

UNITARIAN SOCIETY OF NEW HAVEN

ANNUAL REPORT

2017-2018



The Unitarian Society of New Haven
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Rev. Megan Lloyd Joiner, Minister
Dan Gelperin, President of the Board of Trustees
David Stagg, Chair of the Management Team
Jesse Greist, Director of Lifespan Religious Education
Congregational Administrator, Jamie Ross

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Board of Trustees

The board had three broad goals for this year:

Understand and manage congregational growth

Educated ourselves about the challenges, rewards and process of transitioning from a pastoral-sized congregation to a program-sized congregation by reading Robert Latham's "Moving on from Church Folly Lane". We wanted to understand congregational growth dynamics and proceed intentionally, instead of reacting to changes occurring.

Improve policy-based governance

We are practicing our policy-based governance by focusing on the mission and identifying concrete goals/ends that will advance our mission. Part of this work is keeping USNH's mission in front of us and talking about it with the congregation. The board now meets twice per month. Our second meeting is devoted to deeper discussions of what we should be doing (mission), often sparked by our readings.

We have aligned our practices closer to suggestions from Dan Hotchkiss' "Governance and Ministry: Rethinking Board Leadership" by having a board retreat to set our goals earlier, and by streamlining our meetings by moving more updates into homework and the consent agenda.

We have set a schedule for monitoring compliance with USNH's policies, which is how a policy-based organization ensures that it is behaving in accordance with its policies. The management team and board have gone through a full year's cycle of monitoring performance against policies, resulting in arriving at shared interpretations of all policies. This makes future monitoring efforts easier by clarifying expectations and documenting the shared interpretations.

We recognize that USNH is still figuring out our governance system, and there are difficulties to go along with new energy and freedom. In particular, we are concerned that the demands we place on our management team may not be sustainable by mere mortal humans. We interviewed past and current management team members to better understand some of the challenges.

As a follow up to this effort we started meeting with committees that are critical for operational activities (e.g. personnel, finance, buildings & grounds) to clarify roles, responsibilities and improve communication.

Clarify USNH's Vision

One result of our reading and discussion of "Folly" was the idea that as congregations grow it is increasingly critical for all members to be inspired by the same vision that we all work toward, even if we are doing different tasks. The board spent a lot of time discussing a vision for USNH and trying to understand how to have our congregation agree on a shared vision.

To this end the board started a regular "board chat" on the 4th Sunday of each month. Several of these have asked participants to share why they choose to spend their time and energy at USNH, instead of at other organizations. These conversations have been very powerful.

Feedback from Listening Circles in the Spring of 2017

In the spring of 2017, your Board of Trustees conducted multiple "listening sessions" during which we gathered your responses to 3 questions drawn from "ends" statements or goals which had been drawn from the congregation. The three statements were:

**USNH is a place where I am welcomed to be myself;
A place where we treat one another with respect;
And work towards advancing justice in the community and beyond.**

Folks were given 2 minutes to respond to each of the three statements

We received 95 verbal and written responses and were surprised that approximately 1/3 of the respondents reported times when they did not feel safe in these conversations. In fact, many reported having had painful experiences of not feeling respected for who they were, and sometimes experienced being treated rudely.

We all acknowledge and appreciate that the Right Relations team has facilitated circles addressing individual conflict situations and has also provided training workshops on several Saturdays. Many of us attended several of them and felt that they were very helpful. Of course, those who self-selected to attend had the curiosity, interest and time to do so. Even with that, several of the 95 written and verbal survey respondents reported never having heard of the Right Relations Team while some had heard of it but did not know what it actually was.

Since this presents a challenge to the internal dynamics of USNH culture, the Board established a Safety Circle comprised of representatives from many different areas of congregational life. The people invited to participate in the safety circle were members of staff, were part of prominent committees or held other leadership roles within USNH. Our image for this "Safety Circle" group was that, through mutual engagement, we could function like the hub of a wheel extending into the entire congregation.

We had 3 goals:

1. Arrive at better understanding of what the issues are which are challenging for some members, creating unrest and difficult behavior;
2. Learn strategies to respond to these behaviors and share these strategies with folks in the groups that participants represent;
3. Create a group identity to pursue honest conversation and continue on in the future, if desired, sharing situations and strategies.

We gathered 4 times - in November, January, April and May - 2 of those times with an outside facilitator - and made good progress toward our goals:

- Re goal 1: We have a better, though not complete understanding of issues that can set off difficult behavior – particularly around the dynamic of unmet expectations.
- Re goal 2: We have learned strategies to deal with challenging behaviors but have not as yet developed a mechanism to feed these strategies back into the congregational groups and culture.
- Re goal 3: We think the group has indeed developed a group identity which is in place to move forward if it wishes to.

While the gatherings were valuable, it became clear that, with everyone so busy, continuing with the model of assembling us all at regular intervals was no longer a viable option, so we began thinking about other ways to disseminate the insights and strategies we have gained these last months. Several techno options were discussed, but we felt they really were unsatisfactory. So, in the absence of further group meetings, we asked ourselves how we might best reach out and communicate our ideas to have the largest impact.

Together, we developed the idea that a one-time presentation be made to report back from the Board to share the material with the congregation. We discussed how such material might best be presented. We propose the presentation be made after a Sunday service when the most people are likely to attend. The presentation would hopefully be both useful and entertaining. Attendees would go away with a write-up describing the techniques and their application. All would be encouraged to attend, especially committee leaders who would be further encouraged to distribute the materials and to discuss content within their groups.

The Permanent Committee on Right Relations (PCRR) agreed to take the lead and make this presentation happen. The date is set for Sunday 10/14/18. It has been named “The Safety Circle Feedback Session”. The PCRR would welcome any who might want to help with the planning for this. They also extend a warm invitation to all who might like to join them on a regular basis as a part of a larger effort to support our covenant throughout our congregation. Their door is always open.

PCRR is the contact point for continuing the connections within the group.

Respectfully,

Peggy Myers, Bernice Marie-Daly and Jeannette Faber for the Board of Trustees

Minister's Report

I begin with deep gratitude to all the members and friends of USNH for this journey of shared ministry we are on together. You, the congregation, are the real highlight for me this year. I have reveled in your care for each other, your deep commitment to social justice work, your willingness to wade into troubled waters – politically, theologically, socially, emotionally. You have supported my freedom of the pulpit during a tumultuous year. You have stood by each other through myriad health concerns, death, emotional difficulties, and conflicts. Together, we are continuing to live our covenant, be the change we wish to see, and create a powerful, loving community.

I cannot thank you enough for all you do—financially, physically, administratively, emotionally and more—to make USNH the special place it is. To ALL our volunteers, I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Similar to last year, my goals for this year were to: provide high-quality worship services on Sunday mornings—this year with a 9am and 10:30am service, prioritize my workload and practices that led to work/life balance, and work closely with the Stewardship Team on a successful stewardship campaign. I also wanted to provide quality pastoral care in partnership with the Lay Ministers, connect with you as individuals and as a community, and to undertake the ministry of administration and governance in partnership with the Board of Trustees and the Management Team.

Other highlights for me this year include:

- i. Preaching and leading worship on Sunday Mornings including nineteen sermons (with two more planned for Summer 2018), participating in five services at which we welcomed a guest or which fell outside of Sunday morning, and planning and participating in nine multi-generational services.

I consulted with the Worship Committee and worked closely with Jesse Geist, Director of Lifespan Religious Education, Jeff Douma and Erika Schroth, co-Directors of Music, and Worship Committee Chair, Rich Stockton. We are currently evaluating the timing of services and whether we should have one or two services next year. The 9am service remained very small throughout the congregational year.

- ii. Working closely with our Lay Ministers, especially co-chairs Sarah Whitson and Susan Meredith, to coordinate pastoral care and pastoral visits. I provided pastoral support to members and friends throughout the year including visits in my office, at homes and in hospitals and rehab centers. I am still not doing as much pastoral care as I'd like and seek to rectify this with some concentrated visiting time over the summer as well as structuring my week during the congregational year so as to preserve more time for office hours and pastoral visits.

- iii. Connecting with the congregation occurred on many fronts, largely through our third-Sunday Community Circles on which I collaborated with (and relied heavily upon) the members of the Permanent Committee on Right Relations. I led new member courses in Fall 2017 and Spring 2018, and attended various multi-generational events. I attended committee meetings and meetings with representatives of various committees, and continued our gathering of individuals and families with young children at our monthly Millennials to GenX potluck.
- iv. Working closely with our Management Team (Georgia Jennings (until December 2017), David Stagg, Gwen Heuss-Severance and Jeremy Hill (starting January 2018) to carry out the executive functions assigned to us. Additionally, attending both regular and second monthly meetings of the Board of Trustees and supporting their continued interpretation and implementation of Policy Governance.
- v. With the Personnel Committee, revising the Personnel Policies and Handbook, establishing a personnel proposal for 2018-2019 and hiring a Hospitality Coordinator (starting June 2018).
- vi. The death of Hu Woodard.
- vii. Receiving my second renewal of Preliminary Fellowship from the Unitarian Universalist Association's Ministerial Fellowship Committee. With great thanks to members of the congregation who provided feedback and members of the Committee on Ministry and Board of Trustees who worked painstakingly on my evaluation. Only one more to go!
- viii. Continuing my work with my clergy coach, the Rev. Larry Peers, and my preliminary fellowship mentor, the Rev. Carolyn Patierno.
- ix. Welcoming 25 new members in Fall 2017 and 16 more in Spring 2018.

In terms of service to our Unitarian Universalist Association, in addition to attending General Assembly and UU Ministers Association Ministry Days last summer, I have been a regular attendee at our Unitarian Universalist Minister's Association chapter meetings. I participated in the April 2018 minister's workshop, "Where Leads Our Call," and was proud to represent USNH by offering the Blessing of the Ministry at the Installation of the Rev. Adam Robersmith at The Universalist Church in West Harford on April 29, 2018. I have also supported a number of Yale Divinity students during their time at YDS, including Laurel Gray who was sponsored by USNH and graduated in May 2018.

WORSHIP

Sermons (19)

September 24, 2017 "Running Into a New Year"

October 1, 2017 "The Courage to Care"

October 15, 2017 "The Courage to Confront White Supremacy"

October 22, 2017 "Arm in Arm: The Courage to Disarm"

November 5, 2017 "All Within Reach"

December 10, 2017 Music Sunday "Wild Forces Within Us" (homily)

January 7, 2018 "Cherished Wonder"

January 14, 2018 "What He Saw..."

January 21, 2018 "Rainbows and Olive Branches"

February 4, 2018 "Nevertheless, Persist!"

February 18, 2018 "Resilient Hearts"

March 4, 2018 "The Fine Balance of Give and Take"

March 11, 2018 "The Way of the World"

March 18, 2018 "Balancing You, Me, and Us"

April 8, 2018 "The Emergent Congregation"

April 15, 2018 "Music Sunday" Homily
April 29, 2018 "Spirituality That Surprises Us"
May 13, 2018 "Co-Creating Justice"
May 20, 2018 "Michelangelo and Creative Process"

Multi-Generational (9)

September 10, 2017 "Coming Home: Water Ingathering"
October 29, 2017 "Facing Our Fears"
November 19, 2017 "For What Shall We Give Thanks?"
December 17, 2018 "Lights in the Darkness Again and Again"
December 24, 2018 10:30am "Christmas Comes"
December 24, 2018 7pm "Candlelight and Carols"
February 11, 2018 "Answering the Call of Love"
April 1, 2018 Easter Sunday "Ancient Wisdom; New Life"
June 17, 2018 "A Blessing of Blooms" (Flower Communion)

Guest Preachers

September 17, 2017 Rev. Odell Montgomery Cooper (participant)
October 8, 2017 Kica Matos
November 26, 2017 Emily Bruce
December 3, 2017 Beth Roth
January 28, 2018 Bruce Knotts
May 6, 2018 Dianne M. Daniels

Lay Speakers or Lay Led

November 12, 2017 "Foundations Past, Present, and Future" (participant)
December 31, 2017 Mental Health Awareness Task Force
February 25, 2018 "Wild and Precious Life"
June 1, 2018 Affirmations Service
June 4, 2018 CYRE (participant)
June 11, 2018 YRUU (participant)

RIGHTS OF PASSAGE

Weddings

Howie Blau and Renaté Dicks (December 17, 2017)
George Houston and Helen Byler (raised at USNH) (May 12, 2018)
Richard Colón and Robyn Genzano (planned for August 19, 2018)

Memorial Services

Richard Fitol (non-member) (June 15, 2017)
Lois Saunders (August 18, 2017)
Joyce Shallis (August 27, 2017)
Bob Garino (non-member, father of Xandi Garino) (February 17, 2018)
Hubert Woodard (March 31, 2018)
Tona Donlon (April 21, 2018)
Brian Ferral (non-member) (April 28, 2018)
John Appel (non-member, father of Liz Appel) (April 28, 2018)

Respectfully Submitted by Rev. Megan Lloyd Joiner

Management Team

Management Team; A group of individuals, of which one is the minister, who are delegated authority by the Board of Trustees to run the day to day operations of the congregation and to ensure that the mission of the congregation is being fulfilled. The function and authority of the Management Team is shared equally by its members. (From our Policy Governance Handbook.)

We began the 2017-18 year with Georgia Jennings as lead member and David Stagg as recorder. Gwen Heuss-Severance and Rev Megan completed the team. Georgia ended her session in December 2017. David assumed leadership role and Gwen became recorder. Jeremy Hill joined the team in December 2017.

In August, we received a request from Maria, the Director of our long term rental, Cuddletime to make electrical upgrades to improve the air conditioning and make safety improvements in a few of her rooms. Work was done in August in conjunction with Buildings and Grounds.

Also in August, we commissioned a new member photo directory with Life Touch. The Directory was published in March.

In September we began the process for repaying the \$40,000 in roof loans to 3 members of the Congregation. Funds had become available following the reduction of our Operating Reserve from 25% to 15% as approved by the congregation. The actual repayments were processed in December and January.

Another project that has progressed during the year is the clarification of financial responsibilities among the Management Team, the Treasurer, the Finance Committee, the Bookkeeper and our Congregational Administrator. Originally drafted by Georgia Jennings last August, this document has undergone many revisions but agreement has recently been reached by all parties and details of the implementation are now being worked out.

Since late 2016 we have been very fortunate to have Jane Ferrall as our Membership Coordinator. However, Jane will be leaving us soon to become Director of the Interfaith Cooperative Ministry of New Haven. We have found her position very valuable and are planning to recruit a replacement with increased hours and added responsibilities.

Also in September the Management Team agreed to change some of our staff from a bi-weekly salary payment schedule to a monthly schedule to simplify accounting procedures. This transition was accomplished in January 2018..

A major project that also progressed over the whole year has been the development of Operational Policies and Procedures. So far we have finished 4 policies in a standard form and published them on our website; Newsletter Submissions; Receiving, Tracking and Acknowledging Endowment and Legacy Gifts; Burials and memorials; Gift Acceptance Policy. We are currently working on policies concerning: Disruptive Behavior; bad weather closure; landscape and memorial plantings; children and youth protection; safety and security; and our Personnel Manual.

Another ongoing problem of particular concern to the Cuddletime Director has been the prevalence of ticks in the overgrown area to the side and rear of the RE wing. In September the Management Team agreed to clear the land and plant grass. This has worked out well so far and our Sexton is able to keep the land clear by regular mowing.

In October we agreed to renew the Cuddletime lease on the same terms as before without a rental increase.

We also received feedback in October that some people were upset by the placement of the Legacy plaque directly at the entrance to the Sanctuary. We subsequently interchanged the Legacy plaque with the statement of our mission that had been on the wall by the cloakroom.

In November, Rev Megan commissioned a Security Task Force with Gwen as Chair and MT representative. Responses to external and internal threats are in place for the CYRE program and there are plans for congregational training in the fall. B&G is gathering information about a PA system upgrade.

A special challenge this year has been the refinancing of our mortgage which has to be paid off by July 2nd 2018. We worked throughout the year to discuss a variety of proposals from the Endowment and Legacies Committee involving a partial or complete payoff using Endowment funds. In January 2018 we hosted a meeting with Art Hunt, an independent advisor to non-profit organizations who helped greatly to clarify our options. We met with representatives from People's Bank and Webster Bank to get proposals for a loan as an alternative to repayment using Endowment funds.

Our budgetary planning began in January with a draft budget received from the Finance Committee. We presented a modified version to the Council of Chairs on February 22nd. We received salary recommendations from the Personnel Committee. Rev Megan commissioned the Stewardship Team for this year and David will present a final draft version at the Congregational Meeting on June 10th.

Adult Religious Education Committee

Chairperson: P.J. Deak

Members: Maggie Goodwin, Deb Pascale, Becky Sandmann, Craig Machado

Staff: Jesse Geist

WHAT MOVES US - The Adult Religious Education Committee strives to create a learning environment that motivates our Unitarian Universalist congregation to grow spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, and socially for our good and that of the wider community.

The Adult Religious Education Committee provides opportunities for spiritual growth, fostering connections and commitment to USNH and Unitarian Universalism and developing the foundations for action for justice through a variety of classes, courses, and one-time events.

The Goals & Objectives of the USNH Adult Religious Education Committee are...

1. Partnering with other groups within our congregation to create intentional spaces for sharing and growing our knowledge about spiritual issues, social issues and UU identity.
2. Inviting participation in these intentional spaces by individuals & organizations in the New Haven community beyond our congregation so as to encourage a social justice and interfaith (including no faith) spiritual discourse among USNH members and those in the wider New Haven community.
3. Fostering open dialogue and discourse, in these spaces with these participants, to encourage the reflection portion of a praxis striving towards greater & more effective action on social justice and interfaith (including no faith) spiritual issues.

Advertising for most ARE activities was via the following methods, with the goal of reaching a wide audience: flyer, bulletin board, website, Facebook, email, USNH Newsletter, New Haven Register calendar section, Post-Chronicle calendar section and word-of-mouth.

Dates and times for events were varied throughout the year so as to provide options for those who wish to attend ARE events. See list on the following page.

ARE continued our partnership with Becky Friedkin this year to manage a mini-version of the book cart most Sundays in the Social Hall. We focused on books related to ARE and Social Justice Network issues / events.

ARE has maintained a bulletin board of upcoming events in the social hall all year long – sharing the space with the UUA, UUSC and UU-UNO information in an effort to education our congregation about larger denominational issues and initiatives.

ARE has collaborated with Jesse Greist all year long to maintain the ARE webpage on the USNH website so that events are listed and are kept current.

In addition to the events listed below, ARE provides support for the Tuesday Conversations program and the CONTINUUM writers program.

ARE conducted 20 activities in the 2017-2018 congregational year including a 14 week course, 2 3-part workshops and discussion sessions on both UUA Common Read books. Total = 17+14 + 3 + 3 = 37 events from 09/30/2017 to 05/12/2018 with a variety of partner organizations...

Date	Event Description	Partner Organization(s)	# Participants
Saturday 09/30/2017	Social Cinema – John Lewis: Get In The Way	Anti-Racism Taskforce	28
Sunday 10/01/2018	Chasing The Dragon: Film Screening & Discussion	Mental Health Awareness Taskforce	12
Sunday 10/08/2017	Presentation on Transylvanian Unitarians by Rev. Claudia Elferdink		9
Saturday 10/21/2017	Social Cinema – National Bird	UU-UNO Envoy Team	16
10/22/2018	On Tyranny – Book Discussion Facilitated by Craig Machado		13
Sundays from 10/29-01/21	Course: Unraveling the Gender Knot (14 Sessions) Facilitated by Becky Sandmann		12 consistently
Friday 11/17/2017	Social Cinema – Whose Streets?	Rev. Megan & ART also involved - SURJ New Haven & the Justice For Jayson Project	50
Friday 12/08/2017	Social Cinema – Age Of Consequences	UU-UNO Envoy Team	20
Sunday 12/10/2018	Books Discussion on Refugees & Forced Migration Facilitated by P.J. Deak	Immigration and Refugee Task Force	11
Saturday 1/20/2018	Social Cinema – I Am Shakespeare: The Henry Green Story	Anti-Racism Taskforce & Preventing Gun Violence Taskforce	50
Sunday 01/21/2018	The Righteous Mind: Book Discussion – Facilitated by Craig Machado		5
Sunday 02/18/2018	Getting a Grip on Gender – Presentation by True Colors Facilitated by Becky Sandmann	True Colors	30
Sunday 02/25/2018	Common Read #1: Centering Facilitated by P.J. Deak	UUA	6
Sundays 3/4, 11 & 18	What Does Spirituality Mean To You – Workshop with Bernice Marie-Daly – 3 part workshop		15 approx per session
Friday 03/09/2018	Social Cinema – Equal Means Equal	Social Justice Council & CT Chapter of N.O.W.	20
Sunday 03/25/2018	Common Read #2; Daring Democracy - Facilitated by Maggie Goodwin & Craig Machado	UUA	6

Sundays 04/08, 29 & 05/06	End of Life Decision Making – 3 part workshop Facilitated by Becky Sandmann	Rev. Claudia Elferdink, Atty. Thea Burke-Martin & Dr. Mark Siegal	20 approx per session
Sunday 04/15/2018	Soul Collage Workshop with Lindsey Korth		10
Saturday 04/21/2018	Social Cinema - This Changes Everything	Environmental justice Taskforce	6
Saturday 05/12/2018	Social Cinema - Dolores	Immigration & Refugee Taskforce and Kids' Service Team	future

Building and Grounds Committee

The B&G Committee (David Stagg, Anthony Clark, Gil Belaval, Walter Gayeski, Al Bosch, Jason Kyle, Kevin Chapin, and David Jones) had another active year.

In addition to a number of projects completed, the committee has worked to develop a long range plan for capital improvements. To fully fund the plan would require \$20-25,000/year in a capital improvement budget.

The largest completed project is the replacement of the concrete front stairs and apron. Center Earth completed the project for about \$14,500. They were the lowest of 4 bidders for the job.

The electrical system in Cuddletime Day Care was upgraded at their request to add several new plugs for air conditioners as well as some less protruding covers for other plugs to prevent injuries. The total cost was around \$3,000.

The three electric lights along the driveway were repaired and upgraded this year to more energy efficient LED lights. The project was finished for less than \$1,000.

Brush as well as several small trees which were a breeding place for ticks on the hillside behind the playground were cleared and grass was planted by Jake's Landscaping for \$2,400.

Upgrades to the audio system in the sanctuary including the addition of a wireless microphone are being completed. The cost will be around \$1,000.

Also the lower parking lot near Hartford Turnpike will have the cracks filled and will be relined later this Spring for a cost of around \$2,000.

Other smaller jobs completed include the Spring Work Day on the grounds, repairs to leaks around the exit doors on either side of the pulpit, and work on the ventilation in the second floor women's rest room. These were all fairly low cost items.

Next year money has been sought to address the Drivit covering the walls of the social hall and RE wings. At the same time some work on the back gutters will occur to eliminate leaks when there is very heavy rain. Safety and security updates will also be continuing.

Respectfully submitted by David Jones, Chair

Children and Youth Religious Education Committee

2017-2018 Committee Members: Patricia McChesney, Chair (continuing), Vicki Seitz, Secretary (continuing), Lurline De Vos (continuing), Robb Camm (continuing), Robyn Genzano (continuing), Jamie Johnson

(continuing), Sarah Northrup (continuing), Bradley Woodworth (continuing), Gary Moss (continuing) and Christine Berman (continuing).

Committee Accomplishments:

2017-18 has been another productive and enjoyable year for the Children and Youth Religious Education (CYRE) Committee. We continue to have a very positive working relationship with Jesse Greist, Director of Lifespan Religious Education (DLRE.) His interactional style sets a positive tone for the committee, volunteer teachers, and children and their families in our program. He approaches USNH's CYRE challenges with creativity, knowledge, and care. We look forward to our continued work with him.

Pam Niles continues to volunteer to ensure that the day-to-day details of the program are attended to and has facilitated the CYRE program's goals. We very much appreciate her dedication to CYRE.

We are extraordinarily grateful to our over 40 volunteer teachers and helpers who have supported the CYRE program by donating hours of their time to our USNH children, youth, and teachers. We are a cooperative religious education program that relies on our volunteers. We are also appreciative of the congregants who have supported our children in many ways, including as their Secret Buddies.

The CYRE committee in collaboration with the DLRE met the majority of our stated goals in 2017-18, including

- Supporting our DLRE in his leadership responsibilities managing religious education programs for our children and youth;
- Working with the DLRE to carry out Children's Chapels for the year;
- Continuing our relationship with Rheyline Ogabang and Lezter Rico, the UU children in the Philippines. Through a reading fundraiser, we raised \$600 cover this year's sponsorship.
- Continuing two intergenerational activities begun three years ago—a Community Build Lego night and the Secret Buddy Program, which included a Buddy banquet. We were excited to note continued connections between children and youth and adult Buddies even after the end of the formal program. For the second year, we collaborated with the Sunday Morning Team to host a community event in March, the Green Leprechaun White Elephant intergenerational activity. The Sunday Morning Committee has expressed a willingness to continue the party and we join them in this desire.
- Continuing the children's participation in the service. This was greatly facilitated by Rev. Megan who continued having the children sit in the front of the sanctuary for the children's message and having those who have Stepped Up light the chalice.
- We are supporting our DLRE with OWL classes at age grade groups 7/8.
- Recruiting teachers to fill any unfilled positions for 2018-19.

In addition to meeting our goals, several projects are ongoing:

- Teacher recruitment process for 2018-19 is underway.
- We continued to work to include introverts and engage children who have Stepped Up beyond ushering and chalice lighting.
- Our biggest challenge this year continued to be the integration of YRUU (Young Religious Unitarian Universalists) into the CYRE committee.
- We were unable to recruit a youth member, most likely owing to the early-morning timing of our meetings. We continue to explore ways to involve the youth in our committee.

CYRE Goals for 2018-19:

- Support our DLRE in his leadership responsibilities managing religious education programs for our children and youth.
- Explore other ways to involve teens in the planning of the CYRE committee.
- Work with DLRE to configure Children's Chapels for the upcoming year.
- Continue to maintain our relationship with UUs in the Philippines through supporting the education of Rheyline and Lezter. We will also pursue more fundraising for this.
- Continue to deepen the involvement of teens across CYRE and our UU church community.

- Continue to host intergenerational activities, including the Buddy Program, and co-host the March community event.
- Expand the Classroom Coffees program to facilitate home-to-classroom communication and strengthen the children’s religious education. This program includes a registration push, a check-in with teachers, and a recruitment of parents as teachers.
- Collaborate with DLRE in planning CYRE Sunday in 2019 which will recognize children who have Stepped Up and thank teachers and other volunteers.
- Recruit teachers to fill any unfilled positions for 2018-19 and explore novel recruitment methods.
- Evaluate CYRE curricula so that we can provide the most up-to-date versions during the 2018-19 year.
- Evaluate the possibility of expanding Our Whole Lives (OWL) programs for upper grades.

Committee on Ministry

Members of the Committee: Lisa Anderson, Susan Meredith, Jim Peters, Rich Zelisko and Bruce Levinson

The primary focus of our committee is to support and to serve as a sounding board for Rev. Megan. We met every 6-8 weeks for approximately an hour and one half. In the Fall of 2017 we completed our second Ministerial Evaluation for the UUA Ministerial Fellowship. All members of the congregation, staff and congregational leaders were contacted to provide feedback. The information was synthesized and shared with Rev. Megan.

Endowment and Legacies Committee

Fred Morrison, **Chair**. Michael Clorite, Linda Mehta, Greg Seaman, Vicki Seitz John Watson,
Consultants: Carol Cheney, Mary Beth Congdon, Bob Congdon ,

1.To support the USNH mission of “Inspiring lives of compassion and generosity,” the Endowment and Legacies Committee goals for this year were to:

- Continue with the ten year USNH Endowment Campaign to grow the endowment and other investments to \$2.5 million by 2024 by promoting opportunities for USNH members and friends to make current and legacy gifts.
- Conduct a recognition event for current and prospective Legacy Society members
- Support USNH operating expenses by providing an annual contribution of 2% of the endowment value based on a 13 quarter rolling average.

2. Endowment results for year ending March 31, 2018

The endowment is composed of 3 funds. They are:

The Winchell fund.....	\$675,649.
1989 Fund.....	\$215,039
UUCE Fund.....	\$246,605.
Total:.....	\$1,137,113. .

In what has been described as chaotic market conditions, the endowment grew by nearly 9% since March 2017 for a total growth of \$136,595—\$63,716 came from gifts to the endowment during the year; \$72,879, came from growth in the invested value.

3. Use of Endowment assets to refinance the USNH mortgage

The Endowment and Legacies Committee is working with the Management Team and the Finance Committee to draft a plan to be approved by the USNH congregation on May 20 to use endowment unrestricted assets to payoff the mortgage. The goals of the plan are to:

1. reduce USNH operating costs by paying off the commercial mortgage using endowment funds,
2. reduce the cost of refinancing by reducing or eliminating bank, accounting, and legal fees,
3. maintain the expected returns that the endowment would earn if it were invested, so that the endowment will continue to grow.

4. Ten-Year Endowment Campaign

At the June 2014 annual meeting, the congregation approved a campaign to grow the endowment to \$2.5 million by 2024. As a guideline, some financial experts recommend that to be financially secure, nonprofit organizations need an endowment at least 3–5 times the annual budget—hence our goal of an endowment of at least \$2.5 million.

As part of the ten year campaign a mailing was sent to all USNH this past fall. The mailing resulted in \$20,000 donations restricted to the endowment and 3 more USNH members indicating they have included USNH in their wills. A brochure describing the Ten Year Campaign is available in the USNH foyer.

We invite you to imagine what it would be like today if USNH had an endowment of \$2.5 million and used 2% of the endowment's value to support the USNH budget each year. In this hypothetical scenario, USNH would be receiving \$50,000. Imagine the programs and functions that could be maintained or expanded and the new initiatives that could be undertaken to fulfill our mission if USNH was receiving \$50,000 annually from our endowment.

5. Legacy Society for USNH

The Legacy Society for USNH was established to recognize and honor those individuals who have made an endowment gift of at least \$10,000 or have included a gift of any amount to USNH in their estate plans.

An event honoring Legacies Society members was held in January at the Whitney Center.

For more information

Please contact a member of the Endowment and Legacies Committee to discuss your options for supporting the USNH mission with an endowment and/or a legacy gift.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee Chair reports to the MT and provides specific operational support to the MT and advises the MT on matters of finance. Other members of the committee manage a specific portfolio and work together on larger finance-related issues.

- 1) A new structure and organization for the Finance Committee has been proposed, discussed and adopted. New chair Greg Berg and new member Terry Durham have joined Susan Godshall, Mary Losee and Greg Seaman. The Treasurer is not an official member, but works closely with the team.
- 2) A Financial Reporting link has been built on the Board Website. In addition to quarterly reporting, an annual monitoring report on Financial policy compliance has been presented and a Property Tax exemption form completed for the Town of Hamden. Both of the latter reports were completed in the fall 2017.
- 3) Electronic payments, especially for utilities, have been set up by Antonia and Jamie.
- 4) The Finance Committee met a number of times regarding the refinancing of the mortgage. This included meetings with the Management Team, commercial banks, and Endowment and Legacies.

- 5) Greg Seaman provided the MT with the first draft of the Operating Budget. The Finance Committee has been given the opportunity to review the budget during the process and provide input.
- 6) With approval from the MT, the Finance Committee liquidated \$100,000 from a very low interest Money Market account and deposited into a higher yield jumbo CD earning 1.7% annually.
- 7) Greg Seaman continued to oversee payroll and has transferred some of the responsibility to Antonia, our Bookkeeper. Greg is working with Terry Durham to provide backup.
- 8) The new payroll schedule was adopted as of January 1, 2018. Staff is now paid twice a month.
- 9) The Treasurer, bookkeeper, and Committee member Susan Godshall re-established our registration with the State of Connecticut as a tax-exempt entity and filed the Sales and Use Tax Return on those items that we are required to report (e.g. free trade coffee and book sales). The total liability for 2017 was \$172.00.

History, Archives and Library Committee

Jane Platt, Chair; Toby Appel, Dody Gall, Frank Jonnietz, James Platt, Peggy Rae, Yvette Scharf, Joan Silverman

The Dorothy F. Harned Library is up and running. Over 2,000 books are shelved by category for ease in finding books. We are following up on books that are not returned. We have a database and a print catalog. We anticipate having the database searchable on our website soon. We are publishing articles highlighting our collection to promote use of the Library.

We continue to organize and store items in archival format (acid free folders etc.) We're working on finding more space and maximizing use of the existing classroom closet space. We have identified, sequenced and labeled many photo images of people and events in the Society's history. More need to be processed. Work continues on making digital files from recordings of worship services of past years. Thirty-one current or former members were interviewed on cassettes. These tapes are being digitized and noise reduced. We are up to the "V"s on the list.

There had been no systematic record of the art objects in the building. With the help of Emily Bett and Dody Gall we are locating, photographing and listing them. A database identifying the artist, medium, donor, dates, and location of each work will be created. Examples of this art are the Tree of Life Quilt in the Social Hall and the Zeidenbergs sculpture hanging in the stairwell.

Work continues on digitizing the oral histories of longtime members we have on audio cassette tapes. We're more than halfway through. We can email a file to anyone wishing to listen to them. Melinda Tuhus' recent interviews include Shirley Biewald, Ed Biewald. Bill Goward, Helene Goward and Caroline Bridgman Rees. We plan to expand to past presidents and other longtime members.

I have made a presentation on our early history for the New Member classes. I have also assisted the committee which is revising the by-laws by locating early revisions of the by-laws.

I am grateful to the committee members for their hard work and good humor.

Respectfully submitted,
Jane Platt
History, Archives and Library

Kitchen Project (KP) Task Force

In January 2017, the Management Team identified the USNH kitchen/pantry area as a problem and opportunity to be addressed. The following people volunteered, and through 2017-18 developed a detailed proposal.

Anthony Clark	Environmental/energy-use/construction design
Linda Barrett	Familiarity with her workplace (school) kitchen remodeling
Pam Niles	Sunday Morning Team, extensive experience with USNH and catering use of the space
Becky Sandmann	Sunday Morning Team, extensive experience with USNH and catering use of the space
Paul Trotta	Long culinary experience in restaurant settings, USNH leadership of programs such as Abraham's Tent
Lois Smith	Coordinator
David Stagg	Management Team liaison, with extensive Buildings and Grounds experience

Also consulting to the Committee were:

Sally Connolly	Member of the Sunday Morning Team, extensive experience supporting USNH activities
Robert Garskoff	Coordinator of USNH provision of Friday night dinners at Columbus House; leadership role for Abraham's Tent
Bobbi Pace	Catering experience
David Thompson	Architect
Carol Cheney	Funding Strategist

Lengthy and detailed minutes, construction plans and other documents reflect current and potential program use, goals, criteria, ceiling, wall, floor, electrical and plumbing requirements, appliances, applicable regulations, and reflections on USNH's mission and UUA principles, USNH timetable, costs, and funding. The proposal developed would create a space and energy-efficient, safe, and modernized area that meets our goals, and meets all regulatory requirements. As is often the case with renovation planning, costs would be higher than initially anticipated, even with modifications made to reduce expense.

The Task Force wishes to especially thank David Thompson and Carol Cheney for their generous donations of time and expertise throughout this process.

David Thompson is a USNH member and architect, and he and his network of professionals provided invaluable recommendations. Several rounds of drafts of proposed layouts were prepared for the Task Force's consideration, and rationale and options were presented.

Carol Cheney, with exceptional professional expertise in fund-raising, volunteered to develop a strategic plan for funding the project, and met with USNH management (including Rev. Megan) and financial and task force leadership. Planning addressed considerations of USNH resources and potential grant monies. Liz Appel joined the grant-writing effort.

In late winter 2018, the proposal was reviewed by the Management Team. The Kitchen Project Team understands that finite resources require prioritization of capital expenditures in the coming year, and that the proposal is deferred, but retained for future consideration. The Team is currently inactive.

Lois Smith, Coordinator

Membership Team

The Membership team works alongside the Membership Coordinator to provide a welcoming path from new visitor to full membership.

Over the course of the year, the Membership Team grew to 11 plus our membership coordinator. This increase in numbers has helped to spread responsibilities with team members taking on specific roles. Overall, this has worked well.

Now in our second year as a very new team, we wanted to build on our previous year's (2016-17) success. We considered a few ideas generated by UUA videos on how to welcome visitors and bring them more fully into the USNH community. We assessed ourselves using the following criteria:

1. What's it like walking in (to USNH) for the first time?
2. What concrete actions can we take to improve or maintain what is already working?
3. How can we show visitors are valued?
4. What can we do to help new members integrate and form deeper connections?

Feedback from visitors and new members has indicated we are very welcoming and friendly both at the door and during the service announcements. The Membership Team continues to support the coordinator in greeting visitors as they enter the foyer and our visitor welcome is a line item in pulpit announcements and order of service. Items 3 and 4 were where we felt improvement was needed.

Membership continued to maintain the Welcome Corner as a place for new visitors to chat and ask questions. We offered 1st Sunday Welcome Chats to deepen visitor connection with USNH. These have experienced extremely low Spring attendance. This may be due to lack of publicity or pulpit announcements.

Two sessions of our New to UU classes were offered and well attended in Fall and Spring. This year we changed some of the content to better reflect our goal of 'commitment to' and 'deeper understanding' of USNH.

The classes were as follows:

"A Living Tradition" facilitated by Rev. Megan.

Participants shared their own spiritual journeys; Rev. Megan gave a brief overview of Unitarian Universalism history and the Platts shared the history of USNH.

"Sharing the Journey" facilitated by Rev. Megan.

This class addressed the big questions of 'Why are we here?' and 'Where do we stand?'; and focused on member commitment to USNH. This is a required class for membership.

Attendees shared their thoughts, values and beliefs through a variety of activities. Jesse Greist shared information on RE, and John Watson addressed pledging.

"Jump In!"

This class is designed to share information on how congregants can become more involved at USNH.

Presentations were given for Social Justice (Lurline DeVos), music, (Jeff Douma) Management, (Dan Gelperin) financial structure (Kathy Garner) small group ministries (Paul Trotta) and Congregational Teams. (Jane Ferrall)

In addressing items 3 (valuing visitors) and 4 (integrating new members and forming deeper connections) the year started out in the spirit of hospitality with the Membership Team sponsoring three First Sunday Summer Barbecues. These were very well attended with an average of 90 people per Sunday. During the year we promoted hospitality through providing lunches for the New to UU classes, and breakfast for the two New Member Recognition Sundays.

Two new initiatives we put in place this year were, 1. to sponsor a pot luck for each incoming group of new members. At this time, we have held one potluck for the group who joined in November. This was a very well received and enjoyable evening. We will continue to sponsor these new member pot luck events for Spring and Fall in order to bring our new members into community where they might begin to develop deeper connections; and 2., we are now 'checking in' with new members at least once throughout the year to hear how they are settling into USNH.

Membership has had success in working with a few groups to help integrate new people. Specifically, Small Group Ministries has been very proactive in this practice. Additionally, we continue to emphasize that visitors are welcome to participate in many of the activities and events at USNH, and we are thrilled to see the 'open to all', 'all are welcome' type features in many of the announcements and events. Throughout the year, we continued to connect visitors and new members with specific groups, mostly in social justice.

The Neighborhood Directory was launched at the beginning of the year and is now being put to good use as a tool to promote congregational community. e.g. a reference for organizing Congregational Teams. This has enabled both newer and long-standing members to interact and develop community beyond USNH. The membership coordinator has kept the neighborhood directory updated. New members are given a copy of the directory plus a UU primer and book mark as 'gifts' upon signing the USNH membership book.

Over the course of the year, our webpage was updated to reflect our mission and exactly what we do as a team. The webpage offers a variety of ways to become involved with membership, from simple one-time events to monthly ongoing participation.

Of major note this year... we find that fewer visitors initially come with an interest in membership. They are interested in social justice opportunities and/or small group meetings.

We decided to leave our final goal of reaching out to newcomers in the community. Growth of USNH membership has brought its own issues, and at this time it was felt better to wait as we monitor and manage the present growth of membership.

In summary, the Membership Team has enjoyed a productive year. We fine tuned some activities and initiated new events which are helping to integrate and connect new members into the USNH wider community. We are increasingly aware that visitors are coming to USNH for a variety of reasons, ranging from a need to act on social justice issues to finding a spiritual home.

Submitted by Christine Durham May, 2018.

Jean Bacon

Joan Lane

Christine Durham (chair)

Jane Ferrall (membership coordinator)

Patrick Korth

David Cross

Deb Selden

Terry Vidal

Kevin Chapin

Marty Lipnick

Kathy Haskins

Dan Wade

Music Committee

2017-2018 ushered in a new era of music Direction with Co-Directors of Music Jeffrey Douma and Erika Schroth. Bill Braun continues as Associate Music Director. The choir now typically sings one anthem rather than two, as more hymns are sung during the service. This has worked well with our new schedule of longer rehearsals approximately every other Thursday (rather than every week) as well as every Sunday morning. Choir membership continues to grow, currently with well over 40 singers.

Bill Braun continues as our Associate Music Director, selecting pieces and playing piano during services for our prelude, interludes, coming out of meditation, during the collection and accompanying the adult choir.

Sadly, our longtime Chair of the Music Committee, Peter Hansen, fell ill in the fall. The Committee was unsure of his health for a few months. Then, in February, Jackie Trimble Shapiro was selected as the new Chair. Current members include: Carol Holloman, Dick and Jane Platt, Linda Mehta, Linda Pawelek, Toby Appel, Christine Shadel, Sylvia and Marty Lipnick, Ann Levison, as a member who is not in choir, as well as Jeff and Erika, one of whom attends each committee meeting. Claire Bien continues to advertise special events through press releases as a friend of the committee.

Erika now directs our Youth Choir of approximately 18 members who appear to delight in adding to our music ministry by singing, from memory, about once a month.

The choir's anthems continue to be an eclectic selection of pieces from classical to folk to international. Highlights this year include "The Hope of Loving" by Jake Grunestad in December and Franz Schubert's "Mass in G" at our spring music Sunday. We were fortunate to have the Haven String Quartet accompany these two pieces.

The choir participated in Memorial Services for Joyce Shallis and Hu Woodard.

Sundays at Four will have it's first event this year on June 24th with flautist Sergio Pallottelli accompanied by William Braun. The reception, usually organized and executed by our former director Linda Pawelek and Peter Hansen, will be coordinated by Barbara Orrok.

Our budget request for next year was submitted at the end of March with the same total request as last year.

The Music Committee continues to support our Directors of Music and the musical life at USNH.

Respectfully submitted,
Jackie Trimble Shapiro, Chair

Permanent Committee on Right Relations

Chairpersons:

Gail Figiola (grannygail08@gmail.com)

Nancy Apfel (nancy_apfel@hotmail.com)

BRINGING OUR COVENANT TO LIFE



The center of activity of the PCRR during the 2017-18 program year has been to support our Board of Trustees' published "ends statements" to address the following:

“USNH is a place where I am welcomed to be myself; A place where we treat one another with respect and work towards advancing justice in the community and beyond.”

In order to accomplish these vital objectives, the PCRR partnered with BOT representatives in a 4 - session, Safety Circle listening and learning project to explore communication, covenant-building, and constructive conflict management. Staff and committee leaders from across the congregation were invited to participate and share issues and challenges around expectations for attention and assistance, covenantal behavior, and respectful community interactions. Mediation and PCRR consultant, Joe Brummer facilitated a 2 - session, insightful and useful workshop on how we set a culture for restorative practices.

The PCRR facilitated seven 3rd Sunday Community Building Circle conversations with Rev. Megan around the monthly worship theme to deepen connections and listening practices. The circles themes included: WELCOME; COURAGE; HOPE; INTENTION; PERSEVERANCE; BALANCE; and CREATIVITY. Held in the minister's office space, and reflective in style, these circles have been 50 minutes in length and are open to all. Newcomers have been encouraged to attend.

As a reintroduction, refresher, and re-energizer, the PCRR sponsored a Spring program, **Deepening our Covenant through Restorative Practices** which explored some of the skills needed to help us live each of our congregational covenant promises more fully – to be open, to honor differences, to speak our truths, to listen deeply.

As a continuation of our effort to offer evening, Community Building Circle conversations the PCRR held a social cinema film evening and potluck on June 8th. The film, *Facing Fear* was screened with a discussion circle following. Reconciliation and forgiveness are the focuses of this short documentary.

The PCRR was successful in raising membership to 5 people with the addition of 2 new individuals.

The PCRR was successful in launching its webpage, featuring the monthly calendar of events, articles, and information about Circle Practices.

Members:

Nancy Apfel, Gail Figiola, Maggie Goodwin, Charisse Hutton (Term ends), Paul Trotta.

Personnel Committee

Chairpersons: Jean Rosenthal & Bobbi Pace

GOALS for 2017-2018: To support the USNH mission by enhancing congregational infrastructure, The Personnel Committee had a goal of providing support functions on personnel issues as requested by the Board of Trustees, Management Team, or Head of Staff.

ACTIVITIES for 2017-2018: The Committee supported the ongoing search for a Sunday morning coordinator, participating in the development of the position description, job posting, and interviews. We provided recommendations on future staffing and salaries to the Management Team for the 2018-2019 budget. We reviewed USNH salary and benefits compared to UUA guidelines. We continued to develop revisions to the Personnel Policy Manual to clearly define policies to reflect best practices and to conform with USNH governance. We monitored certain benefit reporting.

Preventing Gun Violence Task Force

(Note from MT - Although MT did not request reports from the specific Social Justice Task Forces, we are including this one that was submitted to us)

Chairperson(s): Sally Connolly, Darrell McChesney and Hubert Woodard

Current Members: Roye Anastasio, Al Bosch, Sally Connolly, PJ Deak, John Deming, Maggie Goodwin, Ann Levison, Pamela Miller, Darrell McChesney, Hubert Woodard, Alison Cunningham Carol Wade, Dan Wade, Jayne Kleinman, Mary Bernstein

Praxis:

Actions taken	Date or ongoing	#USNH affiliated participants	Group or who and # benefiting
Held Monthly Meetings August through June. At 2 meetings we had guest speakers: Jordan Rees from UCONN School of Social Work & Connor Lloyd	2nd Sunday in each month - Ongoing	Average of 10 -12 members attending each meeting	Individuals attending and USNH members, friends and larger community
Presence at many events: Judiciary Committee hearing and Legislative Vote on banning bump stocks, Supreme Court Hearing - Parents vs Remington, Marches in NYC, DC and Hartford, Newtown & Shoreline, Connecticut Against Gun Violence Annual Meeting, Yale CMHC presentation on " Gun Violence, Mental Illness and the Law: Balancing Risk and Rights for Effective Policy,	Throughout the year	Approximately 13	Unknown
Assisted Mental Health Awareness Task Force in sponsoring "Undoing False and Destructive Myths - The Connection between Mental Illness and Gun Violence"	10/21/17	Estimated at 35	USNH members, friends and larger community
Co-sponsored with ARE the film and subsequent discussion, "The Henry Green Story"	1/20/18	52 people attended (highest number so far at a Social Cinema - unclear how many were UUs but estimated @ 45)	USNH members, friends and larger community (52)
Assisted at Community Build Activity	3/9/18	Estimated at 40+	USNH members and friends

Advocated within USNH for state and federal legislation related to Open Carry Reciprocity, Ghost Guns and Bump Stocks	From 12/17 - 4/18	All committee members	Exact # unknown - Advocacy primarily during coffee hour - provided information and materials for calling/writing/contacting federal and state legislators
Increased involvement with CONECT	ongoing	7 of us are directly involved with the CONECT initiative	Hopefully, our work in CONECT will affect many in USNH and in Connecticut.
Attended Press Conference held by Representative Tong on Bump Stocks and Ghost Guns and interviewed CAGV/Rep Tong on legislation	2/5/18	5 attended	PVG and Shalom member interviewed by TV reporter
Attended Southbury Town Council Meeting which was raising issue of Open Carrying of Firearms in their community	11/2/17	3 of us attended and advocated against open carry (Photo of us that alluded to USNH in local newspaper)	Unknown
Connected with UCONN Sociology Department which is conducting field work & collecting information on groups organized against gun violence	2/4 & ongoing	12 directly	We provided for UCONN information on additional groups involved in preventing gun violence which will assist them in their work.
Sponsored Gun Violence Issues: Looking for Common Ground A Panel Discussion	1/14/18	116 individuals present	USNH members, friends and larger community - Panelists (State Representatives Josh Elliott & Robyn Porter, Jeremy Stein, Incoming Director CT Against Gun Violence Lieutenant Karl Jacobson, New Haven Police Department, Chief Thomas Wydra, Hamden Police Department, Brent Peterkin, Statewide Coordinator, Project Longevity) and Guest Speaker Senator Richard Bumenthal

Reflections:

We were deeply saddened by the decline and subsequent death of our founder and one of our co-chairs: Hu Woodard. His social justice work and commitment to peace will continue to inspire us.

What were the high points this year?

Our monthly meetings have been impressive as we have had excellent discussions, a high degree of involvement by all, reflective suggestions, assumption of responsibilities & volunteering for activities.

The Legislative Panel in January was a great success. Our planning was detailed and appropriate; the logistics perfect; the Facilitator well-prepared; and, Panelists responsive to questions. The panelists appreciated our work and were impressed by USNH's commitment to the cause. We were delighted that Senator Chris Murphy sent his representative, Ben Florsheim, to the event and most of all, that Senator Blumenthal was able to attend and inspire us with his comments. Many of us are also part of the CONECT core team and are actively involved in participating in and promoting its mission and events.

What did not go well?

Unfortunately, we found that the date chosen for the Symposium with the Mental health Awareness Task Force presented conflicts for many of us who had previous commitments so we could not be as helpful as we would have liked on the day of the event. However, we did contribute a majority of the funds for the Symposium and were pleased that we could provide financial support.

What have we learned from both the good and the bad?

We know that we have a huge amount of self-education to do regarding status of national, state and local legislation, gun safety issues, positions of gun safety opponents; the necessity for making alliances with other like minded groups especially those in the faith community; the difficulty in selecting issues and actions to focus on; and, the diversity of opinions among members of our group. We find that it is difficult and often painful to address and explore this issue because of the incidence, horror and extent of much of the violence, the complexity of issues, the depth of extremist views, the values and power of entrenched pro-gun organizations, and the massive amount of work ahead of us.

We think it extremely important that USNH have a person or process designated for the production and dissemination of publicity to the larger community. Our community sponsors so many excellent events that should and could draw a larger number of attendees to our community if we had appropriate outreach. An alternative would be for a volunteer to develop a packet of materials for the Social Justice Council and other USNH groups that would include a discussion of USNH policies regarding publicity, media outlet contact info, templates for press releases and any other pertinent information.

How would we change actions?

We will make sure that if we co-sponsor any activities that our membership can be fully involved.

Goals/ Preliminary plans for the coming year

To co-sponsor the reading of *Loaded: A Disarming History of the Second Amendment* by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz

To co-sponsor a movie with ARE pertaining to gun violence

To work with CONECT and thereby reach more people in Connecticut and bring attention to the everyday violence in our streets and homes.

To bring attention to the stance on gun safety issues of candidates who are running for office and helping to get out the vote.

To sponsor another legislative panel in early 2019

To collect and disseminate information on gun violence prevention legislation and initiatives

To educate the USNH community on the true extent of the nation's gun violence epidemic

To coordinate activities, wherever and whenever possible, with other USNH groups including ARE, Peace Task Force, Mental Health Awareness, Waverly Partnership, Green Sanctuary and Anti-racism Task Force

To advocate in favor of common sense regulations and legislation including universal background checks for all gun sales, a reinstatement of the national ban on assault-style firearms, and limitations on magazine size

To be an active and visible presence in our community advocating for peaceful solutions to the gun epidemic and against gun violence

To encourage the USNH community to engage in thoughtful, informed discussions about gun violence prevention

Group Small Ministry Steering Committee

The Steering Committee meets every 2nd Tuesday from 7:00 to 9:00pm at USNH, but members schedules have prevented us from meeting each month. Each of the existing SGMs are operating smoothly and none report any concerns. This allows the Steering Committee to concentrate on two important tasks: dealing with groups that are at capacity; creating new groups.

Our current Groups are

Mindfulness	1st Sun. of the month 4-6 at USNH	Karen Swanson Ellen Mahoney	10 x 2 =20 At capacity
Buddhist Lens 1	2nd, 4th and 5th Mon. 7-9 at USNH	Loren Fields	10 x 2 =20 At capacity
Buddhist Lens 2	1st and 3rd Wed. 7-9 at USNH	Larry Rizzolo Joan Gilbert	10 x 2 =20 At capacity
Thurs. Spiritual Topics	1 st and 3 rd Thurs. 1:30-3 pm at USNH	Ellen Mahoney, Nancy Brown, Gwen Heuss- Severance	8 x 2 = 16 At Capacity
Men's Group	1st and 3rd Mon. 7-9 at USNH	Harvey Weinstein	10 x 2 = 20
Tues. Spiritual Topics	1 st & 3 rd Tues. 1-2:30pm at USNH	Dee Arneith Natalie Keating	3 x 2 = 6
Writings of MLK Jr.		Peggy Myers	5
Jewish & UU Crossroads	2nd and 4th Thurs 7-9 at USNH	Harvey Weinstein Peter Schwartz	6 x 2 = 12
Newer to USNH	Alternating Sundays 1 -2 at USNH	Rev. Megan Jesse Greist	6
Spiritual Explorations For Women	3rd Wed. 7 -9 at USNH	Jean Rosenthal	9 x2 = 18

Total enrollment is 143 obtained by counted for each semester. The number of members enrolled during the year is 71, not accounting for those enrolled in more than one SGM.

Of the seven SGMs, four are at capacity. In previous discussions the decision was made to deal with this situation by having new groups formed on the same topic and BL2 and Thursday Spiritual Topics have been

formed along those lines. Finding leaders for the new groups will be a challenge. I helped form BH2 and it took three attempts to get it established and it still took the leadership of Larry Rizzolo, who had lead BL1 for about fifteen years, to bring the group to its current high level.

The problem of finding leaders will also be a deterrence in forming new groups, but we do have two qualified members who have each agreed to form a new group in the fall.

Pat Trotta will lead an "End of Life " SGM and read "Being Mortal by Atul Gawande

Harvey Weinstein will lead a yet unnamed SGM on life lessons and based on "Life Lessons" by Elizabeth Kubler-Ross).

In addition we will seek to form and search for leadership for the following new groups:
(In loose priority order)

1. Spiritual Topics
2. Christianity
3. Humanism
4. New Members
5. Third Buddhist Lens
6. Whitney Center

The level of interest and presence of leadership will determine which groups are offered.

Respectfully submitted,
Paul Trotta Chair, Jesse Greist, Marc Isenberg, Tom Harden, Karen Sunderhauf, Karen Swanson

Social Justice Ministry

This has been a busy and productive year for the Social Justice Ministry during a very intense and complex time for our communities, the nation, and the world. We were successful in meeting many of our goals and found that changes we made in some financial procedures were helpful in bringing this about.

- 1) Goal: The SJC will work to decrease White Supremacy Culture manifestations and classism in the USNH congregation.

Response: The Social Justice Council partnered with the Anti-Racism Task force and the minister to present a second White Supremacy Teach-in in October which was well attended and well received. 70 congregants attended and reported they would like to continue this type of work. With the Adult RE Social Cinema group this work was continued through the showing of three films about the experience of being Black in America: *Get in the Way*, *Whose Streets*, and *I am Shakespeare: the Henry Green Story*.

At the request of congregants who felt uncomfortable with a perceived implied need to leave money to the congregation to be welcome, we teamed with the Endowment and Legacy Committee to move the Legacy plaque to a new location away from the entrance of the sanctuary.

In March, 2018 tensions increased within the UUA around the treatment of ministers of color and the degree of commitment to the BLUU. The Anti-Racism Task Force brought this to the attention of the congregation and with the backing of the Social Justice Council called for congregational support of the BLUU movement at the requested level of \$3500. In late April, the Board of Trustees invited the Minister and the Council to share their concerns after which the Board voted to support the BLUU at the requested level.

- 2) Goal: The SJC will work to increase the rate of participation of congregants in the Social Justice Group initiatives.

Response: This is difficult to assess, but we can report good participation overall including the involvement of several new members in task forces. The participation in the White Supremacy Teach-in, Gun Violence Panel discussion, and support for people in Sanctuary has been outstanding.

- 3) Goal: The SJC will support the work of the Social Justice Network groups including but not limited to HEART so that no further Columbus House Dinners are cancelled and the Anti-Racism Task Force as it reorganizes and clarifies its focus and seeks to serve the anti-racism needs of the congregation at this critical time.

Response: With the support of the Council, Columbus House is reinvigorated. Dinners are happening on schedule with good congregational participation. As noted above, the Anti-Racism Task Force has moved ahead on several initiatives and with new members is focusing on the coming year. The Environmental Task force (Green Sanctuary Committee) joined an interfaith ecology network to support their work.

- 4) Goal: The SJC in collaboration with the CONECT Initiative Action Group will facilitate the congregation's exploration of membership in CONECT.

Response: Through a process of one-to-one conversations and informational sessions the CONECT Action Group facilitated the congregation's discernment process regarding joining CONECT. Following a congregational vote in January, the Congregation joined CONECT for a one-year trial period beginning 2/12/18. CONECT House meetings are scheduled for May and early June in order to hear the local social justice concerns of congregants as well as strengthening connections within the congregation. CONECT Core Team members and interested congregants will attend a June 26 CONECT Assembly.

- 5) Goal: The SJC will respond to initiatives of the UUA, UUSC, UU-UNO, and UU-CSJ in an effort to strengthen congregants' relationships to the larger denomination.

Response: The SJC supported the efforts of the UUA and UUSC to respond to the hurricanes of the fall of 2017 by requesting a special plate contribution for the relief fund. The UU-UNO service was well-attended for second year resulting in a significant collection plate which was contributed to the UU-UNO. In April four USNH members attended the Intergeneration Spring Seminar: two youth and two adults (a third adult was unable to attend due to illness). One adult serves in an advisory position, while one youth is a Dean. Currently a youth is planning to attend the UUA Thrive workshops for youth of color and hoping to bring back insights related to the anti-white supremacy work.

- 6) Goal: The SJC will support the progressive legislative initiatives of the various Social Justice Network groups

Response: The SJC has set up a legislative table after service for all Social Justice groups to share information and petitions. The SJ groups have made consistent use of the opportunity.

- 7) Goal: The SJC will oversee the expenditures of the various Task Forces sufficiently that they stay in budget or request extra funds through transfers within the Social Justice Network in a timely manner.

Response: The SJC held back monies from the task forces in order to be able to respond to the unexpected needs of the various groups. This has been quite successful in helping the groups stay in budget without complicated (and confusing) bookkeeping. Held-back funds have supported special initiatives, as well as increasing the trust of task force leaders that the council will support their efforts during a stressful financial/historical period.

- 8) Goal: The SJC will encourage the various network groups to partner with Adult RE to increase awareness and understanding of current social justice issues.

Response: Each of the Task Forces has had the opportunity to partner with Adult RE on a film and discussion. The participation of Task Force members has been variable resulting in a plan that the task forces be responsible for the pre-film potluck, rather than the Social Cinema folks.

Currently Anti-Racism and Preventing Gun Violence are partnering with ARE on a book discussion of *Loaded* which addresses the inherent white supremacist bias of interpretations the Second Amendment.

9) Other achievements

In addition to our stated goals, there have been a number of notable accomplishments: the Immigration and Refugee Task Force has supported the refugee family settled last year through tutoring and acculturation and activated the congregation to support those in Sanctuary through Stop and Shop gift card donations, the Preventing Gun Violence group has presented a panel discussion which Senator Blumenthal attended, the Kids' Service Team again contributed approximately 200 pies to the Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen, the youth of Waverly were hosted to a showing of *Black Panther*, and the Environmental Task force (Green Sanctuary Committee) has joined an interfaith network.

In summary, this has been a busy productive year for the Social Justice Ministry. The network groups have provided opportunities for education, witness, advocacy, and direct service on many fronts. It has been clear to us this year that while congregants sometimes voice a desire for a single social justice focus, in fact, they seek diverse ways to express their longings for justice. As we consider goals for the coming year we are hoping to assess which task forces' goals and efforts best meet these longings. We will continue to address manifestations of white supremacist culture within our congregation, the UUA, and beyond. We are also looking forward to determining whether CONECT meets the needs of our congregation. Social Justice Council Members

Lurline deVos (Chair)
Pamela Miller
Richard Cho

Christine Durham
Van Selden

Maggie Goodwin
Dan Wade

Sunday Morning Team

Chair: Becky Sandmann, Team Members: Pam Niles, Sally Connolly, Greg Feeley, Karen Swanson, Theresa Childs, Amy Wexler, Dee Arneth, Ray Zalenski, Barbara Orrok, George Deming, and Michele DeMuis.

Number of new Members sought for 2018-2019: We can always use new members to assist with the tasks on Sunday Morning and with other activities we host. These activities include: Greeting at the door Sunday Mornings, organizing the coffee hour (although this may be what the new Coffee Hour Host will be doing). We also encourage all ages to join and support our group, including our younger folks.

Additional Comments/Information: The Sunday Morning Team believes that working with other committees, such as in hosting joint activities, will assist visitors, new folks and members of USNH become a more connected congregation.

Along with our usual Sunday Morning activities, this year we have sponsored "First Sundays" with either pot luck soups, salads or snacks. Other activities we have been involved in have included the Chocolate Auction, assisting with the used book sale and co-sponsoring a March multigenerational gathering.

The 2018-2019 goals for the Sunday Morning Team are as follows.

- To provide support on Sunday mornings with:
 - Greeting
 - Ushering
 - Assisting with used book sale
- To further assist with making a community by:
 - Organizing monthly pot luck soups or snacks or salads on the first Sunday of each month
 - Assisting with the planning of the annual Chocolate Auction which is also a fund raiser for USNH
- To assist Membership Committee and Membership Coordinator in order to increase membership and further welcome visitors by:

- Maintaining visitor nametags, lists and data regarding the number of times folks visit USNH in order to know who might be interested in joining and/or participating in various activities at USNH (some of this may be completed by new Membership Coordinator)
- To assist with member/visitor support and information:
 - Maintain pamphlets in the lobby for visitors, guests and USNH members
 - Facilitate and order supplies for the kitchen

To further USNH goals we are working with other committees and groups to plan for a multi-generational fun activity in March, 2019, which is becoming an annual event.

We are also cosponsoring a fund raiser for IRIS which will support refugees and refugee resettlement in the New Haven area. This fundraiser will be held at USNH on September 22, 2018 and is sponsored by the following groups: the ARE Committee, Immigration & Refugee Taskforce, Kids' Service Team, UU-UNO Envoy Team and Refugee Resettlement Coalition.

Worship Committee

Rich Stockton (ch), Rev. Megan Lloyd Joiner, Loren Fields, Tom Hardin, Gwen Heuss-Severance, Sue Linsley, Linda Mehta, Deb Pascale, Jim Peters

Goals and responsibilities (2017-2018):

1. To support our minister and congregation by helping to provide high quality Sunday Worship Services;
2. To serve as Worship Associates for Sunday Worship Services and help coordinate the elements of the Order of Service;
3. To serve as Worship Leaders when our minister is absent, and to help locate and support guest ministers and lay members to lead worship;
4. To enhance the effectiveness of Worship Associates through clarity of responsibilities, schedule, and training;
5. To explore and incorporate a variety of spiritual beliefs, expressions and practices in our worship Services;
6. To plan for the future of the Worship Committee through recruitment of new members, training and service participation

Specific details on how we met our goals this 2017-2018 year:

1. **To support our minister and congregation by helping to provide high quality Sunday Worship Services; To serve as Worship Associates and help coordinate the elements of the order of service**

As chair of the Committee, Rich Stockton joins Rev. Megan, Director of Lifespan Religious Education Jesse Greist and Music Director Jeff Duoma on Tuesday mornings to plan the Sunday services. The full worship committee (Rev. Megan is an ex-officio member) meets the 2nd Wednesday of every month. Members of the committee take turns in being the worship associate each Sunday.

The Committee's monthly meetings focused on the calendar, the selection of the monthly themes, the advance planning of the Worship Associate schedule, review of the budget, and developing and refining guidelines for the elements of the order of service (OOS): the gathering, welcome and

announcements, the chalice lighting, the Our Faith in Action speaker, the reception of the offering, reading from the Book of Joys and Concerns and connection and meditation.

We have supported Rev. Megan in providing a 9:00 am second service, reviewed the attendance at both services, and discussed options and alternatives. We have continued the second service all year due to the requests from some congregants, but only about 5-10% of our folks attend the early service, so we have not addressed the issues with parking and social hall crowding and plan to do something different next year..

2. To help locate and support guest ministers and lay members who serve as Worship Leaders when our minister is absent; and to explore and incorporate a variety of spiritual beliefs, expressions and practices in our worship services.

A. List of lay and guest led services since June 18,2017 are:

June 25	Lisa Anderson	Shared Ministry
July 2	Rev. Tony Lorenzen	What Would Woody Sing?
July 9	Sue Linsley	What's Your Story?
July 16	Jim Peters	The Geometry of Time
July 23	Rev. Megan	Once Upon a Time
July 30	Sharon McBlain	Waverly
Aug. 6	Claire Bien	Citizenship, Community . . .
Aug. 13	Erica Richmond	Living Your Best Life
Aug. 20	Rev. Megan	Choosing Faith
Aug. 27	Sierra-Marie Gerfao	Public Trials
Sept. 3	Rich Stockton	Why I'm a UU
Sept 17	Min. Odell M. Cooper	Welcome Beyond Our Walls
Oct 8	Kica Matos	What's Happening to Our Melting Pot?
Nov 26	Emily Bruce	The Stuff of Abundance: Giving Real Thanks
Dec 3	Beth Robins Roth	Buddhist Perspectives on Hope and Faith
Dec 31	Mental Health Team	Hope's Nest, USNH and Being in Community
Jan 28	Bruce Knotts	Working Together to Disarm our Planet
Feb 25	Rich Stockton et al.	Your One Wild and Precious Life
Mar 25	Worship Comm.	Balancing Acts
Apr 22	Bryan Garcia	Caring for Our Common Home
May 6	Dianne Daniels	Unleash Your Creativity
May 27	Jim Peters	Re-Membering on Memorial Day Weekend

B. During the summer of 2018, The Worship Associates are responsible for planning 9 of the 11 Sunday services and are currently recruiting (with Rev. Megan's help) worship leaders and musicians.

3. To enhance the effectiveness of Worship Associates through clarification of responsibilities, schedule and training; To plan for the future of the Worship Committee through recruitment of new members

We continue to provide written templates and guidelines for our worship associates.

We appreciate the gifts of longtime committee member Gwen Heuss-Severance who resigned this year. Rich Stockton has chaired the committee beginning June 2017 and plans to continue for this coming year. We continue to seek 1-2 new members through newsletter ads and personal contacts.

We maintain the subscription to the UU theme-based ministry programs *Soul Matters* with Rev. Megan. Our subscription to *Soul Matters* has offered us the chance to participate in a Worship Team Implementation Lab monthly discussion group/telcon for lay leaders.