memory of Lillias Hamilton Schell by Henry I. Schell"
6. "Given in memory of Hamilton O. Penn by Herbert S. Swartz"
7. "Presented by Miss Florence E. Bishop, Miss Sarah R. Bishop, Mrs. Lena Stowe
Legeyt, Mrs. Stella Bishop Tatro"
8. "Given in memory of Watson Woodruff, D.D. Minister of this church 1944-1949"

Main Floor, plaque on the south wall

Plexiglass storm windows installed about 1975 at a cost of about \$1,000 for both the windows (and the ceiling fans). [August, p. 5] A plaque in the rear of the sanctuary by the silver communion set says "Storm windows given out of love for her church by Lena Wilde Brown."

Donation of the little room on the east side, by the balcony stairs, and of the basement staircase area, opposite

"Presented by the Women's Fellowship"

Beside the stairs to both balconies

9. & 10. Two windows with plaques: "Original Window"

In Balcony

11. & 12 & 13. Three windows on the south side (Route 10/Rt. 44) side of the balcony. One plaque:

"These three windows
given by
the family and friends of
Mr. John S. Eddy
in his memory

Mr. and Mrs. Robert F. Amstutz
in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Amstutz
Mr. and Mrs. Edgar M. Brown
Dedicated February 24, 1963"

Two windows overlooking West Main St./Rt. 44

14. & 15. "Presented by Mrs. Maud Ely Gibbons, 1949"

Going clockwise around the balcony, when facing the pulpit

16. "Given in memory of Mrs. Nettie Miller Hart by Mrs. Eveline M. Stewart"
17. "Given in memory of Charles D. Lynde, John G. Phillip, by Mr. and Mrs. John G. Phillips, Jr."
18. "Given in memory of their parents by Mr. and Mrs. K. Spencer Buell"
19. "Given in memory of Alfred I. Merkle by Mr. and Mrs. Richard A. Merkle"
20. "Given in memory of Paul and Charlotte Berger by Mr. and Mrs. Godfrey Berger"
21. "Given in memory of Alfred C. Herbert by Mrs. Anne-Furbush Herbert"
22. "Given in memory of Miss Mary E. Woodford by C. Frederick Woodford"
23. "Given in memory of Arthur George Smith by Mrs. Adelaide Crosby Smith"
24. "Given in memory of Lester M. Bradley, organist of this church for forty years"
25. "Given in memory of Samuel A. Hart by Mrs Nettie Miller Hart"

Plaques on the West Wall in the Sanctuary

"The Carollonic Bells
in this church
are dedicated to
the glory of God
in loving memory of
Elsie B. Woodford
by her husband
C. Frederick Woodford
A.D. 1954"

"The
organ in this church
is dedicated to
the worship of God

through
the joy of music
Presented by
C. Frederick Woodford
A.D. 1966”

“The
site for this meeting
house was given on
November 18, 1819
by Joel Wheeler
one of the original
settlers of east Avon”

Plaque in the east parking lot, on the way to the Post Office

The parking lot is dedicated to the
cooperative spirit of the community
and to the generosity of
GLADYS and ROBERT AUGUST

ACC Items at Other Repositories

CT Digital Archives, online: Our photographs and documents are bundled in the “Avon Free Public Library” tab. This is a wonderful resource for Avon and church history.

Connecticut State Library (website has archives management short course)

General town records. See website. I have printout of record list.
“Tax, election, school, financial, military, and vital records for Avon, 1830-1880.”

For Avon: Abstracts of births, marriages, deaths, 1852-1880.
For Farmington (which includes Avon before 1830): Town Meeting records.

ONLINE: Abstracts of Ct. Church Records. State Library Index. Avon & West Avon, 1751-1941.
(Avon Congregational Church in Volume 2, starting with Image #1. for 1798-1921. VERY COOL.

Connecticut Historical Society - has the ACC Church Manual, 1869

Avon Free Public Library - “Avon Congregational Church” files.

ACC’s records from 1798-mid 1900s were transferred to the Library in 2021, with the full approval of the ACC Steering Circle and congregation.

United Church of Christ Archives, Sherman St., Hartford.

Rev. Eggleston’s 1876 Report. A thick handwritten booklet. I think ACC has a copy.
Rev. Bankosky’s news clippings, photograph, installation program 1964.
Rev. Steven Hubbel’s biography, newspaper clippings, an envelope/Shady Side book.
Rev. Joseph L. Moulton’s obituary. [1918; he and his wife were studying languages with a mission in India. I found this on google; do more research....]

Rev. Case's biography.
Chester Woodford's biography and newspaper clippings.

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