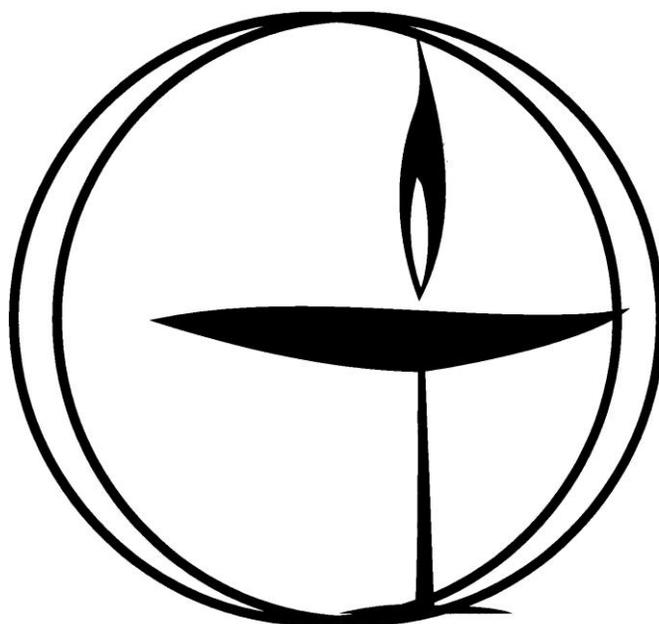


THE  
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY  
OF AMHERST  
*A Welcoming Congregation*  
*A Green Sanctuary Congregation*

# ANNUAL REPORT

May 2019



PO Box 502, 121 North Pleasant Street, Amherst MA 01004-0502  
office@uusocietyamherst.org www.uusocietyamherst.org  
Tel. 413-253-2848

The Reverend Stephen Cook, Interim Minister

**THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY**

**OF AMHERST**  
*A Welcoming Congregation*  
*A Green Sanctuary Congregation*

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**May 2019**

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**UUSA Board of Trustees**

## **Annual Report, May 2019**

### **UUSA Board 2018-19:**

Karen Fisk, President (2020)  
Lynne Latham, Clerk (2019)  
Peter Lacey, Treasurer (2020)  
Bo Mack, Past President (2019)  
Fran Plumer, at large (2019)  
Emily Shankle, at large (2019)  
Rob Fuderich, at large (2020)  
Casey Flueckiger, at large, youth representative (2020)  
Rosie Cowell, at large (2020)  
Susan Rice, at large (2020)  
Jeanne Ballantine, at large (2020)  
Joe Flueckiger, leadership consultant (2019)

Ex officio members: Rev. Steve Cook (Interim Minister), Rebecca Fricke (Director of Religious Education)

### **OVERVIEW**

The UUSA Board of Trustees took time this year to define its role at the UUSA in order to help nurture ongoing leadership and re-establish a Board Policy Handbook. Over the years the upkeep of a policy book fell away and we operated this year without a vice president, as no one was open to taking on the position. Joe Flueckiger (president 2017) stayed on the Board to help with leadership development. At each meeting Joe led the Board in discerning our mission as the fiduciary leadership of this beloved congregation. We are grateful for his wisdom.

The Board also benefited from the wisdom of our Interim Minister Rev. Steve Cook. Rev. Steve has helped the Board further discern best practices and focus throughout the year and we are grateful.

The Board also wants to note with tremendous gratitude the anonymous donor who pledged \$20,000 in matching new and increased pledges from our Congregation. Without this person's generosity, we would not have been able to present a balanced budget for FY2020. (We tend to refer to this person as our angel.)

This past year, the UUSA Board of Trustees focused on the following:

- Working together with our Interim Minister, the Ministerial Search Team (led by Louise Grosslein and Jess Murphy), and our Congregation to prepare for the calling of a new settled minister
- Hiring an office manager and a bookkeeper with essential support from the Personnel Committee (led by Kelley Aiken and Lisa Harvey)
- Encouraging Committees to consider term limits, succession planning, yearly goals, and budgetary needs; supporting the Council of Chairs meetings as a way to facilitate best

communication and teamwork among the many, various, and wonderful committees of our Congregation

- Assembling a Canvass Task Force—which renamed itself the Pledge Drive Task Force (led by Jeanne Ballantine) and ran an impressively successful fund-raising campaign thanks to their hard work and the generosity of our Congregation
- Assembling a task force to explore issues surrounding new members (after receiving two letters of concern) which resulted in the Task Force for Outreach, Integration, and Retention (led by Pat Rector, Catharine Porter, Jeanne Ballantine, and Linda Robinson) and a concerted effort to make our Congregation even more welcoming than it was before
- Assembled a Safer Congregation Task Force (led by Lisa Cyr) to update the Safer Congregation Policies to include Active Shooter protocol among other important matters
- Improving communication with the Congregation through monthly letters from the President and posting minutes and financial reports in the office (we have since added a Board Bulletin Board for posting upcoming meetings, etc.)
- Establishing best practices for Board meetings, agenda building, and record keeping, all informed by the wisdom of our Interim Minister, and the principles of Spiritual Leadership
- Oversaw the finances of the Congregation, making decisions as necessary for spending and saving with the able support of the Finance Committee (led by Linda Callahan, Elliott Kelly, and Betsy Loughran)
- Because we realized that a degree of institutional memory has fallen away, the Board adopted the policy to encourage two-year terms for the President
- Together with the Ministerial Search Committee and the Congregation at a special meeting in May called our new Settled Minister Rachael Hayes

### **Goals for 2019-20**

1. Welcome, get to know, and learn to work together with our new Settled Minister, Rachael Hayes
2. Continue to hone communication, best practices, and leadership development
3. Strive as always to better understand our finances and our financial sustainability
4. Establish an ongoing Stewardship Committee that nurtures financial stability through education surrounding the benefits of pledges, donations, and legacy giving
5. Continue to work in cooperation with our Committees to support the mission and vision of the UUSA

Respectfully submitted by

*Karen Fisk*

President of the Board of Trustees

## **The Rev. Stephen Cook, Interim Minister Annual Report, May 2019**

It was my pleasure and privilege to serve UUSA as your interim minister from August 1, 2018 to July 31, 2019. I regret that I could not have been more present at the Society and within the larger Amherst community, as I was commuting from my home in Quincy, MA; however, I was generally in the office Tuesdays and Wednesdays for as long as needed, and of course Sundays when leading or attending worship. I express my appreciation to the Society for accommodating to this schedule.

I began my service to you by attending the community breakfast on August 8 and meeting that evening with the Transition Team. Thereafter, I began keeping regular weekly, Tuesday/Wednesday office hours, typically sharing Wednesday breakfast with a group of UUSA men before then attending our community breakfast. Sunday was an “out and back” day, leading or attending worship in the morning, as well as attending other occasional events before returning home in the afternoon.

We began our schedule of worship on September 9 (to finish on June 23). Thereafter, I led or attended worship 33 times, other Sundays being filled by guest speakers or our able Sunday Services Committee. One service was cancelled by weather and two were taken up with candidating week.

I began my work with the Board on August 17, working with UUA facilitator Jackie Shanti, helping to lead the group in a vision casting exercise for the year ahead. Further, I submitted a written report to the Board and attended its monthly meetings. Schedule permitting, I also attended meetings of: Pastoral Care Team, Caring Circle, Sunday Services, Membership, Meeting House, Safe Congregation and Personnel committees as requested. Further, I convened three meetings of the Council of Chairs. I also participated in seven Wednesday evening workshops on “Resisting White Supremacy” led by facilitator Ken Wagoner.

It was very helpful, in this third year of the interim period, that the previous ministerial search committee worked with me as a Transition Team to transfer the work and knowledge they had garnered to the newly chosen MSC. On October 14, I took part, along with the very capable leadership of the Transition Team, in an exercise of congregational identity and vision setting that was very helpful for the next formal ministerial search. In other interim specific work, DRE Rebecca Fricke and Administrator Lea Douville participated with me in an eight-week UUA seminar for professionals engaged in the interim process.

In pastoral matters, I met with a number of people in the office or in their homes. It was my privilege to take part in the November 9 memorial service for George Sulzner, led by Minister Emerita, the Rev. Alison Wohler. In addition, I took part in memorial services for three members of the Community Breakfast circle. On December 2, with much joy all around, it was my privilege to dedicate to life Adar Kai Mack-Fuerst and Aliya Ruth Sexauer.

The 2018-2019 church year for UUSA saw the welcoming of 14 new members, a sanctuary so full most Sundays that discernment on the question of moving to two services is clearly urgent, and the calling of the Reverend Rachel Hayes as your settled minister. I feel sure that she and you will bring your characteristic energy, skill and dedication to the co-creation of a new era for the Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst; it was my privilege and joy to be a part of the preparation for that new era.

Respectfully submitted,  
*“Rev. Steve”*

## **Pledge Drive Task Force Annual Report, May 2019**

**Chair: Jeanne Ballantine**

**Committee Members: David Huber, Peter Lacey, Lynne Latham, Susanne Personette, Susan Rice**

### **Summary**

The primary reasons for the pledge goal were to offer the new minister an attractive package with benefits; raise the salaries, benefits, and hours of staff members; enhance the music and RE programs; and cover expenses of maintaining the meeting house.

The financial goal of this year's pledge drive was \$183,802. The pledge drive was successful in meeting its goal – and exceeding it by \$4,860 -- collecting \$7,700 from new members and \$12,183 in increased pledges from existing members, both to be matched dollar for dollar by a generous anonymous donor. This money will go into a separate fund.

### **2019 Pledge Drive Task Force Procedures**

The UUSA Board discussed plans for the upcoming canvass drive for 2019. The kickoff was scheduled for March 3, 2019, with Rev. Steve giving a relevant sermon on the proposed theme of “The Future is Now”. This was followed by weekly “testimonials” at the opening of service and a pledge table at Social Hour. A congregational luncheon was held on March 24, with food provided by the task force and the board. Over 70 people attended, with Rev. Steve providing opening words.

In preparation for the drive and during the drive, the Pledge Drive Task Force members met 5 times (February 3, 7, and 18, March 18, and April 8) and communicated frequently by email. We prepared promotional materials including a “vision” statement, testimonials, a graph with categories of expenditures, and a pledge form on one sheet, and a separate sheet with suggested donation amounts for different salary levels.

The pledge drive results were updated weekly in the UU newsletter and on the pledge drive poster below the TV in the meeting house entry way.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Pledge Drive Task Force should become a standing committee working throughout the year to plan for the drive, research other congregation's drives, monitor the budget in preparation for the next year's drive, and to make the case for the needed funds. UUNE highly recommends that this be a standing committee, functioning most of the year.

### **Specific Tasks:**

Each task force member had a specific role to play: overall coordination, budget oversight, preparing drive materials, record keeping (Lea), publicity/testimonials and reminders in the weekly newsletter, pledge luncheon coordinator, contacts with non-pledgers, and many other related tasks. This division of labor worked well to accomplish the needed tasks.

**RECOMMENDATION:** We recommend dividing up tasks to provide a systematic way to complete the work to be done with minimum overlap. Though we all contributed to many of the tasks, one person had primary responsibility for each part of the process.

Pledge materials to be passed out: Two people divided the tasks of preparing/updating materials to be sent out to UU members. This involved writing and revising existing materials, adding new materials, printing the brochure “in house” on the copier, getting updated member lists (Lea has updated lists and has a system to keep them updated). Addressed pledge envelopes, put in alphabetical order, were passed out after service on March 3, with the remaining envelopes mailed.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Be sure it is clear how and where to return the pledge forms. Have as many options as possible: to the office by phone, mail, or email; at Sunday service pledge table; other ways.

Planning weekly notices for newsletter(s), testimonials at beginning of services, and other publicity for the drive. One person coordinated with Lea and Rev. Steve to see that the drive was publicized.

Pledge Drive Luncheon: Though billed as a community congregational luncheon, this was organized by the task force, with one person coordinating. While the “pledge” message was not front and center, this was an effective way to bring people together and “feel good” about the UUSA. The pledge drive aspect of any future event might make the pledge part more up front. The luncheon featured pasta dishes, salad, bread, finger desserts, and juices.

Weekly Pledge Drive Table at Social Hour: Having someone with a Pledge Drive sign and pledge forms at a table seemed worth the effort, and some people did ask questions about the drive. Also, a number of pledge forms were turned in during Social Hour.

Weekly Updates on Drive: Lea provided weekly updates on Friday during March and every few days in April, indicating progress in reaching the goal. She also kept a record of who pledged, broken down into categories of new members and former pledgers. This provided lists of non-pledgers for the committee members in charge of follow up.

Follow up with Non-Pledgers: In early April, the “follow-up team” began their work. With lists provided by Lea, the 38 previous pledgers who had not pledged were contacted by a general email to remind them to pledge. This brought in a number of pledges. The 25 remaining people on the list were sent individual emails from one member of the team. Those results are still coming in. Selected people of the remaining non-pledgers will receive phone calls from the team. We hope to reach almost 100% response!

Thank You Notes: A note printed on UUSA stationery with a personal note and signed by the task force chair will be sent out in late April to all who have pledged.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE PLEDGE DRIVES**

1. Keep accurate records of all pledges made, amounts received, and work done by the previous year’s task force. All records should be held in the UUSA office.
2. Develop a division of labor among committee members so that different skill sets can be used. Selection of committee members could consider different skills needed.
3. Work closely with the administrative assistant, board, Finance Committee, treasurer, and pastor. These working relationships are extremely helpful in finalizing plans and carrying out the drive.
4. Keep the UU community informed about the campaign results and the financial status of the UUSA.
5. Consider establishing “naming” items for donors: pews, hymnals, special chairs, bricks, and anything else we can name after donors.

6. Establish a new Pledge Drive Committee to work year-round. They should research how other societies do fund raising and other models for campaigns.

**Special thanks!**

The task force would like to thank Rev. Steve for his advice, support, and special words in support of the pledge drive. This drive would have been impossible without the coordination, time and effort put in by Lea Douville, our administrative assistant extraordinaire.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Jeanne Ballantine*

**Caring Circle**  
**Annual Report, May 2019**

**Coordinator: Catharine Porter**

**Members:** Naomi Yanis, Martha Nelson, Mary Latham, Gabriela Horvay, Gordon Wyse, Susan Rice (leaving 6/1/2019), Lynn Sussman, Karen Mack, Linda Callahan

The Caring Circle is part of the three-tiered Caring Ministries: Minister, Pastoral Care Team and Caring Circle.

Our mission is to assure that every member and good friend of UUSA has a personal contact to call upon when an unexpected need arises. We offer practical assistance in the form of meals, transportation, and visits. We want to be sure that no one goes unnoticed and we personally contact each person on our list to be certain they are aware that there is a caring member of UUSA there for them.

We meet once a month to update one another and determine if adequate support is available for people in need. We also coordinate with the Pastoral Care Team when we have a concern and the PCT does the same.

Our ongoing challenge is to maintain a strong group as well as auxiliary lists of people who can help with meals and transportation.

Respectfully submitted,

*Catharine Porter*  
*Chair*

**Dedicated Offering Committee  
Annual Report, May 2019**

**Members: Linda Callahan, Rob Fuderich, Gene Herman, Carolyn Holstein, Anne Perkins, Mary Beth Seminario, Karen Fisk *ex officio***

Nine years ago, under the leadership of our long term minister Alison Wohler, the Annual Meeting voted to establish a committee to choose a monthly Dedicated Offering that would be given to a human service organization independent of the UU Society itself. This Dedicated Offering (DO), from September through May, has been generously adopted by the congregation, and has not detracted from the pledges or weekly offerings for the workings of the Society.

Originally the Committee strove to have a breadth of recipients from regional, national, and international locations, including the arts. However, since the current federal administration has closed the door to funding for so many social agencies, the Committee decided to focus more on local needs where the impact of the DO would be greater. Also, during the course of the year, the Committee realized the Society’s DO would be better served if, in the future, a couple of months would left open in case of international emergencies such as hurricanes or earthquakes. Such emergencies have unfortunately become a regular event in our country and throughout the world. The UUSA Board of Directors also requested a month so that they could collect for the Minister’s Discretionary fund. The arts were able to be included this year, something that the DO committee had not scheduled for a few years.

Through the continued generosity of the UUSA congregation, we raised to date \$7,406.74 to help fund nine different organizations, The specific organizations funded this year are listed below, with the amount raised for each organization. All were very grateful and each sent a thank you note to the Society.

|      |            |                               |       |          |                          |
|------|------------|-------------------------------|-------|----------|--------------------------|
| Sept | \$732.71   | Picture Book Theatre          | Feb   | \$763.53 | The Treehouse Foundation |
| Oct  | \$1,023.60 | The Care Center in Holyoke    | Mar   | \$980.30 | DIAL.SELF                |
| Nov  | \$990.85   | Friends of the Soldiers’ Home | April | \$671.50 | ABC House                |
| Dec  | \$896.00   | The Literacy Project          | May   | \$788.25 | Nuestra Raices           |
| Jan  | \$610.00   | Nueva Esperanza               |       |          |                          |

**TOTAL : \$7,456.74**

Since the inception of the Dedicated Offering Program, the congregation has given consistently and generously to DO recipients. Since the beginning of the program, the totals each year have been:

|        |             |        |  |
|--------|-------------|--------|--|
| FY2011 | \$ 8,549.00 | FY2016 | \$ 9,142.00  |
| FY2012 | \$ 8,003.63 | FY2017 | \$ 9,048.49  |
| FY2013 | \$ 6,865.91 | FY2018 | \$10,232.55  |
| FY2014 | \$ 6,174.52 |        | <i>an extra DO for Hurricanes Harvey &amp; Maria</i> |
| FY2015 | \$11,001.06 | FY2019 | \$7,406.74   |

*an extra DO for Doctors Without Borders*

The UUSA Dedicated Offering Committee would like congregants to nominate organizations and contact information to be considered for DO’s for the coming fiscal year. Forms for suggesting organizations are available in the Meetinghouse Office.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Carolyn Holstein, Chair*

**Digital Outreach Committee  
Annual Report, May 2019**

**Co-Chairs: Steve Rice & Janis Gray  
Webmaster: Steve Rice**

The digital outreach committee continues to keep our website ([www.uusocietyamherst.org](http://www.uusocietyamherst.org)) updated with recent news, events, photos, software updates, etc., as we have for the past 3 years. There are a few changes this year that the congregation should note.

1. The job of communications coordinator previously held by Rebecca Fricke was not renewed this year; the task of composing and sending out the weekly announcements has fallen to our dependable office administrator, Lea Douville.
2. A membership directory (still a work in progress) was added to the website. It can be viewed by clicking the directory menu item across the top of the home page and then inserting the password. The password can be obtained from the webmaster by request ([steveatd1@gmail.com](mailto:steveatd1@gmail.com)).

The website committee generally doesn't meet as the work is done mostly on a routine basis. If updating the website is of interest to you and you would like to learn more, please contact the webmaster.

Janis Gray also keeps the our UUSA Facebook page interesting and up to date. Let her know if there are events or activities you want her to share, in case she is not aware of them!  
([jsgray@crocker.com](mailto:jsgray@crocker.com)).

Respectfully submitted,

*Steve Rice and Janis Gray*

## **Dismantling White Supremacy Task Force Annual Report, May 2019**

### **Co-Chairs: Susan and Steve Rice**

This group was formed at the initiate of the Susan and Steve Rice after attending the 2018 UUA General Assembly in St. Louis. The topic stems from the prevalence of discussions and workshops around this issue at GA.

The group was formed from an initial group of volunteers who agreed to meet on this topic. The purpose of the group was to read, reflect and discuss the subject of racism and white supremacy in general and explore means to take the topic to the larger congregation.

During the process of exploring ways to bring a workshop type event to the congregation we discovered that Ken Wagner had been doing this work for several years and could provide a workshop without cost to our Society. ‘Ken Wagner is former president of the Clara Barton District of the Unitarian Universalist Association. He currently serves on the UUA’s Nominating Committee and was one of the founding members of the New England Region’s Antiracism/Anti-oppression/Multicultural Transformation team called GRACE. He has also served for the last nine years on the Executive Steering Committee of the Allies for Racial Equity and just completed a two year term as president of that organization.’”

Ken agreed to give a sermon and conduct an 8-session workshop. Ken, unselfishly, drove back and forth, over an hour each way, over these weeks throughout the winter to conduct this workshop. We began with about 30 participates, all from our congregation, with over 20 average attendance each week.

His workshop, entitled “Resisting White Supremacy” is described in his own words;

“It is primarily focused on helping white people understand the racial component of their identity, how to live with authenticity and integrity as a white person in a society grounded in white supremacy. It involves understanding the structural foundation of racism quite apart from the bigotry and discrimination that flows from individuals and how it exists almost independently of individual racist people.

Racism itself is the source of great confusion among white folks because there are so many different definitions and conceptions of what it is and what it is not. Thus, one encounters claims of “reverse racism” from folks who have an entirely distorted concept of what racism is or is not. We work through what the role of white people can or should be in racial justice movements, what our role in BLM might be, and what it means to be in solidarity with people of color and what it looks like to exhibit ally behavior. We discuss situations and responses – ie – things we commonly hear but are sometimes frustrated in responding to in an effective fashion.”

The task force is continuing to meet with the goal of keeping this work going in our congregation. Watch for future activities that you may want to get involved in. The group is open to any who want to join us either for the monthly meetings or for the special activities.

Respectfully submitted,

*Steve and Susan Rice*

## **Finance Committee Annual Report, May 2019**

**Linda Callahan, Elliott Kelly and Betsy Loughran, Co-Chairs**

**Members: Peter Lacey (Treasurer) Helen Blatz, Susan Clark, Steve Rice, Naomi Yanis**

**Board Representative: Peter Lacey**

The 2018-2019 year was highlighted by a transition in office personnel. The Finance Committee has been working with the new Office Administrator, Lea Douville, and the new Bookkeeper, Phil Gilfeather-Girton. Phil has been using various features in QuickBooks to streamline some of Lea's record-keeping duties, as well as make our monthly budget reports better reflect the details of UUSA financial transactions. Thus, committee members have been learning new ways of examining and understanding the flow of income and expenses.

We have continued with our usual responsibilities, which have included an annual internal audit of the Society's financial records, monthly review of the operating budget and the endowment, and preparation of the budget for the next fiscal year, in conjunction with the annual pledge drive. We have also contributed to fundraising projects, including assembling a gift basket for the annual Stone Soup Bazaar and managing the ongoing grocery store gift card sales, 5% of which goes back to the Society as income.

We are proud to report that this year's budget appears to be ending in the black. Our maintenance budget line is well over budget because of unpredictable expensive elevator repairs. We have again increased this budget line for next year. Otherwise all other budget lines are at or below budget. We had some unexpected savings in our employee expense budget lines as we realized we were paying double to cover our minister's taxes. Finally, with higher than anticipated plate and gift income, we should end the year with several thousand dollars more income than expenses.

During the year we have explored better ways to communicate with the congregation and increase our visibility. We have used both the monthly newsletter and the weekly announcements to report on the financial health of the Society. A new feature has been the twice yearly "Fiscal Dashboard," which presents a simple comparison of income vs. expenses over the last three fiscal years. We have opened two Sunday services with an introduction of our members and a description of the role of our committee in the life of the Society. The chairs have also participated in semi-annual meetings of the Council of Chairs, sharing the plans and work of our committee with other committee chairs, to improve communication and coordination of efforts.

As we look to the year ahead, we plan to work more closely with other committees and groups who deal with the financial aspects of the Society, such as Fundraising and Membership. We will also continue our efforts to be good stewards of the funds in our operating budget, looking for ways to save money and get a higher return on assets currently in a money market account. Additionally, we would like to refresh our committee membership by rotating chairs and encouraging others to join us.

Finally, there have already been some significant changes in the composition of the Finance Committee this year. As Elliott Kelly's term as Treasurer ended, Peter Lacey assumed that role. We have also welcomed Helen Blatz and Susan Clark as new members, while we have said farewell to Betsy Loughran and Naomi Yanis, with great appreciation for their many important, enduring contributions to the committee. We recognize that the committee and the UUSA are stronger as a result of their enthusiastic participation.

As always, we are very grateful to the congregation for their generous support. We understand that one of the keys to strong financial health is a vibrant, growing membership, so we look forward to working with the congregation and the new minister, Rachael Hayes, as we strive toward that goal in the coming year.

Respectfully submitted,

*Linda Callahan & Elliott Kelly, Co-Chairs*

*Helen Blatz, Susan Clark, Peter Lacey, Steve Rice, Naomi Yanis*

## **Fundraising Coordination Committee Annual Report, May 2019**

### **Coordinators: Sue Kelly, Kate Rice and Lauren Croce**

The purpose of the Fundraising Committee is to support the annual budget through 2-4 fundraising and community building events throughout the September-June year. The Committee's goal is to identify volunteer leaders to organize and carry-out these events as well as provide support. The fund-raising events for 2018-2019 included: a Fall Tag Sale, The Stone Soup Bazaar, and a Gala Art Sale/Auction.

### **Stone Soup Bazaar – December 1, 2018**

Stone Soup is a fun and festive UU community event. The event this year was organized by teams of people taking care of the jobs. Most of the organizing was done through emails and two meetings with the overall event coordinated by Sue Kelly. Overall profits (\$2,884) were down this year, due to lower quilt raffle ticket sales. A more complete report is attached. The main challenge is getting foot traffic in the door. Vendors are reluctant to pay for a table if they don't have good sales. Good quality, unique, well priced vendors are hard to find that weekend due to a large sale in Noho on that date (Big Brothers/Big Sisters). In addition, publicity is always a challenge. I recommend that the date for the event be reconsidered though there may not be a better date (and certainly not a perfect date).

What may help more is to change the format of the event. See below.

### **Service Auction – May 2019**

The Service Auction took place over two weekends – Sunday, May 11<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, May 18<sup>th</sup>. This amazing event was created by an awesome team of the following: Carolyn Cave, Susan Rice, Rachel Peterson, Polly Peterson, Lisa Cyr, Fran Plumer and Mary Herman (Chair). This event had multiple moving parts including: 50/50 Raffle; Buy-It-Now tables; Silent Auction of goods and services; Help Wanted and the classic Live Auction. Preliminary reports shows approximately \$11,000 was raised!

### **Going Forward for 2019-2020:**

#### **Big BIG Tag Sale**

This will be scheduled for the end of September. Information should get out to UU members and friends before the flower communion service about beginning to save items for the tag sale. One challenge is pulling it all together quickly when we just arrive back from summer "break." In addition, the Stone Soup Bazaar comes up very quickly afterwards if the dates stay the same.

#### **Stone Soup Bazaar**

In the past, this event has been scheduled for the first Saturday in December. One of the biggest challenges has been getting foot traffic into the building. Vendors are hesitant to sign on and pay the table fee if they have not been especially successful in the past. A large craft sale in Northampton organized by Big Brothers/Big Sisters also takes place the same weekend.

One thought is to possibly combine the two events – have the tag sale items become the vendors for Stone Soup Bazaar and hold it in early November or late October.

Respectfully submitted by *Sue Kelly*

## **Green Sanctuary Committee Annual Report, May 2019**

**Current Members: Steve Rice (chair), Ali Brau, Gordon Wyse, Mary Wyse, Anne Perkins, Ron Grosslein, Louise Grosslein, Betsy Loughran, Jay Stryker, Sophie Rogers, Darcy Dumont, Jeff**

The Committee has been very active this year and has accomplished several important projects this year.

### **UUSA Building Energy Audit and Improved Insulation**

The committee hired Bruce Harley, an energy consultant, who completed an audit of the Meeting House and recommended several improvements some of which we have completed;

1. Energia completed an insulation project which added insulation to the insufficiently insulated walls and ceiling of the Sanctuary and also completed some air sealing in that structure. 90% of the cost of this work was funded by Berkshire Gas.
2. The ERV (Energy Recovery Ventilator) in our building has been running 24/7 since it was started over 4 years ago. A timer was added to the ERV to have it run from 8 AM – 9 PM when the building is occupied.
3. Other recommendations by Bruce Harley have also been completed and some are still pending.
4. An air conditioning use policy for the summer services was developed and used starting last summer to reduce electrical use.
5. The committee is continuing to look at ways to monitor our energy use and reduce our carbon footprint.

### **Connecticut River Clean Up**

A group of intrepid, multi-generational Amherst UU's and some CT River Council members gathered at Herlihy Park on Saturday, Sept. 29 to clean up an old dump at the bottom of a steep slope. There is a small stream, also at the bottom of the slope that presumably flows south into the CT river.

Tessa Walton-Stanforth and a friend dismantled an old car and dragged up the bank. The top of the car was huge! There was an oven that Charlie Atwood, Steve Rice, Sophie and Pete Rogers dragged out of the bank. There was a huge truck tire almost completely buried in the stream. Ron Grosslein, Charlie, Pete and Dave used shovels, a pry bar made from a tree and a come-along to haul it out. Rebecca Fricke, Karen Fisk, Louise Grosslein, Kate Rice, Steve, Pete and Sophie dug lots and lots of plastic bags, bottles, and cans out of the bank, along with various large and small metal objects and some engine parts. Overall, 20 trash bags were filled lots of junk too big to fit into trash bags were also collected. A great improvement was made to this site on the CT River.

### **Fred Small Earth Day Service and Workshop**

The committee retained Fred Small to give our annual Earth Day service on April 7, 2019. His sermon was titled "Radical Hope."

*Any contemplation of global climate change, its frightening consequences, and the tardiness and timidity of nations in response is necessarily a meditation on hope.  
When the earth and its peoples are in such distress, where do we find hope?*

A Unitarian Universalist pastor, singer-songwriter, and former environmental lawyer, Rev. Fred Small is Minister for Climate Justice at Arlington Street Church, Boston. Cited by Bill McKibben as “one of the key figures in the religious environmental surge,” Fred left parish ministry in 2015 to devote his energies to climate advocacy.

The service was followed in the afternoon by a workshop, Led by Rev. Fred Small called “Giving Light. Spiritual Nurture for Climate Activism:”

*As we come to understand the gravity of climate disruption, it's easy to become disheartened. How do we convert informed anxiety into effective action in our congregation, community, state, nation, and world? In this interactive workshop welcoming all faith traditions and spiritual orientations, Rev. Fred Small will invite us into meditation, reflection, conversation, and song, strengthening our spirits and deepening our resolve in the struggle for climate justice.*

The committee found several sponsors to join in hosting this event including; UU Northampton and Florence, First UCC Amherst, South Amherst UCC, Mt. Toby Friends, Mother’s Out Front, and Climate Action Now. The workshop was a huge success with about 60 attendees.

### **Committee Action/Information Tables**

We have continued the practice of setting up information and action tables on the second Sundays of the month. Topics this year have focused on climate change actions including the carbon dividend bill pending in the US congress and effects to support the Sunrise movement and the Green New Deal.

### **Green Sanctuary Reaccreditation**

It’s been over 10 years since the UU Society of Amherst received Green Sanctuary Status and it has been recommended that we go through a self-evaluation process to ensure we’re doing all we can to improve our society and environment in accord with our UU principles. To accomplish this, we have completed an assessment of our current GS program. Next, we need to complete a re-accreditation action plan that builds on our successes of the past and fills gaps in our current programs. The plan must include a minimum of five projects two in the area of sustainable living, and one each from the other three focus areas (worship and celebration, religious education, and environmental justice).

We would love for you to join us in helping us make a just and sustainable planet.

Respectfully submitted,

*Steve Rice (chair) and active committee members.*

## **Leadership Development Committee Annual Report, May 2019**

### **Members: Joe Flueckiger, Tom Fricke, and Bo Mack**

The primary task of the Leadership Development Committee is to recruit candidates for the coming year's Board and other important committees.

We are especially grateful for everyone who stepped up to help with another year of Ministerial Search and interim ministry. The work done on these and other committees is vital to the long term health of our Congregation, and we recognize that it often comes at the expense of family time and other important commitments.

If you are not on a committee or the Board, we invite you to consider it. There is something for everyone in our community. Talk to others about their service and finding a volunteer role that is a good fit. Serving in a leadership position can be a wonderful means of deepening your connection to the UUSA.

### Our proposed slate for the Board of Trustees:

Karen Fisk, President (term ending 2020 - becomes President Emerita 2021)

Susan Rice, Vice-President (President 2021-22)

Clerk: Emily Shankle (2020-2021)

Treasurer: Peter Lacey (term ending 2020)

Jeanne Ballantine (term ending 2020)

Rob Fuderich (term ending 2020)

Rosie Cowell (term ending 2020)

Casey Flueckiger (term ending 2020)

Ben Brau (2020-2021)

Our proposed slate for the Leadership Development Committee for the next year will be Joe Flueckiger, Tom Fricke and Bo Mack.

The coming year we anticipate the formation of a new Committee on Shared Ministries which will conduct surveys to assess the ministries and create reports for the Minister, the Board, and Council of Chairs to consider. The Committee on Shared Ministries will serve to oversee and nurture all the ministries of the church as defined by the UUSA mission and vision statements.

## **Library and Archives Annual Report, May 2019**

**Coordinator: Maria Lydia Spinelli**

The UUSA maintains both a lending library and an archive of documents pertaining to the life of the society. The library is now housed in our conference room, which is a much more user-friendly space than we had in the past. We have a nice selection of titles, which are available for all to use. Please come by to browse and borrow!

The archives include documents, photos, and other materials chronicling the activities of the Society. They are housed both in the conference room and in Special Collections at the Jones Library. Because we have more shelf space in our expanded building, we are now able to keep more of the archives on site and more readily available. We count on members and friends to submit items that may be suitable for the archives, and we encourage you to use the archives for historical research.

This committee was inactive during the 2018-2019 worship season. **We are in need of volunteers** to help with shelving books, processing new donations, and filing society documents.

## Meetinghouse & Grounds Committee Annual Report, May 2019

**Members: Anne Perkins, Tom Fricke, Ron Grosslein, Jim Lee**

David Ulen continues to do an outstanding job on weekly cleaning and maintenance tasks. We're grateful that he's recovered from his winter injury. Also much appreciation to Lea for her frequent help in coordinating our efforts.

- We had Fall and Spring work days for the tidying of outdoor areas and big clean up tasks. Thanks to all the volunteers who helped. Our work included washing walls, cleaning the RE kitchenette and touch up painting, washing windows, and clearing the HVAC area.
- Great advances in insulation thanks to coordination of the Green Fund by the Green Sanctuary. Committee which obtained a grant from Berkshire Gas, who covered 90% of the cost of having insulation blown into the space above the sanctuary ceiling, insulating the attic walls between the sanctuary and the addition, and insulating the exterior walls that had not been done. Also installed a ceiling in the closet next to the elevator after we discovered that there was nothing to hold the new insulation up.
- Sanded and painted the holes that were patched after the insulation was blown in, primarily in the old hallway and music room.
- The weather strip was replaced on the door to the exterior in the stairway.
- Sanded and sealed stair edges in the sanctuary to increase the visibility of tread edges.
- Replaced batteries in emergency evacuation lights and passed fire inspection.
- Repaired a dragging bathroom door and old entryway door into sanctuary.
- Sue Kelsey continues to take a much appreciated lead on rose garden and other plantings.
- Hired a new HVAC contractor, Climates by Pomeroy, to help make all of our HVAC systems more energy efficient.
- Repaired the trestle table in the Social Hall.

Future tasks:

- We have loose and rotting shingles on the east exterior wall. We will need to hire professional help for that job.
- Working on a safer and more aesthetic platform for the eagle podium.
- Getting blinds for RE Classroom A (the Safety Committee is working on this after we provided them with the information needed).
- A chair rail for the Administrator's Office.
- We will be sanding and staining the outdoor benches.

\Respectfully submitted,

*Tom Fricke*

## Membership Committee Annual Report, May 2019

**Members: Anne Cohen, Janis Gray (Co-Chairs), and David Cohen**

The mission of the Membership Committee is to reach out to the larger community, welcome all who come through our door, help them find connections, celebrate our new members, and help sustain both new and longer-time members and friends.

This year marked our UU Society's third year with an Interim Minister. During these three years, the Membership Committee has in some ways felt "placed on hold," with each of the Interim Ministers, in turn, asking us to wait until a Settled Minister was in place before implementing ideas we developed some years ago.

### Highlights of 2018-2019

As of press time, 17 individuals had added their names in FY 19 to the Membership Book of the Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst. We were delighted to welcome **Jon Kent, Rob Fuderich, Yael Fuerst, Jennifer Mack, Brooke Burrows, Linda Robinson, Rachael Gibson, Craig Gibson, Ellen Leahy-Pile, Chris Pile, Clarise Patton, Abe Gelbein, Joan Gelbein, Susan Clark, Jeff Clark, Sophie Hermann, and Owen Gwilliam**. A New Member Recognition Ceremony is being planned for June 9 for those who joined after our last ceremony.

We are grateful to **Fran Plumer** for once again recruiting and scheduling our Sunday greeters: **Mary Latham, Betsey Johnson, Susan Rice, Anne Perkins, Karen Mack, Chas Stevenson, Naomi Yanis, Gabriela Horvay, Susan Clark, Jeff Clark, Mary Wyse, Mary Herman, Susanne Personnette, Jim Lee, Catharine Porter, Sophie Rogers, Sue Alexander, Pete Rogers, Jeanne Ballantine, Charlie Atwood, Hardy Ballantine, Janis Gray, George Sulzner** (before his unexpected passing), **Gene Herman, and Bo Mack**.

With occasional help from **Catharine Porter, Fran Plumer, Pat Rector, Naomi Yanis, Pete Rogers, Chas Stevenson, and Jeanne Ballantine**, the three of us continued to staff our **Welcome Table** on Sundays during Social Hour. While the table offers a useful and low-stress "focal point" for visitors seeking information, we are also there for any members or friends who have questions – for example, who in our congregation to approach with ideas they have (a book group was one example – we introduced the person to Director of Religious Education **Rebecca Fricke**), how to make more connections, or how to become more involved in the workings of our UU Society.

With Rev. Steve, we organized a **New Member Recognition Ceremony** in November.

We hoped to offer a "Getting to Know UU" class in the fall as well, but Rev. Steve asked us to wait because there were too many things happening at UUSA due to the start of another transitional year. On February 17, he, **Rebecca Fricke**, and Janis Gray (representing Membership) hosted a one-hour "**Getting to Know UU**" session in Classroom A after the service. Rev. Steve led the discussion. We were very pleased to have 12 people attend!

On April 23, 2019, our committee met for the first time with the Outreach, Integration and Retention Task (OIR) Force. Office Administrator **Lea Douville** was also in attendance to learn more about us. The purpose of the meeting was to begin to clarify our respective roles, since our committee and OIR have identical mission goals: outreach, helping people *find* a home, and helping people *make* a home with us.

This past year, the Membership Committee has not held regular meetings because we have found ourselves having “informal” meetings every Sunday while setting up and taking down the Welcome Table (and during the occasional “lulls” between people who stop by). We plan to resume formal meetings with the arrival of a Settled Minister.

We have continued to restock and order new informational materials from the UUA, and create our own specific to our UU Society. We will need to update some of these over the summer to reflect our new minister and any changes in contact information for various committees and affinity groups.

### **Goals for the Future**

**Reintroduce the annual gathering of greeters** in late August or early September to give them an opportunity to share ideas, discuss problems they’ve encountered in the past, and continue to build greeting skills to foster a more welcoming first impression of our UU Society. We used to do this “orientation” every year, but then met resistance from a few greeters who insisted it was not necessary – “All we need to do is be friendly!” In truth, it is not as simple as that, as a few awkward interactions in our foyer on Sundays have shown. We need to raise awareness that what may be a warm welcome to one person may be uncomfortable for another – one style of greeting does not fit all.

We want to **help ensure that there is room in the front row(s) of the sanctuary for wheelchairs** and other mobility aids. We know this is the intention of our UU Society, but lately these open spaces have been filled in.

The fact that our congregation owns a few **hearing assistive devices** needs to be better known. Perhaps they and a sign noting their availability could be placed on the greeters’ table on Sunday mornings.

We would like to work (perhaps with the Meetinghouse Committee) to address the issue of no readily available and accessible source of drinking water in our building. Could we have **a water cooler installed somewhere in the building?** We realize the prospect of using paper cups might dismay some, but 100% recycled sustainable disposable single-use paper cups do exist – here is one example: <http://letsgogreen.biz/pages/utensils/papercups.html>. It is neither realistic nor hospitable to assume the parent of a thirsty child, or a visiting elder at risk of dehydration on a hot day, will know to ask a greeter or someone else who happens to be at hand to go into the kitchen (which may be locked!), locate a clean glass, and return with the gift of cold water (and then make sure the glass ends up back by the wash sink in the kitchen).

We are planning to help **update our directory of members and friends**. It would be wonderful if we could also have a **photo directory** (either part of a simple printed directory, or as a separate document) to help not only our members and friends, but the Settled Minister get to know people!

We want to add space in the Guest Book where signers could have **more check off boxes for optional information or requests**. These types of boxes were included in the past, but at some point they disappeared from the page. Some possibilities: “My preferred pronoun is \_\_\_\_\_,” “I would like a permanent name tag,” “Please have someone contact me about \_\_\_\_\_.”

With the input and approval of a Settled Minister, we want our congregation to offer a more frequent, streamlined and effective **Path to Membership**.

We want to **make the signing of the Membership Book a richer and more meaningful experience** for all -- for the new member, the witnesses from the Board of Trustees, and the Settled Minister. In the past, this took place during a thoughtful and intimate gathering in the minister’s

study. For the last three years, however, it has been reduced to a hasty signing of the book after the service in a noisy and crowded social hall. (One suggestion we brought to our first Interim Minister was to have the member and witnesses gather after the service at the chalice table in the sanctuary and sign the book there. She liked this idea, but it was never implemented.)

We also want to institute a **more immediate recognition by the congregation of new members**, rather than waiting for the ceremonies that have traditionally been held just once or twice a year. One possibility: On the Sunday *after* a member joins (thus giving the minister advance notice while planning the service that day), a few minutes could be devoted in the service to introducing the new member to all.

We have many additional, identified goals and ideas, but we **need more people on the Membership Committee to develop them**. Bring us your *own* ideas, and let's work together as our UU Society begins an exciting new era!

Respectfully submitted,

*Janis Gray*

*Anne Cohen*

## **Ministerial Search Committee Annual Report, May 2019**

**Co-Chairs: Jess Murphy and Louise Grosslein**

**Committee Members: Carol Johnson, Charlie Atwood, Janis Gray, Kiana Diggs, Sue Kelly**

We did it! That is YOU did it. Our congregation voted on May 5 to call Rachael Hayes as our settled minister. When asked why she chose Amherst, Rachael said she was first inspired when she read our congregational record. She felt we were a warm, solid, vibrant congregation. She loves the surrounding area. She had a busy time during candidating week and felt very positive about the meetings she attended and the members she met while she was here.

We had much more than our required quorum at the congregational meeting and an overwhelming number of those members voted to call Rachael. Our RE kids voted on the same morning. With a few spelling changes, here are their comments:

“Yes. I want you to be our minister.”

“Yes, I like how cheerful she is. I never see her without a smile.”

“I want you to stay and I love you. You will love the church.”

“Yes, all the people are nice.”

“Yes, because you have a kind heart and your smile is outstanding.”

Thanks are in order, to **the Board** who addressed our requests promptly during the Search process; the previous Search committee: **Carolyn Cave, Jen Chylack, Lisa Cyr, Mary Herman, Anne Perkins, and Steve Rice; Rev. Steve;** and to **our whole congregation.**

Let’s remember Rev. Steve’s Swiss Army Knife sermon. No one minister can meet all of our needs. But our congregation and Rachael have a great collective tool box of skills and values. It will be exciting to get to know each other and begin to move forward in identifying and living our mutual mission.

Rachael will be ordained on June 9, 5 PM, at her home congregation, Fourth Universalist Society in New York city. We are invited to attend! Her settled ministry will begin in August 2019. She will begin preaching for us in September.

Thanks for your trust and your help during this process. Everyone participated by attending services, stepping up to help with committee work and Sunday morning tasks, and by pledging. We are a strong congregation and that helped us attract a strong pool of applicants. At this point we will join all of you in welcoming Rachael next fall and beginning our worship and our work together.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Louise Grosslein*

## **Music Committee Annual Report, May 2019**

**Jason Threlfall and Maura Whalen, Co-Chairs  
Music Director: Brenda Miller**

This past year the music committee had another successful year of over-seeing the rich tradition of integrating inspirational music into our community. The UUSA Choir, under the direction of our music director Brenda Miller, continued to present a variety of wonderful music to our Sunday services and worked very hard to improve vocal production, diction, and breath control!! The choir welcomed new members: Clarise Patton, Abe Gelbein, and the return of Valerie Eaton to our core group of devoted singers: Carolyn Cave, Maura Whalen, Sophie Rogers, Jane Smith Shohan, Carol Rothery, Carolyn Holstein, Louise Grosslein, Janis Gray, Fran Plumer, Mary Beth Seminario, Rachel Peterson, Casey Attebery, Gordon Wyse, Bo Mack, John Foster, Hardy Ballantine, Pete Rogers, and Ron Grosslein.

The dedication and commitment of our choir members cannot be over-stated or over-appreciated. With minimal time to prepare for each Sunday's musical offerings, their performances have continued to be strong and a true gift to our community each Sunday. Starting in January, the choir began learning the material for Choir Sunday, which this year focused on music from different parts of the world and different time periods: Spanish Villancicos from the 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> centuries, a Purcell (English) madrigal from the 1600's, African Praise Songs and Hungarian Folk Tunes arranged for choir. A fascinating and educational process!! It will be important for the committee to encourage and recruit new choir members in an effort to keep the energy of the group going strong and to have more people who can share in preserving the large role that the choir plays most Sundays.

This past year featured a fabulous fundraising event. In April we raised \$350 for the George Sulzner Music Fund and \$350 for NELCWIT, a local organization which supports women in transition, with a concert of all women composers at the UUSA. The performances featured our very own Brenda Miller and some very generous and talented colleagues of hers. With the funds generated we were able to pay for our guest musicians for Choir Sunday, guitarist Joe Ricker and tenor Jim Mead.

With regards to general business: Jason Threlfall and Maura Whalen stepped in to co-chair the music committee. The committee continued to oversee the UUSA music budget and Kurtiss Gordon Music Fund, as well as the usual piano tuning and organ upkeep. Jason Threlfall built casters for our Roland electric piano and was able to do an emergency repair of the piano's foot pedal assembly which had broken off due to the raised height of the now mobile piano. Also, the committee continued to provide assistance to our in-house and invited musicians, created and maintained a medium for communication among musicians, our pastor, and others, discussed budget issues, and facilitated fundraising efforts.

The committee will be looking for new ways that we can become more active in serving our congregation, which will include generating ideas for additional fundraising efforts. We will also be looking into possible ways of involving children in our Sunday musical offerings, from time to time.

Finally, this past year we lost a dear friend and valued member of our choir, of our community. With hearts filled with gratitude and sadness we bid farewell to George Sulzner. He has been greatly missed.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Jason Threlfall, Co-Chair and Brenda Miller, Music Director*

**Newsletter Committee  
Annual Report, May 2019**

**Janis Gray, Copy Editor  
John Foster, Production Editor**

The newsletter for the Unitarian Society of Amherst is produced once a month. About 30 paper copies are sent by U.S. Postal Service. Electronic files are sent to members and friends, visitors who provide us with email addresses, other UU congregations, and local houses of worship. A PDF is also posted on our website. A few paper copies are also available on the literature table in the foyer and on the Welcome Table in the Social Hall.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Janis Gray*

## **Task Force on Outreach, Integration and Retention Annual Report, May 2019**

**Committee Members:** Catharine Porter, Jeanne Ballantine, Pat Rector and Bob Romer

**BACKGROUND.** In late November 2018, the UUSA Board of Trustees created a taskforce “to examine, plan and help implement some changes that will help new people feel more welcome and help folks who have been here for a while feel more open to sharing leadership.”

Three relatively new members of the UUSA agreed to develop a report and a set of recommendations. The 10-page preliminary report and recommendations were approved in their entirety by the Board in March 2019. In May 2019, OIR members were encouraged to continue their work and invited expand its efforts with the Council of Committee Chairs.

**PROCESS.** The group first met in January 2019 and based its report on meetings, informal fact gathering, multiple emails, phone conversations, and consultations with various members of the congregation and professional staff. This is an on-going process.

Recommendations we have made are both ambitious and achievable. We were mindful and confident that they would be shaped by the values, vision and skills of our new minister.

We have only begun to meet with Committees regarding possible collaborative work, but have held three meetings so far: on Feb 7 with RE Committee; on February 10 with the newly revived Welcoming Congregation Renewal Committee, and on May 23 with the Green Sanctuary Committee. We have also reached out to the Sunday Services Committee, but its leadership but have not yet settled on a date.

The purpose of these visits include a) listening to each committee/task force’s self- assessment of the ways it involves newcomers, and b) exploring their interest in increasing engagement and empowerment of the congregation’s newest members and friends through outreach and service to the wider community, and c) hearing more about how to integrate new members and friends into their leadership structure. We envision this activity as collaborative partnerships, where possible.

### **HIGHLIGHTS OF REPORT/RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. **“One Night Stands”** (in process) Their purpose is to attract and welcome newcomers to UUSA, to provide a service to our own members/friends and the larger Amherst community, and to create occasions to explore, reflect, or consider action. (The definition of these events is still evolving, in the direction of exploring what unique contributions could be offered by a moral/spiritual community such as ours.
2. **Welcome Mugs** (in process): Their purpose is to be a gentle identifier in the Social Hall, a visual cue to the rest of us that this is a person who is new - and have a chance to welcome them. The whole point of ministry of welcome mugs is to build relationships between existing members and newcomers.
3. **New Members - “Getting to Know You” Project**— (in process) Photo and/or brief description of new member, could be prepared on an ongoing basis. One or two new members and their brief profile could be included in the weekly newsletter, with their approval, and then, as time and resources allow, an end-of-the-year photo display on an easel or bulletin board could be created. Not mandatory and new members and friends who don’t want to participate are free to decline.

4. **Keeping Mailing and Invitation Lists Current:** (in process) Addressing the problem that newcomers have knowing which groups are open and which are not accepting new members. Identifying a need to navigate the business of “open and closed” more gracefully and how new groups could be spawned.
5. **How Do Things Work Here?:** (process not yet started) We have heard repeatedly in conversations from newcomers that it is not always clear how to get involved in UUSA activities. Some of their concerns relate to more transparency in governance and decision-making: If I want to serve on the board, do I need a “platform?” If not, on what basis does a new member vote meaningfully? We recommended the creation of a fiercely practical manual (online or otherwise), a project to be started immediately and available for new (and longer term) members and friends.
6. **Support and encouragement of “pop-up” interest groups:** Those who would like to convene a little group of UUs and friends could be permitted to “advertise” the group in the electronic newsletter (and possibly elsewhere). The groups could be anything from knitting to hiking, biking, support groups, theater or movie buddies, etc.
7. **With Open Arms: Greater systematic and more timely attention given to prospective and new members:** (modestly begun, but not yet initiated) This involves a range of activities that are vital to the health of the society and its future through regularly scheduled newcomer events, focus groups or surveys of new members, and development of a comprehensive media plan.

A fuller version of the committee’s report is available through the UUSA office.

Respectfully submitted by

*Catharine Porter, Jeanne Ballantine, Pat Rector and Bob Romer*

**Pastoral Care Committee  
Annual Report, May 2019**

**Pete Rogers and Mary Wyse, Co-Chairs**

**Committee Members:** Mary Herman, Fran Plumer, Charlie Atwood, Rob Fuderich, Carol Johnson, and Rev. Steve.

Added four new members - Mary Herman, Rob Fuderich, Charlie Atwood and Carol Johnson. Charlie and Carol have been excused from their PCT functions during their tenure on the Search Committee and are re-joining this summer.

Bo Mack, Libby Walton-Stanforth and Elizabeth Alcaide resigned after providing devoted and loving concern for all UUSA members and friends for many years.

Rev. Steve Cook was an active participant and provided his valuable wisdom throughout his interim ministry.

Three members attended a day-long workshop on lay pastoral care conducted by New England District of UUA at Chelmsford First Parish UU.

Our plans for the coming year include:

- a day-long retreat in mid-August which Rev. Rachael Hayes will hopefully be able to attend,
- another district training
- addition of another member who has a child in RE or good contacts with parents of children in RE. This person will replace Libby who had that function.

Respectfully submitted,

*Pete Rogers*

**Personnel Committee  
Annual Report, May 2019**

**Co-chairs: Kelly Aiken, Lisa Harvey  
Board Representative: Jeanne Ballantine**

This past year, the UUSA Personnel Committee focused on the following:

1. Worked with board surrounding job descriptions and hiring of new office administrator and bookkeeper.
2. Worked on aligning UUA policies regarding benefits with UUSA policies
3. Consulted with minister and board on personnel related matters
4. Discussed with minister employee review process and barriers to completing these
5. Coordinated with Office Administrator regarding record keeping of personnel materials
6. Arranged for the purchase of secure file cabinets to store confidential personnel materials in the minister's office and office administrator's office.

Goals for 2019-20

1. Work with minister to problem-solve implementation of procedures (evaluation forms and employee agreement/job description templates)
2. Work toward standardizing and streamlining personnel procedures including administering benefits
3. Update Employee Handbook to bring it in line with UUA policies

Respectfully submitted,

*Lisa Harvey*

## **Religious Education for Children and Youth Annual Report, May 2019**

**Director of Religious Education and Youth Facilitator: Rebecca Fricke**  
**Preschool Teacher: Jacy Armenti**  
**Preschool Assistant: Anna Stanforth**  
**Preschool Helper: Tess Stanforth**

**Religious Education Ministry: Alyson Miller, Chair, Polly Peterson, Anne Perkins, Alyson Bull, Maura Whalen**

### **Programming**

The RE program continued to combine K-5th graders and most classes were led by Rebecca Fricke. Lesley Smith volunteered and led a mindfulness practice for the elementary group six Sundays this year. Jacy had a room full of children (9 regulars!) and she was assisted by HS Senior Anna Stanforth (paid) and Tess Stanforth (volunteer). Most Sundays children began upstairs for the chalice lighting, first hymn and story for all ages. Before being sung down Rebecca gave a brief explanation of what was going to be done downstairs. Once downstairs the children had circle time where they shared their joys and concerns. Then there was usually a discussion about the theme and then an activity. The morning usually ended with singing *This Day We Come* song and a “passing of the squeeze” - sending a hand-to-hand squeeze around the circle of children. In total we have 43 children and youth in the program.

**There were several whole-congregational services including:** October 14th – led by Rev. Steve; November 18th -led by Rev. Steve; December 16<sup>th</sup> – Christmas Pageant led by the children (pre-K-6) with the help of Ashley Carter and Kate Rice; Family Christmas service led by Rev. Steve; February 10th – breakout worship through music, service, art and conversation led by RE; March 17th - youth led service; May 12th - Mother’s Day led by Rev. Steve and Flower Communion on June 9<sup>th</sup> led by Rev. Steve.

**Sanctuary Keepers** (6th-8th) was facilitated by Rebecca Fricke with the help of parent volunteers. One Sunday a month the youth met in the foyer at 9:45 to receive their assignments. Throughout the year the youth rotated through the different jobs related to setting up for worship and cleaning up afterwards. The youth worked with the adult sanctuary keepers. The youth let me know that after awhile they learned everything and it seemed “the same.” They also pointed out that the adults often did things ahead of time so there wasn’t as much for them to do. If we do this again I will need to come up with more for them to do and have a better system to check in with the adult keepers. Email reminders didn’t work. Despite these shortcomings, they learned a lot by being part of the worship process. We met a second time every month and at that time and Rebecca modified the curriculum called *Worship Weaving* which encourages youth to think about their role in worship, the parts of worship and their ideas about faith and sacredness. This should set them up well for the Coming of Age program next year.

**The High School Youth Group** (9th-12th) was facilitated by Rebecca with the help of Kate Rice. Youth met irregularly from the start. In late fall it was decided that there were not enough people so Rebecca encouraged youth to get involved in some adult groups. One youth was already on the board and another joined the Green Sanctuary Committee. Six youth led a worship service on March

17th which was well received. Two youth and Kate Rice attended the UU UN Conference in April and the youth had a great time. Both want to go back next year.

I am hoping to find a way to develop a stronger youth group in the coming years.

**OWL (K-2nd and 4th-6th)** Our OWL program began in January and ran through to April. Thanks to Alyson Bull, Susan Wells (4th-6th) and Lauren Croce and Tom Fricke (K-2) for facilitating the groups. We had about 8 children in each group.

### **RE led Congregational Special Events**

This year the RE committee led several successful events: September 17th - congregational picnic at Mill River Park; December 16th - Holiday Potluck, April 13th - Contra Dance, May 3rd - Pride poster making and pizza and meet Rachael Hayes gathering, May 4th - PRIDE March in Northampton.

### **RE led traditions for Youth:**

Drivers License Ceremony - March 17th

Bridging Ceremony - June 9th

### **Safer Congregations Policy Update**

Rebecca ordered door window black out blinds in case of emergencies. Rebecca also worked with the Safer Congregation committee to bring in the Amherst Police Department to evaluate our building and present to interested congregants. There are things we can do to make our building safer.

### **Collaboration**

Rebecca meets almost monthly with Jessica Harwood, the Northampton DRE, to exchange ideas. Rebecca and Jessica collaborated on the PRIDE march information tent (shared costs, volunteers) and we encouraged our congregants to have breakfast together at the parade start.

### **RE Ministry**

RE Ministry met almost monthly from 7:30-9. The committee worked well together. In April Karen Bellevance-Grace came and talked with us and other interested congregants about Family Ministry.

Respectfully submitted,

*Rebecca Fricke*  
DRE

*Alyson Miller*  
Chair of the RE Ministry

## **Rental Committee Annual Report, May 2019**

**Committee Members: Carol Johnson, Elliott Kelly and Kelly Aiken**

The purpose of the Rental Committee is to create policies and guidelines around the use of our building for non-UUSA related events. While Lea, our Office Administrator, is the primary point of contact for those seeking to rent the meetinghouse, the Rental Committee supports her work by responding to questions/concerns as the need arises.

The use of the meetinghouse gives UUSA committees priority over the use of the space. However, the rental of our meetinghouse to both members and outside parties represents a significant portion of our yearly revenue. There are approximately 3-4 regular weekly renters and 3-4 regular monthly or bi-monthly renters. Together with a handful of short-term renters each month, the average monthly revenue is approximately \$2,500.

**Since the building can become quite busy, committees are reminded to request space from the office when scheduling a meeting.**

## **Safe Congregations Task Force Annual Report, May 2019**

**Committee Members: Lisa Cyr, Casey Flueckiger, Rebecca Fricke**

Several years ago our UUSA congregation approved a Safer Congregation Policy. These policies broadly cover a variety of safety issues from supervision of children to protocols around dangerous situations and building safety and security.

### **2018-2019**

In November, we met with the Amherst Police Department and walked through our building together. As a result of the meeting, we installed blackout curtains in the offices downstairs (more details in RE report) as well as a phone in the pulpit. Additionally, we have taken up the task of creating an active shooter policy for the congregation.

In December, Rob Fuderich invited security camera vendors to the meetinghouse to make recommendations and drafted a request for funding to the Board. Security cameras were recommended by the APD during November's walk-through to reduce the potential for crime. This conversation is ongoing.

In January, we hosted the Amherst Police Department who trained us in **A Citizen Response to Active Threats (ALICE)** course. We are in the process of writing an active shooter policy to add to our Safer Congregations Policies.

### **2019-2020**

In the Fall, we hope to present the congregation with this new policy and facilitate training for our congregation to implement the new policy. As always, we are open to suggestions of additional safety issues you feel should be addressed.

Respectfully submitted,

*Lisa Cyr*

## **Sanctuary**

### **Annual Report, May 2019**

#### **CHALICE TABLE FLORAL OFFERING**

##### **Susanne Personette, Coordinator**

Offering a floral arrangement or potted flowers for the Chalice Table on Sunday morning is yet another way for UUSA members and friends to add beauty and meaning to our weekly services. This year, we added the opportunity for volunteers to dedicate their offering to an anniversary, birth, death, personally meaningful events, gratitude, etc. Many did this.

However, getting volunteers to bring flowers every Sunday continues to be difficult. Since I was not eager to troll coffee hour trying to cajole people to volunteer, I sent out email invitations to over half the congregation asking them to sign up via a Doodle poll. Lea also put announcements in the weekly email when flowers were needed for particular Sundays. We both had limited success and several Sunday services were without flowers.

Rather than continuing to appeal to the larger congregation, since there appear to be 10 or 12 women who find offering flowers meaningful, I suggest that the UUSA creates a "Flower Brigade" with 12 members who will each bring flowers a few times a year. People would join this new group and sign up on Doodle for their specific dates.

If people do not respond to this, then we can surmise that flowers are just not that important, and we can probably eliminate them.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Susanne Personette*

#### **SOCIAL HOUR**

##### **Mary Latham and Catharine Porter, Coordinators**

The Social Hour provides an opportunity for the congregation to gather following service to visit with each other – it seems to be a tradition that is enjoyed by many in the congregation. The Coordinators organize volunteers to provide and serve refreshments during the social hour following each Sunday service.

#### **Concerns**

In addition to serving as hosts at least 6 times over the course of the worship season, Mary and Catharine, as coordinators, were on hand every Sunday in 2018-2019 to assist with a variety of tasks and to ensure that the volunteers knew what was required of them.

As it currently stands, despite the assistance of several volunteers, the tasks of the Social Hour Coordinators are a very heavy lift. In addition to the tasks of finding volunteers who are willing to provide refreshments and to assist running and cleaning-up from Social Hour, there are many components involved in the operation of a commercial kitchen. Looking ahead, perhaps there is a need for this event to be shared amongst more (all?) members of the UUSA. For examples, two to three volunteers across 45 services per worship season adds up to 90 to 135 volunteers a year – about the size of our current membership.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Mary Latham*

## **HOUSEKEEPING/MAINTENANCE & REPAIRS**

### **David Ulen, Sexton**

Our Meetinghouse is being swept, scrubbed, and maintained by our Sexton, David Ulen. David and Lea work together weekly to make sure our building is ready for Sunday Services, rentals, and other activities. In keeping with our designation as a Green Sanctuary, we use “green” cleaning products to care for the Meetinghouse and environmentally friendly soap and paper products for use in the restrooms. David also performs the many maintenance and repair tasks required by our building. Our Meetinghouse is in good hands!

## **SANCTUARY KEEPERS**

### **Keepers: Kyle Cave, Elliott Kelly, and Steve Ransford**

Sanctuary Keepers take one Sunday a month to arrive early to set up the sanctuary for the service, take attendance, facilitate the passing of the collection plates, count and document cash, and lock up the building. Many thanks to members of the choir for putting out the hymnals before the weekly services.

## **OUTDOOR SIGN BOARD**

### **Bob Romer, Coordinator**

The task of displaying the upcoming sermon title out front on our outdoor sign is accomplished by volunteers coordinated by **Bob Romer**. In April, we made the switch to printing sermon titles which take less time to ‘install’. If anyone is interested in joining the sign-changing crew and taking a turn (about once every six weeks or so) at changing the sign, get in touch with Bob Romer (rhromer@amherst.edu). Thank you to all who help with making our Society more visible in the community!

## **WAYSIDE PULPIT**

**Chas Stevenson** copies and installs the inspirational and thought-provoking “Wayside Pulpit” quotations on the reverse.

## **Small Group Ministry Annual Report, May 2019**

### **Anne Louise White and Mary Wyse, Facilitators**

Covenant groups comprising UUSA congregants have been meeting steadily for more than fifteen years. There are at present three groups. Their schedules are: Wednesday, twice monthly, at 10:15 AM; every other Wednesday at 1:30 PM; and the first and third Thursday at 1:30 PM. Each is facilitated by an experienced group leader. Each operates more or less independently of the others, thus there are some differences in content and format. Members of the existing groups are predominantly late middle aged and elders. Last year two long-running groups disbanded. A new group focusing on aging (the Wednesday AM group) started in January and is thriving. Another group, also to be focused on issues related to aging, has not yet established itself. Facilitators for the groups form the committee, which this past year met infrequently.

Historically, once groups are established they sustain themselves for years, reflecting the members' high levels of both commitment and satisfaction. Autonomy of the groups has allowed them to go on without significant institutional input or support. However, starting new groups has proven difficult.

### **Concerns**

1. Lack of institutional involvement/support, in terms of promotion—recruiting new members, starting new groups; and in terms of guidance and training—recruiting/training new facilitators, for instance.
2. Lack of clear protocols where they might be useful: re how to start new groups, how to place new members in existing groups, how to address problems within individual groups (e.g., conflict among members, issues of authority).
3. Lack of participation of younger congregants in covenant groups.

### **Needs/Recommendations**

Integration of covenant groups with other functions of the society is essential to raising awareness among its members of what small groups have to offer. It is essential to a truly organized effort to start new groups, to broaden their appeal, and to engage more people in training and leadership roles. This can be accomplished through:

1. Regular representation in the Council of Committee Chairs.
2. Coordinating with our minister and other leaders our efforts to start new groups and recruit/train more facilitators.
3. Establishing an ad hoc committee to formalize protocols governing the operation of individual groups.

The covenant group can have a powerful place in the life of our society. It offers a safe and intimate place for worship and sharing. It helps society members get to know one another better. It could become a way of attracting new members to the congregation and/or retaining new members. There is that potential, but our small groups have tended to operate on the margin in the UUSA. It will take work and the support of the society as a whole to change that.

Respectfully submitted,

*Bill Cooksy*

## **Social Events**

### **Annual Report, May 2019**

#### **MEN'S BREAKFASTS**

##### **Mike Sussman, Coordinator**

A small group of men from the Society meets for breakfast at *Kelly's* every Wednesday starting around 7:00 AM. The size of the group varies from as few as six to as many as twelve, and we will always make room for newcomers. There is no set agenda, and the conversation is rather eclectic, covering everything and anything on a given day. If you'd like to be included on the email distribution list re: this event, please contact Lea in the office. Come join us; you'll be well-fed and never bored.

#### **WOMEN'S LUNCHEON**

##### **Sophie Rogers, Coordinator**

A group of women from the Society meets for lunch on the second and fourth Thursday of each month at 12:00 noon at a variety of local restaurants. If you'd like to be included on the email distribution list re: this event, please contact Lea in the office. New faces are welcome!

#### **CONGREGATIONAL PANCAKE BREAKFASTS**

##### **Peter Lacey, Coordinator**

The Boys of Summer (a.k.a. "The Men's Breakfast Crew") once again hosted these traditional summer pancake breakfasts on the last Sunday July, and August. We always look forward to gathering for some summer breakfast food and conversation. Our next congregational pancake breakfast is on Sunday, June 30<sup>th</sup>.

## **Social Action Committee – Interfaith Opportunities Network (ION) Annual Report, May 2019**

### **UUSA Representative to ION: Mary Beth Seminario**

The Interfaith Opportunities Network (ION) is a lay interfaith network based in Hampshire County that seeks to strengthen bonds of mutual respect and understanding with the desire to learn from others' faith tradition, rejoice in the many things we have in common and appreciate our differences. We respect and are inspired by our shared concern for peace, justice and concern for the earth.

ION was begun in 2005 with 4 people from different faith communities. It has grown to include the following fifteen houses of worship and five college spiritual centers: South Congregational Church, Mt. Toby Friends Meeting, New England Peace Pagoda, Daughters of the Heart of Mary (Marion Center), First Congregational Church (of Amherst), Hope Community Church, Jewish Community Center of Amherst, Hampshire Mosque, Wesley Methodist Church, North Hadley Congregational Church, Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst, Immanuel Lutheran Church, Goodwin Memorial AME Zion Church, Grace Episcopal Church, Hadley Congregational Church, Cadigan Center for Religious & Spiritual Life, Mt. Holyoke College & Amherst College Office of Religious & Spiritual Life, Newman Catholic Center and the Albert & Amelia Ferst Interfaith Center (Westfield University). This past year after thoughtful discussion we decided to expand our membership to include non-Abrahamic faiths and welcomed the New England Peace Pagoda.

At our meetings, we share what is happening in our own faith communities including fundraisers for non-profit environmental, peace and justice groups. A member often shares in depth what her/his faith means to them. It is another way we learn from one another. Also each year we also usually have a few speakers.

A member from South Congregational Church who is on the board of the A Better Chance (ABC) house invited us to participate in their 50th Anniversary fundraiser. She asked if each house of worship could contribute \$150. Through a dedicated offering our UUSA gave \$670 which brought the total ION contribution over \$2500.

Another speaker, Duane Dale, is coordinator from Grace Episcopal Church which is co-sponsoring a Tutsi Congolese family. This family of ten, a father and his 9 children (8 girls 1 boy) have been in Amherst since November 2018. They entered this country through the work and support of Catholic Charities. While Catholic Charities provides the administrative support, the day-to-day support of this family rests on Duane, his wife and 20 other Grace members who have formed a circle of care along with 10 Jewish Community Members. After a large apartment was found, food had to be purchased, medical appointments, schooling arranged ESL classes arranged and jobs food. The day-to-day support of this family continues. Additional help is welcome.

Throughout our twenty plus year history ION has felt the need to publicly respond to hostility against specific groups. This past year there were anti-Semitic, anti-Muslim and anti-black acts to which ION responded. After the massacre in at Christchurch in New Zealand, ION submitted the following letter to the editor of the Gazette newspaper as well as had a silent vigil on the Amherst Commons.

"We of the Interfaith Opportunities Network are Jews, Muslims, Buddhists and Christians. Once again we find ourselves confronted with an unspeakably violent tragedy. Last fall we

stood with Jews after the massacre at a synagogue in Pittsburg. This time it is our Muslim sisters and brothers of New Zealand who are the victims of a murderous attack.

Too many across the globe are spreading messages of fear and hatred toward the "other," the stranger, those different from themselves. These seeds of hatred move and take root even in welcoming places like New Zealand - or our own community. Often these attacks are directed at those gathered in worship from faiths viewed as threats to the attackers' own faith or identity.

There are deep reflections we can enter into. Can we question our own assumptions and internalized feelings of superiority and self-righteousness that we harbor? Can we be bold to notice and challenge racism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, homophobia and xenophobia when we encounter them? Join us in committing ourselves to this sacred work.

We stand with you, our precious, Muslim sisters and brothers who live and work and worship among us. We support you, are connected to you, respect your religious beliefs and practices, and consider you part of "is." We will not allow hatred or violence to tear us apart or destroy what we share in common. You are not alone....".

Respectfully submitted,

*Mary Beth Seminario, UUSA ION Representative*

## **Social Action Committee Annual Report, May 2019**

**Chair: Maria Lydia Spinelli**

**Members: Mary Beth Seminario, Gabriela Horvay, Kenton Tharp, Mary Latham**

This year we sponsored an event focusing on the dire lack of affordable housing in Amherst, and a Peace Pagoda event on disarmament that encouraged people to boycott companies that contribute to nuclear arsenals and to war in other ways.

We continued to coordinate the meal team for the **interfaith shelter in Northampton**, in cooperation with the Southern Congregational Church in South Amherst. From November to April, we prepare, deliver and serve a meal for the some 28 people who come to the shelter. Chas Stevenson, Susan and Steve Rice, Mary Latham, Kenton Tharp, Maria Lydia Spinelli, Sue Kelly, Mary Wyse, Elizabeth Alcaide, Pat Rector and Rebecca Fricke donated food and/or delivered meals and served. Thanks to all for making this possible.

Our Annual **Social Justice Service** focused on White Fragility and White Supremacy and it served to launch the **Dismantling White Supremacy** seminar series organized by Steve and Susan Rice, and led by Ken Wagner.

Gabriela Horvay set up a table with information and letter writing materials in February. We have talked about making that a monthly feature.

### **Additional activities of the Social Action Committee:**

#### **Just One Thing**

During September through June on the second Sunday of the month, a collection usually occurs for the Amherst Survival Center. Detailed information about needed foods & items is publicized ahead of time in the weekly announcements. Our congregation has contributed generously to this collection which has occurred in various forms for countless years.

#### **Not Bread Alone**

Our Society is responsible for providing lunch for First Congregational Church's community meal whenever there are 5 Saturdays in the month. This year there were 4 Saturdays (including June) where UUs prepared new dishes for hungry community members. We also helped serve the food, organize donated produce & bread for distribution as well as clean up. As students from UMass & other colleges often help too, there have been Saturdays when the kitchen was too crowded and our help was not needed. That will not be the situation this summer when our help will be needed in both June & August.

#### **Interfaith Sanctuary & Solidarity Chapter Amherst Chapter**

Many area faith communities, including our UUSA, are member of or support the work of this group which seeks to support immigrants in their quest for a secure life free from fear of deportation.

Since October 2017, twelve different religious communities have supported Lucio Perez, a Guatemalan, who has been in sanctuary at the First Congregational Church of Amherst. A very brief background: He has lived in this country since 1999 when as an 18 year old he was forced to leave

his country because his life was in jeopardy from gang members. He & his wife Dora have 4 kids ages 20, 16, 15 and 10. Lucio had worked a variety of jobs involving demanding physical labor. In 2009 he came to ICE's attention when the Perezes went into the West Hartford Dunkin Donuts (a very safe neighborhood) leaving their children in the car. They returned to the car finding it surrounded by police. He was charged with child abandonment. Though this charge was dropped it put him on ICE's radar. In dealing with the immigration system, at some point he sought the help of the Pioneer Valley Workers Center through which he decided to seek sanctuary rather than be deported back to Guatemala. Lawyers are presently working on his behalf while he awaits a hearing on his appeals.

Our Society is involved in helping Lucio & his family in several ways. Every 2 -3 months, we help provide suppers for either Lucio & his family (usually 3 kids) or just Lucio on 3 or 4 nights. Many different individuals and families have shared their time & talents to furnish a variety of healthy meals which nourish the family both physically and emotionally. Additionally, there are people in our Society who on their own provide transportation for the children and their mother from their apartment in Springfield for meals with Lucio. Other Society people spend time at First Church as part of the round the clock coverage for Lucio. More than 200 people have been involved supporting this humble man who sees himself as representing all immigrants in their struggle.

Respectfully submitted,

*Maria Lydia Spinelli*

## **The Unitarian Universalist Society of Amherst Stained Glass Annual Report, May 2019**

### **Chair: Janis Gray**

It is hard to believe it's been five years to the day since a fully restored Angel of the Lilies was reinstalled in our meetinghouse!

Since then, we've taken part in the monthly Amherst Arts Night Plus events on the first Thursdays of June, July, August, September, October, April and May. **Janis Gray** has served as docent during those evenings. In recent years, **Jay Stryker** has also been present to play both the piano and our historic Steere and Turner organ, and give "behind the organ tours" to interested folks who came in to see the window, letting them try their hand at the organ's keyboard.

Between last June and this May, 90 people came to UUSA on Arts Night Plus; we anticipate more on June 6, 2019.

Throughout the year, an unknown number of visitors have asked to view the window during office hours. Thank you to Office Administrator **Lea Douville** for accommodating them so graciously!

In April 2019, **Tom Fricke** and **Darcy Dumont** began learning from Janis where to find set up the signs and displays for the Arts Nights, and answers to other questions visitors may have about the Tiffany window, in order to spell Janis so that she was not the only person responsible for Arts Night Plus duties month after month. More help would be welcome! Setup begins at 4:30 p.m., the doors open at 5:00 p.m., and we must remain open, per Arts Night Plus requirements, until 8:00 p.m. Then the signs may be taken down and the displays returned to their storage places.

This spring, the organizers of Amherst Arts Night Plus also asked our UU Society to serve as a venue for some of the musical groups that add the "Plus" to Arts Night Plus by performing at two or three locations on a given evening. This "Musical Medleys" program is funded by a grant from the Amherst Cultural Council. So far we have enjoyed the jazz and rock duo Grace McKay and Michael Mazzu, and the Amherst Regional High School Jazz Band. On June 6 we will host Mary Witt (of the O-Tones) and Annie Paterson (of Rise Up Singing).

Respectfully submitted,

*Janis Gray*

**Sunday Services Committee  
Annual Report, May 2019**

**Co-Chairs: Mary Herman and Steve Rice**

**Members: Betsy Johnson, Mary Latham, Anne Cohen, Carolyn Holstein, and Bob Romer, Carol Rothery.**

The Sunday Services Committee primarily plans and conducts services when the minister is not in the pulpit.

Last Summer the committee planned 9 Sunday Services from June 25 – September 3, 2018.

|           |   |                                 |
|-----------|---|---------------------------------|
| June 25   | Remembering Amherst's Black Civil War Soldiers              | Bob Romer                       |
| July 2    | Little Hearts... Grateful Hearts; How we came to be         | Janis Gray                      |
| July 9    | Reflections on UUA General Assembly                         | Steve / Susan Rice              |
| July 16   | Grief and Transitions in Music                              | Stephen Gottlieb                |
| July 23   | Hands Across the Hills                                      | Kip Fonsh                       |
| August 6  | An Exclusive Interview with Margaret Fuller                 | Carol Rothery/Elizabeth Alcaide |
| August 13 | These Are My People<br>The Search for an American Identity: | Rev. John Pastor                |
| August 20 | Creating a Usable Past                                      | Betty Romer                     |
| Sept 3    | Change of Heart   | Mary Herman                     |

During the Fall, Winter and Spring Services our interim minister, Rev. Stephen Cook, lead 30 services and the Sunday Services committee arranged for 7 services.

|                       |  |  |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| Sept 30               | Sharing Our Gifts – Making Connections                       | Susan Rice, Karen Fisk<br>Emma McIntire, Steve<br>Rice |
| October 7<br>Greenway | Deeper Than the Skin   | Reggie Harris and Greg                                 |
| November 25           | White Fragility  | Glen Bertrand  |
| December 30<br>Gray   | The Fish Who Dared to Develop Lungs                          | Carol Rother and Janis                                 |
| January 27            | Resisting White Supremacy – What's in it<br>For White People | Ken Wagner   |
| February 3            | What Does Love Require of Us                                 | Mary Herman  |
| April 7               | Radical Hope   | Rev. Fred Small  |

The Committee is now engaged in planning the services for this summer and the schedule is already nearly full.

In addition, the committee planned and produced a new Order of Service Cover to give the messages of Unitarian Universalism and our Society in the hands of attendees every week so that they can get to know us better.

The Committee meets monthly at the Meeting House and is a fun and challenging committee. We'd love for you to join us.

Respectfully submitted,

*Steve Rice, Mary Herman and the active members of the committee*

## **Wednesday Morning Community Breakfast Annual Report, May 2019**

**Coordinators: Sophie Rogers and Clare Bertrand  
Co-Sponsored by UUSA and Craig's Doors**

The Wednesday Breakfast has been hosted for almost 5 years in the beautiful social hall, providing a full hot breakfast every week free to all who visit. About 100 people enjoy the breakfast each week and enjoy a great meal in a comfortable casual atmosphere. Our partner, Craig's Doors, provides food and guest oversight while UU's cook, serve and clean up.

Food is donated by Atkins Farms, the Food Bank and other area restaurants. Craig's Doors supplements these donations with eggs, potatoes, onions, orange juice, cereal, sausages and condiments.

Other services provided weekly at the breakfast include:

- Craig's Doors personnel eat with guests and stay connected, offering support.
- a health worker who sets up a desk near the entry and assists our guests with Mass Health and Massachusetts ID's.
- free newspapers for guests to read are delivered.
- a representative from Tapestry joins the breakfast on a monthly basis to train those interested in the safe use of Narcan, a life-saving overdose drug.

The breakfast is staffed by friends or members of UUSA, as well as volunteers from the community at large. Using an online sign up tool, <http://signup.com/go/83M6sv>, we have found most volunteers will sign up ahead of time. The morning begins at 6am with set-up, potato prep and every hour more volunteers arrive. Rick Stegg continues to be a constant volunteer who is devoted to leaving our kitchen in perfect order. Jade Lovett and other staff from Craig's Doors provides steady support and leadership. Some of our guests help with clean up.

The Wednesday Breakfast continues to provide a meaningful, and concrete way to connect with each other and the larger Amherst community. Thanks to all our breakfast team, and thanks to the UUSA community for their support and encouragement.

If you would like to volunteer or have questions, please contact Sophie: [sophiesailing@gmail.com](mailto:sophiesailing@gmail.com)

Respectfully submitted,

*Sophie Rogers, Coordinator*

**ADDENDUM:** We established a kitchen committee which will meet when necessary. Perhaps this committee will warrant its own report in future years. In November 2018, we had two of the volunteers in the kitchen pass the serve safe certification: Claire Bertrand and Kenton Tharpe. We received a generous donation to buy kitchen supplies. Before we received that we bought a new warming tray.

## **Welcoming Congregational Renewal Committee Annual Report, May 2019**

**Pat Rector and Shawn MacLaren, Co-Chairs**

**Committee Members: Yael Fuerst, Jennifer Mack, Anne Perkins, Libby Walton-Stanforth,  
Annie Sexauer**

### **HIGHLIGHTS of Welcoming Congregation Renewal Committee in 2018-19**

- November 2018: Attendance of UUA New England-sponsored conference: “Aren’t We Welcoming Already?” By Catherine Porter and Pat Rector, which challenged congregations to consider deepening their commitment to LGBTQ+ individuals through the “five practices of welcoming” initiative.
- Late Fall 2018: small group convened including Lauren Croce and Helen Blatz, who had been involved in Welcoming Congregation work at UUSA when congregation first voted to become intentionally welcoming to LGBTQ+ people. Shawn MacLaren and Pat Rector agreed to be co-conveyors (co-chairs).
- Meetings began in earnest in 2019 to organize our work together and group decided to call itself the Welcoming Congregation Renewal Committee and to recommend to the Board of Trustees to support and endorse the UUA’s Five Practices of Welcoming initiative.
- March 2019: Board of Trustees approved Five Practices of Welcoming Initiative and recognized group as an official committee.
- May 2019: With significant organizing help from RE director Rebecca Fricke, adults and children’s participated in the Northampton Gay Pride parade, with a sign-making/pizza party the night before, and more than triple the attendance of the preceding year. Participation in all events was affirming and exuberant, and included members staffing an informational table about UUSA at the fairgrounds.
- Membership on the WCR committee continues to grow steadily and has more than doubled in size since its first meeting.
- Looking ahead: WCR is exploring possibilities in the coming year for a more organic integration of queer issues/challenges/individuals in all parts of congregational life, and for people of all ages, following and documenting the Five Practices of Welcoming.” This will include educational and commemorative events, solidarity actions, i.e. both outreach and inreach.