

ANNUAL REPORT, INSURANCE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE  
UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SACKETS HARBOR

To: Clerk of Council, United Presbyterian Church of Sackets Harbor  
From: David B. Geurtsen, Chair, Insurance Oversight Committee  
Date: **February 2, 2026**

**SUMMARY OF COVERAGE**

This year marks our 14<sup>th</sup> year with insurance agent William A. Smith & Son, Inc., of Newburgh, New York, and our 12th year with Preferred Mutual Insurance Co.

I have received the Certificate of Insurance for our church's property and liability coverage from Preferred Mutual Insurance Co.. Our current annual policy period runs from **July 1, 2025 to July 1, 2026**.

The following are the limits of coverage, which have increased this year:

- **blanket building and contents casualty damage limits are now \$2,554,000 (increased \$102,200 over last year) for the church, including contents. The deductible for building and personal property losses is the same at \$500.** I have a copy of the Evidence of Insurance for reference in the event specific activities, losses, claims and applicable coverage limits if the Council wishes to review them in detail;
- **commercial general liability limits remained the same at \$1 Million per occurrence and \$3 Million annual aggregate;**
- **subject to the aggregate limit above we also have the following coverage, unchanged from last year:**
  - **\$1 Million per incident/\$2 Million annual aggregate in director's and officer's liability;**
  - **\$1 Million per incident/\$2 Million annual aggregate for professional liability (pastor);**
  - **\$1 Million per incident/\$2 Million annual aggregate in sexual misconduct coverage.**
- **\$10,000 coverage per incident for medical expense (which pays medical expenses without regard to fault to persons injured on our premises);**
- **\$50,000 in coverage for employee theft, employee/volunteer dishonesty, per occurrence;**

- **\$15,000 for theft of cash or securities by employees, etc.;**
- **\$100,000 in coverage for damage to personal property of others we rent;**

**Last year our annual premium increased \$975.00, from \$3,883.00 to \$4,858.00 a 25% increase,** for the same levels of coverage overall (except for buildings and contents coverage, whose limits are set forth above). Our premium breaks down as follows:

<b>\$3,658.00</b>	<b>Property coverage (up \$949)</b>
<b>\$1,130.00</b>	<b>General liability (up \$26)</b>
<b>\$70.00</b>	<b>Employee theft (no change)</b>

For budget purposes, our agent generally advises us to plan for premium increases in the range of 5-10%, based on Preferred Mutual's advice to their agents. Any increase over 10% requires 60 days advance notice from the insurance company to us, so we will have some time to evaluate any anticipated increase.

In 2023 I submitted another application to our agent so they could obtain quotes from other companies, given the increase we saw between 2022 and 2023, but our agent did not find comparable coverage at lower rates than our current insurer offered. Given the increase we saw this past year, I will explore additional quotes again this year, but our agent advises Preferred Mutual has been the most cost effective insurer they represent for their church clients. I will also explore lowering or our building coverage(subject to mortgagee consent), and higher deductible limits, as means of containing premiums.

As in years past, I must continue to advise that the contents of our church could be significantly underinsured in the event of a catastrophic loss (ie. windstorm, serious fire), and that we would be unable to replace our stained-glass windows, bells or organ for the amount of coverage in place. As last year's policy did, our buildings coverage is designed to cover the full cost to replace the church building. We can certainly purchase more coverage for the building and contents, if we are willing and able to bear the expense.

An electronic copy of the Certificate of Insurance and policy are kept in my offices in Watertown, and are available for the review of Council, via email.

## **CLAIMS FOR COVERAGE IN 2025**

After conferring with our agent, Jennifer Radford, at W.A. Smith and Son, Inc., **I am not aware of any claims made on our policy in 2025.** As always, I ask the Session and our membership to advise me immediately if they are aware of any actual or potential claims arising in **2025**, or this year, so that we can promptly inform our insurer as required by our policy, as **failure to notify our insurer promptly of potential claims can result in a denial of coverage.**

## TOPICS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. In 2015 and 2016 the Session adopted updated **policies and procedures for screening volunteers and staff working with church youth**, as required by our insurance carrier, the Presbytery, and the Presbyterian Church USA. I would like to remind those involved in our child and youth ministry that new volunteer or paid child/youth ministry workers are subject to background screening procedures run through the Synod, and that new workers must submit a screening authorization before they begin any work with children or youth. Please advise me if you anticipate we will have any new child/youth ministry workers this year who would need to be screened.

2. In approximately 2007 we instituted the use of a **Facility Use Agreement**, which holds UPC harmless from claims arising from guest users claims, and in most cases require proof of additional insurance from the guest user, naming UPC as additional insured, when our property is used for an outside organization's events, such as the sacred sites tours, community concerts, Tai Chi and yoga classes, etc. We continue to host the use of our facility by outside groups. Though this use of the church by outside groups provides valuable community support and outreach opportunities, I urge the Council to continue the practice of obtaining Use Request Forms and proof of insurance from new users of our facilities for my review well in advance of the planned uses/events, and on an annual basis for recurring users/uses.

I am happy to continue serving as the Insurance Oversight Chair for the coming year, and am happy to answer any questions arising from this report, or any other insurance related issues of interest to the Council.

Respectfully submitted,

David B. Geurtsen, Elder