

ELSIE GAUDETTE AWARD 2022

The church body has a unique award presented to an individual who most exemplifies the qualities that the original Elsie Gaudette had. Though she passed away in the 1990's, this award was created in 1991 to honor her service. She was a most extraordinary member of very long standing. There were a very few positions and jobs she didn't hold. Back in the 1960's, the church nearly closed. She was and had been on the Parish Committee who voted to sell the parsonage and make one last attempt to keep the church going and find a minister. It worked, and the resurgence began.

Elsie defined service to the church. She simply saw a need and filled it. She never waited to be asked to help or gave it a second thought. All the recipients of this award do the same over many years. Many are still here, contributing. They are: Kimberly French, Sue Sherman, Rick Benard, Linda Thompson, Marc MacQueen, Jeff Stevens, Cheryl MacQueen, Cindy Benard, Andrea Priest, JR Pucillo-Dunphy, and Maria Pucillo-Dunphy. They are "who" we are.

Today we honor another such person for service to this church body. Since they first arrived in Middleboro, they have pitched in to small town life and small church life. Small churches need people who can be jacks of all trades, people who will try to do things they have never thought they would, but willing.

We needed helpful hands on Building and Grounds projects, lighting repairs, carpentry projects, roof repairs, heating and air conditioning. Need a little help on Church yard sales, yard cleanups, an appetizing favorite dish by an amateur cook for Men Who Cook, Women Who Sing, an extra hand in the garden, or simple plumbing? He'll volunteer and do it.

He volunteered on the big I Love My Church campaign project, the Finance Committee, the Investment Committee, and has been a major participant in the Black Lives Matter Social Justice Committee actions and programs. He was a major contributor in the Web of Life Curriculum and has always been one of the "Show Up" people.

He has jumped into small town affairs as well, speaking up at Town meetings, helping to write a grant for the Sustainable Middleboro Project, and attends G & E meetings.

He has an easy way of engaging in conversation with anyone, has a great sense of humor and a great laugh! And he loves the Red Sox!

All of these activities would have been enough, but they all preceded his greatest contribution to church life. In March 2020, life changed for everyone in the world and in Middleboro, and here. I'm pretty sure he never expected to become an expert in streaming worship services to the confined-at-home congregants of FUUSM. But he did. He thought his new retirement plans were going to be different. Instead, he jumped into learning how to put Rev. Sarah and Susan Hotchkiss on ZOOM, becoming a ZOOM master taking the lead in managing Sunday services and creating virtual spaces for small groups to meet. This year he shifted toward creating a tech team to share the A/V work, and it's a good thing he did, because they were able to take over his work when he became incapacitated in May. Bravo!

Please congratulate our latest Elsie Gaudette award recipient,

Alan Melchior.