

**UNITARIAN SOCIETY OF NEW HAVEN**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**2021 – 2022**



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## **Minister's Report – Rev. Lindasusan V. Ulrich**

In a year of many changes, one thing has remained constant: the commitment of people at USNH to building and maintaining community through it all. I'm grateful to each of you for all the gifts you bring to the congregation and the care you share with others. Below are some of the highlights from the 2021-22 congregational year.

### **Pastoral Care**

Restructuring the Pastoral Care program was one of my top priorities for the year, and I'm delighted that we've started to organize volunteers to help support others. (For more details, please see the Pastoral Care report.) In addition to the restructuring, I also offered direct care through calls, texts, in-person meetings, and emails.

A significant amount of pastoral care went into memorial services that I led or played a role in. Most of the services had livestreaming available in addition to the in-person event, making them accessible to more people despite COVID and/or distance.

- Marty Lipnick (9/10/21)
- Lindsey Korth (9/18/21)
- Meredith Fahey (9/25/21)
- John Pawelek (10/2/21)
- Helene Goward (10/17/21)
- Ron Grunloh (10/23/21)
- Paula Maddern (11/6/21)
- Connor McNerney (11/17/21 at funeral home; 6/5/22 at USNH)
- June Shafer (12/11/21)
- Paul Hammer (4/10/22)
- Lois Smith (4/16/22)
- Jane Anderson (5/21/22)
- During this period, a memorial service was also held for Steve Evans (2/27/22)

I also led other rites of passage, including child dedications, new member ceremonies, interment of ashes, and planning for an upcoming wedding.

### **Spiritual Practices with the Congregation**

- Presided at or led planning for 34 Sunday services, working closely with the Worship Committee. (See the Worship Committee report for details.)
- Offered weekly lectio divina sessions, using poetry in a reflective practice.
- Worked to get to know people better. This had been especially difficult during my first year at USNH because of COVID. With the return to regular in-person gatherings, I experienced more of the informal interactions that are so vital to learning about people.

## **Social Justice**

- Supported the 8th Principle process, including a December 5 service ahead of the congregational meeting at which USNH voted to adopt the 8th Principle.
- Engaged with CONECT through online meetings and conversations with congregants. Half of the offering from the Installation service on November 14, 2021, supported CONECT.
- Started a BIPOC group. My original intention was for folks to gather over lunch after a Sunday service, have some informal conversation, and see how the group might evolve. However, because of the safety concerns around eating in the building, that organizing principle had to be set aside and the group never cohered. I'm still glad I tried this experiment and hope to return to it in the future.
- Participated in interfaith events, including an MLK Day service at Congregation Mishkan Israel and a multifaith clergy group.

## **Administration and Governance**

- Worked with the Management Team and the Building Reopening Advisory Group (BRAG) on operational matters, such as a variety of policies and ways USNH might implement recommendations from the Commission on Institutional Change. (For more details, see the reports for both groups.)
- Worked with the Board of Trustees, including participating in the Ad Hoc Committee on Financial Roles and Responsibilities and helping with an update of the Within and Beyond Ends statements.
- Represented the Management Team on Stewardship and took a major role in shaping the message of this year's ambitious stewardship campaign.
- Took part in hiring our new Membership Coordinator and Director of Music.
- Taught two New to UU classes with a total of 15 attendees. During the course of the year, USNH welcomed 11 new members.
- Worked on updating the structure of the USNH website with a professional consultant.
- Attended all of the Council of Chairs meetings.
- Updated the congregation's brochures on membership and engagement opportunities.

## **Installation and 70th Anniversary Festivities**

While activities celebrating USNH's 70th anniversary were more limited than expected due to COVID, the day of the installation was quite joyous. At the morning worship service, we wove together excerpts from sermons by all of the settled ministers. (The text representing Rev. Lewis came from the program for his installation.) The installation service brought several of my clergy colleagues to USNH, including Rev. Dr. Sofia

Betancourt as the preacher. The evening ended with delicious cupcakes, which volunteers also delivered to people who couldn't come to the installation in person.

An end-of-year picnic in honor of our 70th anniversary is planned for the last Sunday of the congregational year (June 19).

### **Professional Connections Beyond USNH**

- Began a two-year fellowship with the Pastoral Innovation Network of New England (PINNE). “Younger clergy who are three to ten years into their ministry career and who are engaged in innovative congregation-based ministries will build and sustain relationships with peers and mentors where they can explore challenges of ministry in New England, share creative ideas, and receive support from each other.”
- Offered one of the readings at the ordination of Rev. Tara Humphries.
- Took part in professional gatherings both within and beyond Unitarian Universalism: UU Ministers Association (UUMA) Ministry Days (virtual), UUA General Assembly (virtual), UUMA Clara Barton chapter retreat, UUMA Institute (a triennial gathering for UU ministers), Finding Our Way Home (for UU religious professionals of color), SDI Engage conference (for spiritual directors; virtual), Festival of Homiletics (for preachers; virtual).
- Reviewed book proposals as a member of the Skinner House Editorial Board.

### **Board of Trustees**

**Board Membership:** Emily McCave, President; David Jones, Vice President; Aimee Cotton Bogush, Clerk; Larry Copes, Treasurer; At-Large Trustees: Bernice Marie-Daly, Becky Reeve, Tina Santoni, Rich Stockton, Sue Trotta-Smith

Our long-term goals for this congregational year were shaped in part by the ongoing pandemic, which continued to affect our congregational activities and needs of our members. Our goals were also formed in our collaboration with Reverend Lindasusan Ulrich, who the congregation joyfully installed as our settled minister in November. Lastly, our priorities were guided by USNH's Ends statements, which describe the difference we want to make in the world.

A main priority this year was to respond to the call, both from within and beyond our congregation, to act on the proposed [8th Principle](#). In collaboration with the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle Working Group, the Board put forward a motion at the Fall Congregational Meeting to adopt the 8<sup>th</sup> principle. There was cause for much celebration when the motion passed by overwhelming majority. Subsequently, work has begun in various groups within our congregation, including the Board, as we discern how to live into this new principle with not only our words but our actions. The Board would like to extend its deep gratitude to members of the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle Working Group, in particular Sandra Salazar, Jesse Greist, Becky Sandmann, and Jackie Trimble Shapiro, who devoted significant time, energy, and emotional labor to this endeavor.

Typically, the Board holds two retreats during the year, one in the Fall and one in the Spring. Due to unforeseen circumstances that left a vacancy for the Vice President position, it was determined that the best course of action was to forgo a Fall retreat and instead focus on planning a Spring retreat in which the full Board could participate, including the newly elected Vice President, David Jones.

This year's Spring Retreat focused on deepening our relationships with one another, reviewing our Board processes and priorities through the lens of the newly adopted 8<sup>th</sup> principle, and continuing the work of reviewing and revising our ENDS statements. The Board was able to achieve the first aim by participating in an activity focused on recognizing our gifts and the gifts of others, which was led by members of the USNH Ad-Hoc group MELD, which stands for Meaningful Engagement and Leadership Development. The Board is grateful to the MELD members for leading the Board, as well as other groups across the congregation, through this thought-provoking activity. The Board had a rich discussion of our priorities and processes as well as considered what "accountability" means for us as a leadership body within the congregation. Lastly, we made significant changes to both the *Within* and *Beyond* ENDS statements to ensure that the words are action-oriented and in alignment with the 8<sup>th</sup> principle, while also keeping the spirit of the original language. This continues the work that was completed last year in which the *Among* statements were revised. The Board voted to accept these latest changes at our April 2022 meeting. Our revised ENDS statements for *Within* and *Beyond* are below, with the *new language italicized*:

We create and nurture relationships:

### **Within**

Respecting different spiritual journeys, the people of USNH find inspiration *and encouragement* to:

- Worship and explore opportunities for spiritual growth
- *Experience a profound connection to that which is larger than ourselves*
- *Cultivate* meaning and purpose in our lives
- Live with more joy, *kindness, love*, and open-heartedness
- *Demonstrate a willingness to learn and change*
- *Engage in ongoing personal education, including the internal work critical to dismantling white supremacy culture*
- Articulate our Unitarian Universalist identity

### **Beyond**

The people of USNH, together and *in solidarity* with our partners, *seek to build the Beloved Community in our congregation and beyond*. We:

- *Accountably dismantle oppressions in ourselves and our institutions*
- *Deepen our understanding of how justice issues are interrelated and take action to address them in the wider world*

- *Engage in spiritual and applied practices that promote ecological sustainability and environmental justice*
- *Devote resources to support these goals and strengthen Unitarian Universalism*

**The original language is below:**

We create and nurture relationships...

**Within**

Respecting different spiritual journeys, the people of USNH find inspiration and a safe place to:

- Develop our best selves
- Worship and explore opportunities for spiritual growth
- Live with more joy and open-heartedness
- Experience a connection to something larger than ourselves
- Find meaning and purpose in our lives
- Articulate our Unitarian Universalist identity

**Beyond**

The people of USNH, together and with our partners, act on our values in the larger world. We:

- Advance justice in our community and beyond
- Expand our understanding and awareness of social and environmental issues
- Develop new understanding of ourselves and others through our justice work
- Contribute our resources to strengthen Unitarian Universalism

Our regular Board work included monitoring Governance Policies, overseeing the budget and setting priorities for the FY23 budget, which for this coming year included: continuing COLA raises for personnel, supporting Waverly and CONECT (tied to the 8th Principle and racial justice), and paying our dues to the UUA. The Board also continued to work with the minister and Management Team to hear the continual work being done throughout the year. Additionally, the Board worked closely with the Building Re-opening Advisory Group to ensure safety protocols and ongoing monitoring tools were put into place related to building and grounds usage.

At the 2020 Fall Congregational meeting, the congregation passed a motion to experiment with a smaller Board – meaning no more than nine Trustees, plus the Youth Trustee – through June 30, 2022. This year, the Board had nine Trustees, the Youth Trustee position was unfilled, and we experimented with two major changes: 1) the Past President did not join Board meetings but rather was available for consultation as needed, and 2) the Treasurer attended quarterly Board meetings to present financial reports and joined additional meetings if needed to address fiscal matters, but otherwise was not generally engaged in Board activities. Throughout this experiment, the Board utilized process reviews at the end of each Board meeting, engaged in an end-of-the-

year survey on Board effectiveness, and had robust discussions on the size and composition of the Board. Now that the experiment is concluding, the Board is bringing forward bylaws changes that will allow the Board to continue to function effectively and efficiently. These bylaw changes address the size and composition of the Board, as well as address other matters that were brought up this year, such as procedures for voting during congregational meetings and formally allowing USNH friends to join USNH Committees unless otherwise stated in the bylaws.

The Board also accepted the final report of the Ad-hoc Committee on Financial Roles, which made final recommendations to the Board on:

- the specific and appropriate financial roles and responsibilities of the USNH Treasurer, Finance Committee, Management Team, Board of Trustees and other relevant participants in financial matters;
- the accountability relationships among the above entities regarding finances; and
- the appropriate financial reporting to the Board of Trustees.

These recommendations informed the proposed bylaw changes to language surrounding the Treasurer.

Lastly, the Board held a special Board meeting on 5/5/22 with members of the Endowment and Legacies Committee, Management Team and Finance Committee, to discuss the proposed FY23 budget as well as financial projections for the upcoming years. Given the anticipated increases in expenses and flattening of revenue, the Board voted to create a Financial Planning Taskforce made up of members from Management Team, Finance Committee as well as other key stakeholders to develop recommendations to balance expenses and revenues, provide a plan for addressing anticipated capital needs, and complete its work by 2/27/23.

While this year continued to pose many unique challenges, we have persevered. Through the dedication of our minister, our Management Team, members of BRAG, our staff, our Sunday worship team, those who made streaming services possible, especially Robb Camm and Mary Donohue, all the volunteers who have served on committees as well as those who are engaged in our many social justice task forces, as well as each of you, we have continued to show up for one another and have made both a financial and emotional commitment to strengthening our community. Thank you.

## **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.)*

Membership of the Management Team changed at the start of the year with Gwen Heuss-Severance leaving us at the end of June 2021 after 4 years on the team. David



Stagg continued to lead the team with Rev Lindasusan, Jean Rosenthal and Bobbi Pace as our other members.

We continued Zoom meetings every two weeks throughout the year with Jean as recorder and Bobbi providing readings. Rev Lindasusan is our representative to the Stewardship Committee. Jean is our liaison to the Personnel Committee and is its Chair. Bobbi coordinates the activities of the Meaningful Engagement and Leadership Development Group (MELD) and has been our representative on the searches for Membership Coordinator and new Music Director. David is the representative to the Finance and Buildings and Grounds committees. We continue to attend Board meetings each month and we are all members of the Building Reopening Advisory Group (BRAG).

With the advice of a professional website developer, we undertook some modest improvements to our website. We removed a large amount of unused material from the server, tidied up a few sections, implemented the “https” secure protocol and developed a plan for significant future restructuring of the website. We worked with the chairs of 17 of our committees to revise the website document [USNH Committees and Plans](#).

With advice from Richard Genzano we purchased and tested a high quality video camera and associated equipment so that services could be live-streamed. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to Robb Camm and Mary Donohue for their work on remote coverage of our services using Zoom. Robb and Mary not only figured out how to transition from pre-recorded services to the live-stream coverage but have hosted almost all of our Sunday Services and Memorial Services since our return to in-person worship.

MT continued to explore the feasibility of using large TV screens to display video in the Sanctuary. We purchased a 75” TV with a movable stand as a trial. MT continues to solicit and gather feedback from the Congregation on the use of this movable display and the option of mounting two similar screens above the Sanctuary exit doors.

In March 2022 we enlisted the help of Becky Friedkin to transition our usnh.org domain management and resources from G-Suite to Google Workspace. MT reduced the number of active accounts by 50% to simplify management and Becky was able to get us the free version of Google Workspace.

In May 2021 we began working with Susan Godshall on the transition of our daycare ownership from *CuddleTime* to *Over the Rainbow*. Susan drafted an interim lease agreement, our letter of intent to transfer, and worked extensively with the lawyer representing *Over the Rainbow* on the lease. The new Lease Agreement was signed by MT in October 2021 and *Over the Rainbow* took over operations in January 2022 with most of the staff and clients staying on.

In July, Rev Lindasusan and Jean worked on the Job Description for the Membership Coordinator position since Anna Flores would be leaving us. We were delighted to learn

that Jane Ferrall had agreed to take up the position. The transition happened during January 2022.

In the fall of 2021 MT continued to work with the Ad Hoc Committee on Financial Roles and Responsibilities (CFRR) (Becky Friedkin, Rev Lindasusan, David Stagg, Terry Durham, Kathy Garner and Larry Copes as Chair). The report was presented to the Board at their January 2022 meeting and recommendations discussed. The Board subsequently voted to dissolve the Ad Hoc Committee as our work was completed.

We reported compliance with certain Policy Governance sections at the regular monthly meetings of the Board of Trustees. We reported on sections 1.1 through 1.4 and 1.7 through 1.10. In March we resumed reporting on the financial sections 1.5 and 1.6 with critique from our Treasurer, Larry Copes.

We met with the Council of Chairs in September 2021, February 2022 and May 2022. Jean created the agenda and chaired the meetings. We asked at the February meeting for Council Chairs to consider how to apply the 8<sup>th</sup> principle in their work and report back to us at our May 18<sup>th</sup> meeting. MT continues to explore its role in implementing the 8<sup>th</sup> principle, drawing on its discussions on [Widening the Circle of Concern](#).

In January 2022 MT began discussions with the Finance Committee regarding the Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2022-23. The Finance Committee provided us with a first draft. We have continued this collaboration through multiple revisions of the budget as the Stewardship campaign nears its conclusion.

In February, Rev. Lindasusan reported to the Board a request for staff paid time off between Christmas and New Year's (other than Sunday services). With the positive MT and Board response, that will be offered to staff at the end of this year as a test. Jean and the Personnel Committee will look to changes to the Personnel Manual SOP-0016 after the test.

In March 2022, we revised our Standard Operating Procedures SOP-0014 "Fees for Memorial Services" to add right of first refusal and fees for the outside area.

In the fall of 2021, we commissioned a *Roof and Building Envelope Inspection* from Susca Roof Consulting. We received a detailed report in December 2021 including recommendations for work needed now, and in the next 2, 5 and 10 years. We continue to work with the Building and Grounds Committee and with David Jones, who is managing the project, to address the urgent needs of fixing building leaks and providing needed maintenance of the roof and walls.

## **Adult Religious Education Committee**

See Director of Lifespan Religious Education report

## Building Reopening Advisory Group (BRAG)

**BRAG Membership:** Gwen Heuss-Severance (BRAG convener), Rev. Lindasusan, Management Team (David Stagg, Jean Rosenthal, Bobbi Pace), Jesse Greist, Jamie Ross, Emily McCave, Rich Stockton, Nancy Apfel, and Dr. Manya Lisse.

During the 2021-2022 congregational year, the Building Reopening Advisory Group (BRAG) held 10 meetings on Zoom. In June, we began making plans to return to indoor in-person Sunday services with the Water Communion in mid-September 2021. We tracked the local hospitalizations and positivity rates through the summer, noting that positivity rates were below 4%. The risk of infection seemed low enough for a safe reopening of the building. Masks and social distancing protocols for gathering both inside the building and outside were put in place while live-streaming of services on Zoom and YouTube continued.

In late September, BRAG authorized the Worship Planning Team (Rev. Lindasusan, staff members, Worship Committee leaders Jim Peters and David Jones, and Technical Engineer Robb Camm), to determine at its weekly meeting the wisdom and safety of in-person worship.

In December 2021 we returned to live-stream worship only for two months as the local data reflected the surges associated with the COVID variants. The Worship Planning Team prepared for a return to in-person worship for the *Wild and Precious Life Service* in February 2022. We asked that everyone attending in-person worship be fully vaccinated and boosted to the extent that they are eligible. Our protocols were revised to include proof of vaccination and NIOSH mask specificity.

### Current Protocols for USNH In-Person Attendance

- People who are **fully vaccinated, including one booster** (as eligible) are invited to attend in-person worship and other in-person USNH events.
- **High quality masks** (N95, KN95, or KF94) are required inside the building. If you do not have this kind of mask, one will be provided to you on arrival.
- **Vaccination cards will be checked at the door or you can upload** your vaccination record at [this link](#). (Stickers affixed to name tags last fall are no longer being used.)

Our thanks to Becky Friedkin and Pam Niles for designing and managing the record keeping. In April, Music Directors Jeff Douma and Erika Schroth invited the masked congregation to join the choir in singing during the service. And thanks to the Sunday Morning Team for offering a safe “coffee hour” outdoors after the Sunday service. Throughout this pandemic journey, Jesse Greist and the CYRE folks have continued programs for our children.

With our current protocols in place, we have opened the meeting rooms for use by groups of differing sizes and we have returned to using the sanctuary for memorial services, weddings, and concerts.

We would like to thank the Worship Planning Team and everyone for all that they have done and continue to do to keep our community safe and hopeful.

## **Buildings and Grounds Committee**

**Committee Membership:** Jason Kyle (Chair), Al Bosch, Gordon Daniell, John Deming, Shirley Dion, James Erard, Maggie Goodwin and, David Stagg (Management Team representative)

### **The following items have been completed:**

1. Fall and Spring clean-ups (mostly). Some trees were taken down and a ton of grounds cleared. Thanks to everyone who showed up for doing an amazing job!. Jerry Clupper has been leading the charge to beautify our property! In doing so, he has uncovered many of the memorial plaques and markers on our property. He's also cleared a ton of weeds allowing a lot of the plants we've purchased through the years to flourish! Jane Snell has done a great job with the pollinator garden as well!
2. Memorial plotting — Maggie Goodwin has been very hard at work identifying plaques, spaces, and/or items that have been donated or designated in honor of past USNHers. There is conversation with the Mgmt. Team about how we might memorialize deaths in the future. One idea is a "Buy a memorial brick" and build a "memorial patio" replacing the back patio.
3. We purchased and assembled 3 new benches that have been placed on the patio and can be moved to enjoy the property.
4. Winfred Rembert paintings are now protected with plexiglass cases.
5. The biggest project of course is the Dryvit and roof on the exterior of the building. Thanks to David Jones, who is leading this project! Since we last had a meeting like this, much has transpired. There is a multi-year plan with several stages that are on-going. We recently fixed the electrical on the roof to the HVAC units in preparation. We have quotes approved for re-facing the Dryvit with a harder, thicker material and replacing the flashing all the way around the building (except the sanctuary) that ties the roofing material to the Dryvit to prevent leaks and water intrusion.
6. We have sidelined soundproofing the social hall. We have some wonderful ideas like tapestries or handmade cloth artwork to be hung and absorb sound but we would need to collaborate with some willing congregational members that are skilled in this art. Until then, we have more important tasks to manage.
7. Hot water issue in the kitchen was solved by reverting system back to what it was five years ago. Not perfect, but better than it had been since the renovation. (Three-minute run of the hot water will provide enough heated water for at least an hour and the water run time could be used to fill the coffee machines).
8. A moveable wheelchair ramp was purchased and is in the breezeway. When needed, it can be set up in the doorway to provide a ramp to the back patio so all can enjoy.

9. We replaced the entire blind system in the library and room 209 and replaced most of the damaged vertical blinds in all the rooms.

10. The leak in the men's bathroom has been fixed and the Sheetrock was replaced as well as the room painted!

11. The electrical plugs in the kitchen have been labeled so when we have soup Sunday (I HOPE SOON!!) the Sunday Morning Team should be able to keep all those wonderful soups warm until the service is over.

**The following have no projected completion dates yet:**

1. We've gotten a few quotes for solar. We really should consider a parking lot array. We could incorporate EV power stations when doing this. If anyone has ideas on how we could get this project moving, we welcome your involvement!

2. We need to remove a very large amount of tree and shrub debris from our property in several locations and are investigating how best to accomplish this still. In the meantime, the debris is composting which isn't a bad thing at all.

All in all, we have been very active in working to address many of the needs brought to our attention from the congregation and our tenants. We have invested quite a bit but we will be investing much more with the on-going Dryvit and roof project. Without your continued support and contributions, our physical sanctuary will fall into disrepair. We will always do our best to make sure this doesn't happen together!

## **Children and Youth Religious Education Committee**

**Committee Membership:** Patricia McChesney (Chair, continuing), Vicki Seitz (Secretary, continuing), Robyn Genzano (continuing), Manya Lisse Newton (continuing)

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

We would like to express enthusiastic pride for Jesse's accomplishment in earning his certification as a DLRE within the UUA. He worked very hard to attain certification and USNH is fortunate to have him as a leader in our community.

### **Committee Accomplishments**

2021-22 has been a productive and enjoyable year for the Children and Youth Religious Education (CYRE) Committee. We continue to have a very positive working relationship with Jesse Geist, 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. This year, he has overseen classes held in person outdoors and indoors, as well as occasional Zoom format classes. We look forward to our continued work with him.

In 2021-2022, all committee members participated as teachers in the CYRE program, along with many other volunteers from our community.

### **Special Events and Fundraisers**

The CYRE committee and DLRE organized and ran two events this year:

- U-Lympics community gathering (July 2021)
- Family picnic and games (August 2021)
- Getting to Know U – Buddy Program (October-November 2021)
- Sponsorship of Lezter Rico and Miguel Caballero students, and UU children in the Philippines

### **Stated Goals**

The CYRE committee in collaboration with the DLRE met the majority of our stated goals in 2021-22, 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 and expanding on the intergenerational activities begun five years ago—the Secret Buddy Program, the U-Lympics, and other community activities. We were excited to note continued connections between children and youth and adult Buddies even after the end of the formal program. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were unable to host a Buddy Banquet in 2021, but we hope to return to normal social activities in 2022.

### **Additional Projects**

- We are working with the DLRE on incorporating the new 8<sup>th</sup> principle into all CYRE programs
- We are working with the DLRE on updating the CYRE curricula with UU heroes and history that includes people of color
- We are working with our DLRE on updating curricula to include gender non-binary acceptance and understanding
- We are supporting our DLRE with OWL classes at age grade groups K/1, 4/5 and 7/8.

### **CYRE Committee Goals for 2022-23:**

- Support our DLRE in his leadership responsibilities managing religious education programs for our children and youth
- Recruit 2-3 new committee members.

- Work with DLRE to recruit and train new OWL teachers as we look forward to new classes in the 2023-24 year
- 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 Lezter Rico and Miguel Caballero our sponsees.
- Collaborate with DLRE in planning CYRE Sunday in June 2022 which will recognize and thank teachers and other volunteers
- Work with DLRE in planning community activities throughout the year

## **Covenantal Relations Committee**

**Committee Membership:** Amanda Dettmer-Erard, and Nancy Apfel, co-chairs; Lisa Anderson, Marc Eisenberg, Maggie Goodwin, Bernice Marie-Daly, and Karen Swanson

No financial expenditures. Donation of monies left in our restricted budget, \$286.92, to USNH to help fill the budget gap expected for 2022-2023.

We held our monthly meetings via zoom on the first Thursday of each month.

Provided monthly Community Circles, usually the first Sunday of the month unless the date conflicted with holidays, or other congregational events. We adapted thematic materials from Soul Matters. Average attendance of 6-12 participants.

Participated in quarterly Council of Chairs meetings.

Established periodic CRC updates/discussions with Rev. Lindasusan.

Supported congregational discussions and self-education about the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle, and, after USNH adoption of the principle, offered programs to support diversity and inclusion at USNH.

- The CRC voted unanimously to adopt the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle as a committee, November 2021
- We expressed our support to the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle Working Group for their work, encouraging a congregational vote to adopt the principle "sooner rather than later."
- We held a Community Circle on Nov. 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021, entitled *The Call to the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle*.
- Held a movie discussion group on *The Best of Enemies* Sunday March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022, after service, with 22 attendees. Movie topics: racism, fear, community action around desegregation of schools, and friendship.
- Gathered as a committee on May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022, to watch the movie *Son of the South* and consider it for future congregational movie discussion.

Reviewed CRC membership and needs for 2022-23 in April 2022

Revising our CRC covenant to incorporate our intention to actively respect and nurture our planet. Our plan for 2022-23 is to advocate to USNH leadership and congregation

that this concept be added to our USNH Covenant also, as our planet faces an environmental crisis.

Bernice Marie-Daly stepped down as co-chair, January 2022

Amanda Dettmer-Erard and Nancy Apfel – co-chairs January 2022

Amanda is stepping down as co-chair, July 2022

Nancy will be chair, July 2022

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Dettmer-Erard and Nancy Apfel, Co-Chairs, May 14, 2022

## **Director of Lifespan Religious Education**

### **Section One: CYRE**

The Children and Youth Religious Education (CYRE) program continued in 2021-22 to serve the young people and families of USNH, while seeing limited growth, heavy participation in middle grades and reduced participation among high school youth and young children. The CYRE committee, teachers, volunteers, USNH staff, parents/guardians, youth and children collaborated weekly to co-create diverse, vibrant programming, both in person and online. In the fall, the classes met in person, went online (again, sigh) in Winter, and finished out the year in person and outdoors as much as possible.

### **Curriculum**

The curriculum for this year centered on the sources of Unitarian Universalism, as well as health and Sexual Education for middle grades. The curricula used in each class were:

*Picture Book World Religions and Bible Tales* (Pre-K through 2nd Grade)

*Bibleodeon and Beyond* (3rd-4th Grade)

*Riddle and Mystery* and *Our Whole Lives* (5th -6th Grade)

*Our Whole Lives* (7-8th grade)

*Young Religious Unitarian Universalists* (9th – 12th grade)

Note: Due to low numbers in the nursery and youngest grades, Pre-K through 2nd grades were combined into a single class. This is also the reason the decision was made to not run K-1 OWL as we have in the past. We will need to recruit new OWL facilitators and re-evaluate this decision when OWL comes around again in 2023/24.

### **Teachers and Classes**

The teaching corps has been reliable, flexible, and all around wonderful, as always. The all-veteran teams (many of whom had worked together before) coalesced quickly, and became largely autonomous as the year progressed, supported by myself, the CYRE committee and Pam Niles during the week. Classes met weekly, as in prior years, and were able to meet in person outside throughout the fall, virtually in December, January and February, and again in person in March-June, as many children were able to get vaccinated against COVID 19. In general, classes ran smoothly both in person and



online. It is important to note that there have been no cases of COVID 19 transmission during the entire pandemic related to USNH RE classes and parents/children have been excellent about masking, following social distancing protocols, and reporting exposures. All cases of exposure have been followed up by self-imposed whole family quarantine from USNH activities.

Online class sessions in the winter months were shorter than in person, especially for younger children. They also did not follow RE curriculum, but rather served as opportunities for connection and socializing. The in-person classes we offered in fall and spring were wonderful and breathed life into the program, but required A LOT of set up time, energy and resources.

Enrollment in the CYRE program was up from 2020-21, but still down from the previous years, mostly due to the prolonged pandemic. About 10 families that stopped attending in 2020 have yet to return.

We also offered only limited nursery care this year, and in Spring 2022 both of our nursery workers left USNH. I have not hired replacements yet, due to the low number of babies/toddlers attending.

The Pre-K through 2nd grade class averaged 4 students per week, and was taught by Patricia McChesney and Robyn Genzano. In March, 2022 Robyn moved to the 5-6th OWL class and Gretchen Frazier began teaching this group.

The 3-4th grade class averaged 5 students and was taught by Vicki Seitz, Jim Bond, and Mary Beth Congdon.

The 5-6th grade class was taught by Ellen Greist, Nathan Kane and Gretchen Frazier, and averaged 7 students in attendance. We were unable to recruit trained OWL teachers (Robb Camm has been providing tech support, and Becky Sandmann has been deeply involved with the Sunday Morning Team) so OWL was taught by Ellen Greist, Nathan Kane and Robyn Genzano, following a much truncated "in-house" training.

The 7-8th grade OWL class was taught by Manya Lisse, Suzanne Miller, and Bob Congdon, all of whom went through OWL training. Attendance in this class was high, averaging 10 students per week.

The YRUU youth group had only two advisers this year, and four participating youth. The advisers, Richard Genzano and Derick Doebrick have worked amazingly well with the group even as it dwindled in size to an average of 1-2 youth attending per week. They met either online or at USNH twice per month.

The year began with an overnight camping trip, coordinated with other congregations, which was very successful and attended by all four youth, but attendance was poor thereafter. I am working on a new model for next year (see the "goals" section for details).

As mentioned above, total enrollment was up from 2020-21, but still down from prior years. There were 35 children/youth registered for classes this year, with an average weekly attendance of 28. We received approximately 10 visits, with several students returning up to five or six times, but due to a mix of natural attrition and the USNH vaccine attendance policy, only one of those visits translated into student registration or family membership.

### **Special Events and Fundraisers**

In spite of the pandemic, the CYRE committee and DLRE organized and ran four events this year:

- The Olympics in July, 2021
- The YRUU camping con in September, 2021
- A Halloween party and dance
- The Annual Easter Egg Hunt

All of these events were well attended, averaging 50-70 people participating.

The children's chapels this year were both online and in person.

We also ran monthly multi-generational services, adopting a new model that invited children into the Sanctuary for 20 minutes, followed by a parallel worship activity outside for 30 minutes, with the children returning for the final 10 minutes of worship. This model was well received and ran smoothly.

### **Section Two: Adult Religious Education**

This year saw several gatherings of the *Rising Generations* (formerly the *Millennials to Gen X* group) outdoors around the USNH fire pit and patio heater. These events were well attended in fall, but not so in Spring. The final event that was planned wound up needing to be moved at the last minute due to weather, and was thus poorly attended. The good news is that more recent USNH high school graduates have been attending. Other young adults have expressed a desire to meet, but have largely had scheduling conflicts when events get put on the calendar.

It was also my pleasure to run the *Continuum* writer's group, which met monthly to share poetry and prose based loosely on the USNH worship themes. This has proved to be an intimate, safe space for reflection, creativity, and support. A collection of pieces from this group will be added to the USNH library over the summer. The group mourned the passing of co-founder Steve Evans, but welcomed two new members, including one who offered a volunteer \$500 donation to the ARE program.

The Adult Religious Education (ARE) Program ran one short-term class, 4 book discussions and 2 other one day workshops. These were all well received and highly attended. One other book discussion was not well advertised and wound up postponed until fall 2022.

Also, stemming from the efforts of ARE member Ellen Greist, a Bereavement Group was formed, to serve the many members of the congregation who have lost loved ones and family during the last two years. Jamie Johnson and Jenn Kapranov have led this group, which has been a wonderful addition to USNH's community offerings.

The ARE committee ran without a chairperson this year, and was made up of Becky Sandmann, Ellen Greist, Maggie Goodwin, Laura Patey, Kathy Haskins, and Claudia Elferdink, who left the committee in March 2022.

### **Small Group Ministry**

In fall 2021, we ran seven Small Groups, with 72 participants and in spring 2022 we ran six Small Groups with 64 participants total. Feedback about the groups that ran both in the fall and spring was positive, and attendance was regular. The groups that did not run this year did so mostly due to the difficulty associated with running groups virtually. Two of our "stalwart" facilitators put their groups on hiatus until all can meet in person again. In spring, a decision was made to allow groups to meet in person if 100% of participants agreed, and all followed USNH's BRAG protocols. All groups chose to continue meeting online only.

Small Group Ministries at USNH continue to offer essential community building opportunities and a spiritually nurturing atmosphere.

The Small Group Ministry Steering Committee saw membership drop to 3 members, and did not meet at all after September. Decisions, problem solving, and the logistics of sign-ups were handled primarily through email and phone conversations.

### **Section Three: DLRE Professional Development**

Having attained Credentialed Religious Educator status last year, I focused my efforts this year internally. Still, using the generous professional development budget provided by the USNH community, I was able to:

- Attend 6 virtual CT Religious Educator cluster meetings this year.
- Attend the Lifespan Religious Educators' week at Star Island in July 2021, including the *Adapting to Change* daily workshop facilitated by Tandi Rogers.
- Plan and participate in a CT-wide youth camping con
- Deepen my involvement in the Liberal Religious Educators' Association
- Be nominated to serve on the board of the New England Liberal Religious Educators Association chapter for a 2-year term starting in July, 2022.

### **Program goals for 2022-23**

- Revamp the YRUU youth group. With one senior bridging out of YRUU and four incoming 8th graders, now is the time to re-envision YRUU. I have been talking with parents and facilitators about beginning next year with the goal of a year-end environmental stewardship trip. The youth will spend the whole year preparing for this trip, which will occur in May, 2023.

- Revive the *Getting to Know U* buddy program. Many families have missed this program during the pandemic and we hope to run it again in fall 2022
- Examine innovative ways to meet the needs of families with babies and toddlers.
- Encourage Small Group Ministry leaders to expand offerings and hopefully return to in-person meetings, especially emphasizing group accessibility to newcomers.
- Begin to offer expanded Adult RE, especially movies and 1-2 short term classes.

Jesse Greist, Director of Lifespan Religious Education

## **Eighth Principle Working Group**

We met throughout COVID on Zoom and discussed what passing the [8<sup>th</sup> Principle](#) would mean to folks at USNH as well as how we need to incorporate the intent of the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle in all we do at USNH.

We invited members of the USNH community to attend our meetings. In order to answer USNH members' questions about the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle we had question and answer sessions open to all.

Members of our group designed an 8<sup>th</sup> Principle pamphlet and logo.

At the Fall Council of Chairs meeting we discussed how committee chairs can engage their committees regarding how they can live into the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle. In addition to several examples, we suggested two questions:

- How can our committee integrate the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle in what we do? And
- How have we been doing with integrating the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle into our work?

We also offered to attend committee meetings to discuss how to help incorporate the intent of the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle in what they are doing.

In December at a congregational meeting the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle was passed by the entire congregation.

In January the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle Working Group and the Anti-Racism Task Force united to begin working together, for now.

We are continuing to discern how best to move forward with supporting efforts at USNH to “accountably dismantling racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.” (from the 8th Principle)

Becky Sandmann and Jackie Trimble Shapiro

## **Endowment & Legacies Committee**

**Committee Membership:** Fred Morrison, Chair; Carol Cheney, Mike Clorite, Greg Seaman, Vicki Seitz, Van Selden; with Mary Beth Congdon and Bob Congdon, consultants

**Committee Membership:** Fred Morrison, Chair; Carol Cheney, Mike Clorite, Greg Seaman, Vicki Seitz, Van Selden; with Mary Beth Congdon and Bob Congdon, consultants

## Goals

To support the USNH mission and "inspiring lives of compassion and generosity," the Endowment and Legacies Committee goals for this year were to:

- Conduct the 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 and reducing management and investing costs while improving portfolio performance.
- Conduct a recognition event for current and prospective Legacy Society Members.
- Support USNH by providing a contribution of 2% of the endowment value based on a 13-quarter rolling average.

The performance from inception to December 2021 of the endowment managed by the committee is described in the chart below:

<b>Fund</b>	<b>Value 7/1/2012</b>	<b>Value 12/31/2021</b>	<b>Investment Management</b>
1978 Fund	\$ 41,000	\$196,084	UUA Common Endowment
1989 Fund	\$ 96,908	\$423,497	Bradley Foster Sargent
Winchell Fund*	\$357,818	\$1,017,492	Bradley Foster Sargent
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$495,726</b>	<b>\$1,637,073</b>	

\*Includes USNH mortgage refinance loan.

The **total Endowment values and annual returns** in recent years were:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Endowment Value</b>	<b>Annual return</b>	<b>Change in CPI*</b>
Dec 31, 2014	\$ 920,480	0.8%	
Dec 31, 2015	\$ 899,827	- 2.2%	0.7%
Dec 31, 2016	\$ 957,402	6.4%	2.1%
Dec 31, 2017	\$1,107,937	15.7%	2.1%
Dec 31, 2018	\$1,090,562	- 1.5%	1.9%
Dec 31, 2019	\$1,245,526	14.0%	2.3%
Dec 31, 2020	\$1,453,515	8.0%	1.4%
Dec 31, 2021	\$1,637,073	8.9%	7.5%

\*Consumer Price Index

## Mortgage Refinance

In June, 2018 the commercial mortgage with Citizens Bank was due to be refinanced. Instead of refinancing with a bank loan, a plan was adopted to use endowment funds to “loan” ourselves the funds to pay off the Citizens bank loan. The goals of the refinance plan were:

1. To reduce USNH operating costs of a commercial loan by borrowing endowment funds to refinance the commercial loan
2. To reduce refinancing costs by eliminating bank closing and legal fees
3. To maintain the expected returns to the endowment by approving a covenant to repay the loan with interest on a monthly basis

The existing Citizens Bank loan was paid off with \$279,700 from the Winchell Fund and \$100,000 from the UUA Common Endowment Fund. It was replaced with a simple mortgage at 5.7% for 15 years. Monthly payments from the operating fund to Endowment are \$3,142.91. The unpaid balance is an asset in the Endowment since it is receivable. This means that the 13-quarter rolling average at the end of the calendar year used to determine the Endowment contribution to the annual operating budget is maintained at about the same level.

Since Endowment gives money to the operating budget and the operating budget makes mortgage payments to the Endowment, we use journal entries for the monthly mortgage payment until the amounts are the same in both Endowment and operating budget, and then write checks for the remaining amount. If Endowment owes less than the 12 x 3,142.91 to the operating budget, then the operating budget writes checks to Endowment, and vice versa.

## **Recent History of the USNH Endowment**

### ***Winchell Fund***

The Winchell Fund was established in 2011 with a bequest from Jean Winchell of approximately \$400,000 that nearly doubled the size of the USNH endowment. Jean Winchell's will specified that her gift to the endowment could not be used as collateral for a loan. To ensure that we could honor that condition as well as honor long-term members Jean and Herb Winchell for making such a large gift, the Endowment Committee chose to create the Winchell Fund as a separate endowed fund.

### ***Major revisions to the endowment bylaws in June 2012***

At a Congregational Meeting in June 2012, the bylaws pertaining to the management and use of the Endowment Funds were amended to provide, among other things, the following:

- Distributions may be made from total returns including appreciation, not just from income and dividends.
- Distributions may be used to fund, without limitation, existing programs, capital needs, and new initiatives or contingencies.
- The Endowment and Legacies Committee proposes an amount to be distributed, but does not determine how the money will be used. Instead, the uses for the

distribution are determined during the process of developing an operating budget and a capital budget and then approved, or modified, at a Congregational meeting. The Congregation can vote to take more or less of a distribution than the amount recommended by the Endowment and Legacies Committee.

### ***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. A campaign brochure was developed and sent to USNH members.

Imagine what it would be like today if USNH had an endowment of \$2.5 million and used 4% of the endowment's value to support the USNH budgets each year. In this hypothetical scenario, USNH would be receiving \$100,000. Imagine what USNH programs and functions could be expanded or what new initiatives could be undertaken to fulfill our mission if USNH was receiving \$100,000 annually from its endowment. It is generally recognized that healthy 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.

On December 31, 2021 the market value of the endowment was \$1,637,073. The estimated value of USNH members' estate contributions is approximately \$600,000. Taken together, we have reached \$2,237,073, or 89%, of the \$2,500,000 goal.

### ***Legacy Society***

The Legacy Society was established to recognize and honor those members 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. During this year, three USNH members joined the Legacy Society by including USNH in their estate plans. Also \$9,000 in endowment contributions was received .

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.

### ***Activities During 2021-22***

In addition to the usual review of Endowment fund performance, the committee decided to move all Schwab Endowment funds to be ESG funds (Environmental, Social and Governance) type, in which investments are supposed to be with companies that promote good environmental practices, have broad social goals, and have governance structures that are non-discriminatory. The UUCEF funds are already weighted toward social and environmental goals, and we have no influence over the individual investment decisions.

Unfortunately, as reported in several publications, such as Bloomberg Weekly, the ESG model may not be as pro-active as one would hope, but may be weighted toward companies that are at low risk from environmental, social and governance factors. We decided not to do anything about this at this time.

And, our financial advisor, Peter Kirschenbaum, moved from Peoples United Advisors to a different firm, Bradly Foster Sargent. Peter has been our advisor for a long time, and

we decided to continue with him. The funds he manages for us continue to be held at Schwab and Co., Inc., so no change was necessary.

## **Finance Committee**

**Committee membership:** Terry Durham (chair), Susan Godshall, Linda Mehta, and Rick Weber. David Stagg from the Management Team and Treasurer Larry Copes also attend the 2nd Tuesday monthly meetings.

The Finance Committee monitors operational revenue and expenses during the fiscal year and advises the Management Team.

**Continuing Operations:** Financial activity is usually conducted on Monday mornings by Finance with Administrator Jamie and bookkeeper Antonia. At that time bills are paid, and bank deposits prepared and made. Bank statements and deposits are reconciled. Also, other financial matters are reviewed, discussed and resolved on Mondays.

Regular specific tasks are performed by Finance members. Finance ensures that the Sunday collection and grocery gift card funds are counted and secured in the safe. Finance also manages TIAA Bank CDs and the sale of stock donations to USNH. In July, Finance ensures that staff COLA and other pay raises are implemented for payroll. In January Finance ensures that the annual UUA medical premium updates are implemented for payroll. During the fiscal year Finance monitors payroll operations. Payroll is made twice monthly on the 15<sup>th</sup> and at the end of each month.

**Financial Roles and Responsibilities:** During the 2020-21 fiscal year the Board of Trustees appointed an Ad-Hoc Committee on Financial Roles and Responsibilities to update financial procedures and policies. This Ad-Hoc committee was formed by Treasurer, Larry Copes, Clerk Becky Friedkin, Finance members Terry Durham and Kathy Garner, Management team members David Stagg and Rev Lindasusan Ulrich. The committee inventoried all finance duties, ensured that each is checked by at least two people and updated duties for the Treasurer, Finance Committee, and Endowment & Legacies. These duties are shown on the USNH website under [Operational Policies and Procedures](#) as [SOP- 0013 Financial Operations. Roles and Responsibilities](#).

The Finance Committee will coordinate an annual July review of this “living document” to ensure its continued accuracy.

**Annual Operating Budget:** Annually during February, Finance prepares and submits to the Management Team a first draft budget for the next fiscal year. During the spring, Finance assists the MT in finalizing the proposed budget for the annual Spring Congregational Meeting.

**Financial Planning Task Force:** In a special Board meeting on May 5, 2022, the Endowment & Legacies Committee proposed forming a task force to review long term revenue and expenses to assist planning the 2023-24 operating budget. The Board approved this request. This task force will be led by Management team member David Stagg and Finance chair Terry Durham and will consult with representatives from



Stewardship, Membership, Music, Life Span Religious Education, Social Justice, Buildings and Grounds, Personnel, and Endowment and Legacies. Guided by the USNH Mission, the Task Force will develop recommendations to balance expenses and revenues and provide a plan for addressing anticipated capital needs. The goal is to complete this review by February 27, 2023 to assist the fiscal year 2023-24 planning.

Submitted by Terry Durham, chair

## **History, Archives, & Library Committee**

**Committee membership:** Jane Platt, Chair; Toby Appel, Frank Jonnietz, Kathy Lindbeck, James Platt, Peggy Rae

Recently a few of us have met in the Library, but we're still mostly working at home and by email.

A [searchable database](#) of our library collection is now on [our website](#).

We have continued to organize and store items in archival format (acid free folders etc.) depending on access to the building. We're revising the filing system, adding new categories to reflect changes in congregational life.

Transcribed histories of USNH, written by Oscar Weiner, Richard N. Platt, Sr., Richard N. Platt, Jr., John Wolff, Jean Winchell, and Madeline Erskine are available. I can send email copies of these to anyone who is interested.

Thirty-six current or former members have been interviewed on cassette tapes which are now digitized and noise reduced. We can email a file to anyone wishing to listen to them. More recent interviews include Shirley Biewald, Ed Biewald, Bill Goward, Helene Goward, and Caroline Bridgman Rees. We plan to expand to include past presidents and other longtime members.

We have developed a list of deceased members, attempting to name those whose remains have been interred in our Memorial Garden. Please let us know if your relative's ashes are there.

My presentation on our early history for the New Members took place on Zoom. I answer queries about our early history as they come up. A recent example is a record of the varying numbers of trustees on our Board

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

Respectfully submitted,  
Jane Platt

## **MELD: Meaningful Engagement, Leadership Development**

**Team membership:** Bobbi Pace (chair), Nancy Apfel, Cindy Chelcun, Becky Friedkin, Dan Gelperin

In the spring of 2021, last year's Board identified *leadership development* as a priority and Nancy Apfel committed to make it a focus for her year as Past President. In May of 2021, Bobbi Pace attended a two-part virtual workshop offered by the New England Region of the UUA on *Centering in Gifts*, which focused on helping people develop more meaningful connection and involvement in their congregations through the identification and cultivation of their *gifts*. These two initiatives are the source of our group name: *Meaningful Engagement, Leadership Development - MELD*.

A statement from that workshop on *Centering Gifts and Spiritual Leadership* says:

*We believe the purpose of congregational life is to equip congregants to exercise their Spiritual Leadership. While not everyone in a congregation is called to serve in a leadership role in a congregation, everyone is called to Spiritual Leadership. All church work therefore can be approached as opportunities for spiritual growth, community building, and mission fulfillment.*

Especially as the pandemic continues, there is a hunger for more connection and meaningful engagement. *Centering in Gifts* is an approach to help foster these at USNH, both for newer and longer-term members. It is important to stress that **gifts are not the same as skills and talents**, although there can be overlap. Skills and talents tend to be tapped in a more utilitarian manner - to get things done. **The concept of gifts is more spiritual and life-affirming.**

We began meeting in August 2021, sometimes with Rev. Lindasusan, to explore how to bring these ideas to USNH. We used resources from the workshop Bobbi attended, the New England Region website on [Spiritual Leadership](#), and exercises from Rev. Lindasusan's *New to UU* class to develop a workshop to help USNHers identify and share their deeper selves and gifts and to affirm those gifts in community. We want to help individuals find ways to participate at USNH that is gratifying, recognizes their gifts, and brings them joy.

Members of the team made a presentation to the Board at its January 13, 2022 meeting, introducing the concepts of spiritual leadership and centering in gifts, describing our proposed workshop, and inviting Board members to participate in the workshop we developed. The Board invited the team to run the workshop at the Board Retreat on March 5 and were very positive about it, noting that they wished it had occurred earlier in the year.

The team made a similar presentation to the Council of Chairs meeting on February 23, 2022. We subsequently ran two small workshops with five committee chairs and Director of Lifespan Religious Education Jesse Greist, again to very positive feedback.

We think this process can support committees and other small groups at USNH in their work through the sharing, trust, and appreciation of one another. We are in the process of scheduling summer or fall workshops with the Stewardship, Nominating, and Membership teams, and would love to do so with other committees, task forces, or informal work groups.

## **Communication and involvement with the wider congregation**

The February 3, 2022 monthly [USNH newsletter](#) included an introduction to the MELD team and concepts. We plan to include additional articles in the coming months.

We want to bring the process to small groups of USNH congregants (members and non-members), regardless of committee or task force involvement. This will be a major focus in the coming congregational year. We are working with the Worship Committee to schedule a LOVED talk about Centering in Gifts and will lead a **summer service on July 10**.

## **Engagement with other congregations exploring spiritual leadership**

In early 2022, the New England Region of the UUA started a [Spiritual Leadership for Culture Change \(SLCC\) community of practice](#) focused on using the five practices of spiritual leadership for congregational culture change towards creating the [beloved community](#). Religious professionals and lay people meet once every two months to share experiences and explore the application of spiritual leadership to our congregations. At least one member of the MELD team has participated in the two meetings held so far (in January and March), and will participate in the May gathering. (Later gatherings have not yet been scheduled.)

The [March SLCC gatherings](#) focused on *Responding to Racism Through the Practices of Spiritual Leadership*. We alerted members of the Anti-Racism Taskforce and the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle Working Group about these meetings and several members joined the gatherings. A group of five or six people (from both the MELD team and the task forces) plan to take the UUA seven-session online course [Claiming Our Spiritual Leadership](#) as a team this summer.

## **More traditional leadership development**

The team is in conversation with the Nominating Committee, which is chaired by MELD team member Dan Gelperin, about ways in which we can best collaborate and complement one another's work on congregational leadership development.

Any group or congregant interested in meeting with the MELD team may contact us at [meld@usnh.org](mailto:meld@usnh.org).

## **Membership Team**

Jane Ferrall (current Membership Coordinator)  
Anna Flores (previous Membership Coordinator)

**Committee Membership:** Kathy Haskins (chair), Patrick Korth, Joan Lane, Kyle Manning, Debbie Smith, Cindy Chelcun (left team in January)

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

The beginning of the year was challenging with Membership Coordinator Anna Flores participating on-line from Arizona. The team handled (while in person) the greeting of

new visitors and having them fill out the new visitor forms, while Anna would follow up with ongoing communications with them and facilitate the Zoom post-service Welcome Corner. Our search for a new coordinator was also a big challenge. The resumes the search team received from various job sites were not, for the most part, what we were looking for and the few interviews scheduled did not present positive results. Fortunately, Jamie Ross contacted previous coordinator Jane Ferrall and she was willing to take on her former position. The transition period was smooth, Jane hit the ground running and has not slowed down since.

We will continue our function of checking in with new members at least once a year to see how they are settling in and to provide any assistance they may need in being directed to interaction with teams/committees they may have interest in. In January, the team contacted members of the last three new members groups to check in and see if any needed further connection with the congregation. Some had taken a break for various reasons (virtual services/zoom overload, pandemic fatigue, relocating), some were involved with social justice projects but not attending service regularly, some were unreachable, and some were engaged in all ways and good conversations were had about initiatives they would like to see implemented, which we passed on to the appropriate committees/staff.

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.

A new program was suggested and implemented with the management team, SGM and membership to set up a series of three small group classes over the summer, one each on the first Tuesday of June, July and August. The classes were offered first to new or newish members to get them acquainted with the small group concept and hopefully introduce them to more members of the congregation until we can all meet in person again.

Becky Sandmann attended our March meeting to discuss ways to work the eighth principle into our team protocols. A good discussion was had and material was provided with examples of ways to be more welcoming. We are working those examples into our greetings and being mindful of what we say, how we say it and information that we should provide new visitors that we might not have been already. Our visitor forms were previously updated to include a space for pronouns if the visitor wished to provide it, but we would like guidance on how else to review/update our materials.

Two new member classes were held this year, one via Zoom in January and one in person in April. The January class yielded six new members and the April class brought five more. We are hoping to be able to begin to have social gatherings again for the new

members to help them get to know each other and other USNH members, if pandemic numbers allow.

In summary, the Membership Team has enjoyed as productive a year as possible considering the pandemic related circumstances. We fine-tuned some activities and initiated new events which are helping to integrate and connect new members into the wider USNH 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 Kathy Haskins, May 12, 2022

## **Music Committee**

**Music Directors:** Jeff Douma and Erika Schroth

**Associate Music Director:** William Braun

**Committee Membership:** Jackie Trimble Shapiro (chair), Toby Appel, Carol Holloman, Ann Levison, Sylvia Lipnick, Linda Mehta, Linda Pawelek, and Jane and Dick Platt

This year saw the choir gradually return to rehearsing and singing in services with masks. Jeff and Erika continued to lead hymn singing from the pulpit: initially with no one else singing. With happy enthusiasm, the congregation has resumed singing with masks on.

Jeff and Erika let us know in November that they are finishing as Directors of Music in June. As chair of the Music Committee, Jackie became chair of the search committee for a new Director. She and Reverend Lindasusan gathered the following people to join them on that committee: David Jones, Robyn Genzano, Bill Braun, Claire Bien and Bobbi Pace as liaison to Personnel. The process of hiring a new Music Director is almost complete. We plan to make an announcement in the next couple of weeks.

The committee requested and was given an extra \$200 in the music budget to support the new Director's ability to purchase music.

The Music Committee began discussion of how to integrate the 8th Principle which influenced the following two points:

- 1) The Music Director Search Committee discussed and remained open to all applicants. Discussion was begun with all candidates about willingness to include a variety of cultures and styles of music in services. They were made aware of our 8th Principle and the desire to bring this lens to our work together.

Both final candidates demonstrated this willingness by their music choices for an audition-choir-rehearsal, when given the theme, *Widening the Circle*.

- 2) We requested to work together with Reverend Lindasusan, the Worship Committee, and possible others to explore making attributions of choral composers and lyricists to acknowledge their contributions. Carol Holloman from the Music Committee and Carole

Arnold from Anti-Racism/8th Principle volunteered to be part of this process which will be moved forward with the new Director.

Our Associate Music Director, Bill Braun, resumed playing piano in the sanctuary and continues to coordinate guest musicians to augment many services.

Three committee members, Linda Pawelek, Linda Mehta and Carol Holloman, are organizing a congregation wide farewell celebration for Jeff and Erika after the service on Sunday June 12th.

In service,  
Jackie Trimble Shapiro, chair

## **Nominating Committee**

**Committee Membership:** Dan Gelperin (Chair), Carol Anastasio, Robb Camm, Gretchen Frazier, Maggie Goodwin, Becky Sandmann (Clerk), and Susan Trotta, Board of Trustees Representative

From its first meeting, the Committee identified the important task of finding a board Vice President candidate to replace Joanie Messner, who had resigned from this position. The Committee also needed to find a Vice President candidate for Spring, as well as replacing two at-large BoT members, as Rich Stockton and Bernice Marie-Daly complete their terms in 2022, and a Treasurer to replace Larry Copes upon completion of his term. Becky Sandmann and Carol Anastasio agreed to continue for another term on the Nominating Committee. Linda Mehta will rejoin and Fred Morrison will serve another term on Endowment and Legacies.

The Committee did the following, in order to communicate widely and inclusively with USNH members:

- discussed potential candidates;
- contacted numerous USNH members about elected leadership, focusing on developing possible candidates for future years as well as current needs;
- sent a message via the monthly newsletter to the congregation in Fall 2021, describing the elected leadership positions and inviting interest.

We were unable to find a candidate for VP for 2022-23, and will continue searching.

The Committee plans to work with Board leadership and Rev. Lindasusan to develop a new Committee charge.

The slate presented to the Congregation follows. Asterisks and blue text denote identified candidates. Elected members remaining on the Board and Committees are also shown.

Name	Position	Term	Notes
<b>BOARD OF TRUSTEES</b>			
<b>OFFICERS:</b>			
*David Jones	President	2022-2023	
*Not filled, to be determined	Vice President	2022-2023	
Aimee Cotton Bogush	Clerk	2021-2023	Incumbent
*Joanna Scaparotti	Treasurer	2022-2024	

**AT LARGE TRUSTEES:**

Tina Santoni	Trustee	2020-2023	Incumbent
Becky Reeve	Trustee	2021-2023	Incumbent
Sue Trotta-Smith	Trustee	2021-2024	Incumbent
*Joan Ciano	Trustee	2022-2025	
*Kyle Manning	Trustee	2022-2025	

**NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

Robb Camm	Nominating	2020-2023	Incumbent
Maggie Goodwin	Nominating	2020-2023	Incumbent
Gretchen Frazier	Nominating	2021-2024	Incumbent
Dan Gelperin	Nominating	2021-2024	Incumbent
*Carol Anastasio	Nominating	2022-2025	Incumbent for 2 <sup>nd</sup> term
*Becky Sandmann	Nominating	2022-2025	Incumbent for 2 <sup>nd</sup> term
TBD	BOT Representative	2022-2023	Board will select

**ENDOWMENT AND LEGACIES COMMITTEE**

Michael Clorite (2nd term)	E&L	2020-2023	Incumbent
Vicki Seitz (2nd term)	E&L	2020-2023	Incumbent
Van Selden	E&L	2020-2023	Incumbent
Carol Cheney	E&L	2021-2024	Incumbent
*Linda Mehta	E&L	2022-2025	
*Fred Morrison (2 <sup>nd</sup> term)	E&L	2022-2025	Incumbent for 2 <sup>nd</sup> term

**Pastoral Care**

The Pastoral Care program at USNH was restructured this year, using a model that had been used successfully in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

The Pastoral Care Network was introduced during the October 10, 2022 worship service, during which more than 50 members completed forms specifying the nature of care they could commit to (making calls, sending cards, providing meals, supporting the bereaved, and visiting congregants who may feel isolated). Additional sign-ups were solicited in subsequent newsletters, and we have more than 50 people who have

volunteered to make calls, more than 70 people who have volunteered to send cards, more than 40 people who have volunteered to provide meals, and almost 50 people who have volunteered to make visits. People also spontaneously volunteered to provide rides, read to people, meditate with people, run errands, help with garden chores, follow up with new members, chat with people on the phone or Zoom, and take people to lunch.

Implementation of the model was delayed somewhat by the need to recruit enough coordinators to leverage the pool of Pastoral Care Network volunteers. This was accomplished in early spring and the team started meeting in March. A newsletter item and pulpit announcement in April announced the launch of the new team. The coordinators meet monthly with Rev. Lindasusan. Following are the coordinators and the area each manages:

Calls:	Carol Wade
Cards:	Leigh Powers
Meals:	Becky Friedkin
Visits:	Pat Trotta
Comfort Shawls:	Mary Losee

More than 70 meals have been provided to members this year through the Pastoral Care Network, and cards and calls have begun to be solicited. Coordination of visits, and pertinent training, is the next major task for the team. Related to the 8th principle, we will include cultural competency in all trainings.

The success of the Pastoral Care Network depends, in part, on the willingness of congregants to identify their needs. With respect to implementation of the 8<sup>th</sup> principle, we encourage all those who are in need of some special care (comforting contact, meals, etc.) or are undergoing difficult circumstances to call upon us. Please email [pastoralcare@usnh.org](mailto:pastoralcare@usnh.org) or [revlindasusan@usnh.org](mailto:revlindasusan@usnh.org) to request care or with questions or concerns. If you have not yet volunteered to provide care, you may do so at [this link](#).

We also note that Jamie Johnson and Jenn Kapranov launched a grief support group in November 2021, which has been helpful to many during these difficult times. The group meets on the first and third Wednesdays of the month, and is open to all. Email [bereavement@usnh.org](mailto:bereavement@usnh.org) for more details.

## **Personnel Committee**

**Committee Membership:** Carol Stockton and Jean Rosenthal, with liaison assistance from Management Team member Bobbi Pace. We are actively looking for others to join the committee!

### **Goal of USNH Personnel Committee**

To support the USNH mission by enhancing congregational infrastructure by providing support on personnel issues as requested by the Board of Trustees, Management Team, and Minister as head of staff.



## **Staff Support**

- Responded to questions about employee benefits
- Regular check-ins with employees
- Surveyed all employees for Monitoring Report on section 1.3 of Policy Governance Handbook. *Treatment of Paid and Volunteer Staff*
- Researched and provided information on possible DLRE sabbatical.
- With the finance committee, began work on the UUA *Benefits Tune-up Workbook*.
- Provided information regarding reimbursement for OTC Covid-19 tests to those participating in health insurance

## **Staff Hiring**

With the departure of the part-time Membership Coordinator Anna Flores and the hiring of Jane Ferrall for that position, we worked with the minister and the search committee in developing the job description, posting the job, screening candidates, and facilitating background checks for the final candidate.

With the planned departure of co-music directors Jeff Douma and Erika Schroth, we worked with the minister and the search committee in developing the job description, posting the job, screening candidates, drafting an offer letter, and facilitating background checks for the final candidate.

## **Budgeting**

We submitted three recommendations for the 2022-2023 budget, which have been included in the proposed budget for 2021-2022:

1. Keep staff at the current size.
2. Based on the UUA projection, budget an increase of 5% for health insurance premiums.
3. Add a cost of living (COLA) increase of 3% for all employees, based on the UUA's recommendation and local inflation.

Submitted May 12, 2022

## **Small Group Ministry**

See the Director of Lifespan Religious Education report.

## **Social Justice Ministry**

Despite the continued challenges of the COVID pandemic and consequent closing of the USNH building, the Social Justice Ministry remained extremely active in a number of areas: anti-racism work, supporting refugees and immigrants, fighting voter suppression, preventing gun violence, supporting the food bank, confronting the climate crisis, responding to the humanitarian crisis in the Ukraine and collaborating with other congregations to discern which issues are of greatest concern in order to focus

organizing efforts. Much of the work is inherently anti-racist. In keeping with the [8th Principle](#) work of the congregation, efforts were made to be intentionally inclusive when reaching out to congregants, to raising issues of racial bias as they arose with partner groups, and to following the lead of people of color with whom we are partnering.

The Social Justice Council (SJC) supported this work by consistently reaching out to the various task forces to help with logistics including funding and encouraging partnerships between task forces and with other community groups working on similar issues.

The SJC also conducted a survey of the congregation to help us determine which issues are of most importance to USNH congregants. Twenty percent of the congregation responded. The results are still being analyzed, but preliminary results indicate that while there was significant interest in most issues, the issues of greatest concern were racism, the climate crisis, and the freedom to vote. The survey also assessed peoples' interest in various forms of social justice engagement and provided a list of to whom to reach out for various initiatives.

Please see the individual task force reports below. Groups not listed are on hiatus due to COVID restrictions or a lack of available leadership.

### **Anti-Racism**

We have continued to meet via Zoom.

First our task force and then the USNH membership have adopted the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle. We continue to educate ourselves and others about the UUA report "Widening the Circle of Concern."

- The 8<sup>th</sup> Principle Working Group was formed and met often and to focus their energy on the principle. The result was the USNH vote in favor of adopting it.
- We continue our efforts of previous years of collaborating with the anti-racism efforts of other task forces, committees, and initiatives at USNH.
- Adult RE and Anti-Racism led a three-session discussion of Winfred Rembert's book *Chasing Me to My Grave*.
- Meeting discussions focused on shared anti-racism related readings, for example, *Critical Race Theory: A Case Study in Appropriation* and *Ignoring Racism is No Way to Study American History*.
- We support the initiatives of CONECT and USNH's commitment to financial and volunteer support.
- We support the Waverly/USNH Partnership as ART's working arm.
- We decided to consciously include the anti-racism issues of Asian people and Indigenous people.

The 8<sup>th</sup> Principle Working Group (which had some members who had not previously been part of ART) began attending the Tuesday night meetings. The meeting is now called the ART/8<sup>th</sup> Principle Working Group

## **Immigration and Refugee Task Force**

- Weekly ESOL tutoring for survival- and beginner-level English speakers
- Members volunteer with IRIS co-sponsor group (New Start Ministry) to resettle Afghan refugees
- Supported (contributions, physical set-up) USNH apartment set-up for IRIS-sponsored refugee
- Joined Connecticut Immigrant Rights Alliance (CIRA) as ally member, attended monthly meetings to stay informed about Connecticut and national issues
- Legislative contacts to support Husky4Immigrants campaign to expand healthcare regardless of immigration status
- Publicized New Haven area businesses/training programs for refugee women (Havenly Treats, Sanctuary Kitchen); donation to each
- LOVED presentations on Dec. 19, 2021 and May 8, 2022
- Sponsored Diaper Drive, May 8-15 at USNH to collect diapers for community and immigrant/refugee organizations
- Adopted 8<sup>th</sup> Principle
- Disseminated information on current issues, advocacy to 70-person USNH email list as needed
- Convened monthly meetings of IRTF to share information

## **LBGTQ+ Pride and Radical Welcoming**

We have been meeting with the Anti-Racism Taskforce and 8th principal group for the last 6 months or so, as we are committed to working on the integration of the 8th principal at USNH. Because we had had limited participation in during the week zoom meetings of the LBGTQ+ group, we decide to move the LBGTQ+ monthly gatherings to the third Sunday after service in support of and parallel to Rev. Lindasusan BIPOC gatherings on the second Sunday of the month. These LBGTQ+ gatherings began on Zoom and are now scheduled in person in the library and we have had increased interest and participation. Ocean Phillips agreed to become the co-chair with Maggie Goodwin of the task force. We have been working with our community partner agency, the New Haven Pride Center, and are co-sponsoring with the Pride Center a discussion of a needed "rainbow elders" resource project to bring other agencies together in support of "rainbow elders." We are exploring the possibility of doing a summer service and have a LBGTQ+ awareness activity scheduled in June with the Pride Center at USNH and will plan for other activities in September when Pride is celebrated in New Haven.

Funding was used to fulfill the LBGTQ+ Welcoming commitment to contribute to a community partner. We gave \$250 and will hopefully contribute additional funds to the *Rainbow Elder Resource Development Project*.

## **Women Empowered**

The Women Empowered task force had limited activities this year due to the pandemic. At one of the social justice drive throughs, WE collected menstrual supplies for delivery to the Keefe Center in Hamden. Some WE task force members participated in rallies for reproductive rights at various locations. The task force hopes to become more active in the coming months in response to the wave of politically motivated anti-abortion activities across the country.

## **Kids' Service Team**

Children and their parents rose to the challenges of the pandemic restrictions and continued "having fun while doing good."

- Cleaned and furnished two apartments for refugees in collaboration with the Immigration and Refugee Taskforce
- Held a very productive coat drive for refugees
- Supported the foodbank through the Reverse Advent Calendar project
- Held two muffin sales to support Ukrainians fleeing the humanitarian disaster
- Will tag horseshoe crabs with the CT Audubon Society

## **Food Bank**

The USNH Food Bank has collected nonperishable food and toiletry donations from USNH members and friends every month of the year. We also collect \$25 grocery gift cards as donations. Donations placed on our shelves in the coat room are available to USNH members and friends who may need them. We deliver remaining donations to the Keefe Center Food Bank (which is the Hamden Food Bank) later in the month. From June 2021 through April 2022, we have delivered 300 bags of food and 252 grocery gift cards. We also collected used clothing, once for winter and once for victims of a fire in Hamden.

We appreciated the partnering again this year with the Kids' Service Team for the Reverse Advent Calendar food collection. Finally, we are grateful to the SJC for organizing drive-through donations during the pandemic, which made our work possible.

## **Preventing Gun Violence**

Due to the pandemic and the engagement of members in personal priorities and social justice activities, we did not formally meet during this year (July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022).

As Task Force members we were engaged in:

- Pushing the Connecticut General Assembly to support community gun violence intervention – we signed petitions, spoke at hearings, attended rallies, sent emails, called legislators and advocated directly at the capitol. Our state's budget now includes an unprecedented level of spending of nearly \$6 million to fund community gun violence prevention, intervention and aftercare programs.

- Volunteering to garden at [\*The New Haven Botanical Garden of Healing Dedicated to Victims of Gun Violence\*](#) located in Westville. It is a beautiful and extremely poignant site.
- “Lunching and lobbying” with the *Newtown Action Alliance* on Mondays. We have called national congresspeople to urge them to vote for gun safety/violence prevention measures
- Publicizing Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPOs – orders to remove guns from those deemed by a judge to be at risk of imminent harm to themselves or others) as we team up with [\*Connecticut Against Gun Violence\*](#) to provide information on ERPOs in town offices, libraries, community centers, etc. in the Greater New Haven area.
- Becoming a formal Partner of *The Connecticut Initiative to Prevent Community Gun Violence*.
- Wearing orange on June 2<sup>nd</sup> to commemorate and bring attention to National Gun Violence Awareness Day.
- Participating in CONECT’s House Meetings and, in addition to other issues raised, raising concerns around gun violence in our schools and communities. As members of CONECT’s *Do Not Stand Idly By*, we will be involved in its issue-specific House Meeting in May on gun safety/gun violence prevention.

### **Green Sanctuary and Environmental Justice**

Set goals of "collaborating and informing" for the year with the idea we would keep meeting and do what we could. Developed and sent out a list of collaborating advocacy and climate informational groups to follow and discuss. Decided to use our monthly meeting times to discuss and share information, thoughts, and actions. Met monthly on third Mondays at 6 pm on Zoom.

- Had an informational Climate Change Workshop 101 in October on Zoom which co-chair Melinda Tuhus developed and 16 people attended. We sent the recording to others (in English and Spanish).
- Cosponsored and participated in a speaker and book discussion with Humanists.
- Cosponsored and participated in a forum on Land Use with C3M and will cosponsor another forum with C3M in May.
- Cosponsored and participated in a workshop with IREJN and hopefully will participate in a second event this month.
- Followed and submitted testimony on CT legislation in collaboration with Save the Sound and Sierra Club on their environmental legislative priorities as well as specific interests of members.
- Wrote and presented testimony and asked USNH members to contact legislators on various environmental issues.

- USNH member participated in actions in Hartford and on Zoom with other environmental groups and informed membership and USNH of opportunities to participate in advocacy actions.
- Ran the regifting sale in December with many members participating by staffing, donating, setting up and taking down, collecting, selling, buying and assisting Waverly receiving gifts for Waverly kids to give to parents and family. We raised \$1,200 (I believe) and then donated the remaining items to Iris and Goodwill.
- Encouraged participation and carpooled to Earth Day April events throughout the state.
- Supported and participated in the Earth Day service organized by Ellen Griest, as well as assisting with the recycling workshop after service on Earth Day.
- Investigating the possibility with BRAG and Management Team of having a reconfigured REcycle, REuse, REduce tag sale at USNH over the summer.
- Members of USNH have also participated in the CONECT Asthma team and its work with air quality and environmental justice issues.
- Members of the task force have participated in UUA zoom events and workshops and brought back information to the group as well.

Co-chair Maggie Goodwin is liaison with the Building & Grounds Committee, lifting up the environmentally friendly changes that we hope to make as USNH strives to become a UUA Green Sanctuary Congregation. Co-chair Melinda Tuhus is active and in leadership in many local and national environmental groups, representing the congregation as well as herself in many activities.

Funds were used to co-sponsor events with IREJN and C3M and we paid our membership in Hamden Land Trust. We hope to have funds to support some student (Sunrise) and community environmental justice run events (Bridgeport).

### **USNH UU the Vote**

Following the amazing work of the congregation on the 2020 UU the Vote initiative by sending out 30,000 post cards, USNH UU the Vote team members continued working with national and state organizers to work for the freedom to vote, to fight voter suppression, and to provide opportunities for congregants to work for voting rights.

- The team attended the 10 session UU the Vote Organizing School 2.0 and will now receive mentoring from a UUA staff organizer.
- Members of the team continue attending monthly Side with Love skill trainings.
- Team members are partnering with the League of Women Voters, the NAACP, the Anti-Defamation League, Common Cause, the ACLU, and Safe Vote Connecticut.
- To date, we have supported congregants in writing 3,720 postcards to voters for climate change and to encourage voters of color to participate in the primary in Georgia. The mission of our post-carding is to connect with marginalized

communities in swing states and to encourage voters to make their voices heard through their votes. Working with the Center for Common Ground, a non-partisan organization dedicated to making voting more accessible and helping voters navigate the voting process, we provide voters with pertinent information to make it easy to cast their ballots. Our goal is to help ensure that all voters are able to exercise their right to vote. Post-carding and Vote Forward letter writing will be ongoing initiatives we offer congregants throughout 2022.

- We are also working on developing a campaign to pass the Early in Person Voting Referendum in CT.

### **Waverly/USNH Partnership**

Founded on earned trust and respect – sustained by friendship and love.

Tynicha Drummonds has creatively led us through another year of changes and challenges. After the Housing Authority of New Haven (HANH) privatized the management, the two-bedroom housing unit that we occupied for 25 years and was designated the *Waverly Community Center*, was reclaimed for rental. We have been like a congregation without an indoor place to meet.

Since COVID hit, Tynicha, other community leaders, the Waverly/USNH Partnership, and volunteers have focused even more on *Community Building and Organizing* with educational and emotional support of the Waverly children and youth a primary goal. We have been able to supply Tynicha with Stop and Shop cards that individuals at USNH have gifted us. Tynicha is a master at who and where each card should go. She likes to give new families a card to welcome them to the community and also gets them in the hand of folks with empty refrigerators and hungry kids at the end of months.

This year CONECT leaders have joined with Tynicha and facilitated productive meetings with the leadership of the HANH as we search for a meeting space nearby. CONECT leaders also arranged meetings between Tynicha and the New Haven Police Department to work together to solve problems and gain needed support for the community. Tynicha has also joined forces with her friend Kia's non-profit *Increasing Confidence Decreasing Suicide* (ICDS) for activities for the youth: a Halloween event at the Keefe Center & an upcoming Sip & Paint event at Waverly.

Tynicha and the USNH volunteers continue to meet each week (now Tuesday instead of Wednesday) via Zoom to stay connected and to support supervised outdoor activities for the children. In the fall, USNH folks donated school supplies and backpacks which were safely distributed to the children. In December, the traditional holiday party with Santa and gifts that has always been at USNH, was held in a tent in the Waverly courtyard. Recently the courtyard was filled with a perfectly organized and very well attended Easter Egg Hunt. Outings to FUNZ Trampoline Park, Waterbury Skating Rink, East Rock Park hikes, and picnicking, puppets, painting and kick ball in the courtyard have contributed to promoting emotional, mental and physical health for all ages. The tradition of sending a birthday card to a long list of Waverly birthdays started by June Schafer is continued by the volunteers.

Wendy Mcleod and Tynicha are working together on the possibility of establishing a non-profit organization, SEW (Securing the Essentials for Waverly).

This spring and summer, we will meet with the children in the Waverly courtyard. We plan to buy two inexpensive pop-up tents. Last summer we were able to cover the summer expenses (stipend for Tynicha, craft supplies, and refreshments) with personal contributions from volunteers and a small grant that Wendy secured from Grassroots Fund.

### **CONNECT – [Congregations Organized for a New CT](#)**

CONNECT this year focused on the grass roots work of connecting with congregants to determine what their concerns were in order to develop actions including initiatives for the 2023 legislative year.

#### ***Summary of the 2022 House Meetings***

This document is an effort to summarize the many responses and concerns spoken in our USNH house meetings that took place in February, March, and April. This is a general summary of the most mentioned concerns and does not seek to capture every comment.

Thanks to all USNH members who participated in this year's CONNECT house meetings, including all of the facilitators and notetakers! We were quite successful in reaching our goals – 13 house meetings with over 80 participants. Our initial goal was 18 house meetings with 90 participants.

#### ***Healthcare and Mental Health***

Issues about health care access, mental health care, and eldercare were the most mentioned among participants. Affordability, access, system oversight, and the need for universal care were mentioned frequently. Implementing a *Medicare for All* program was mentioned.

Eldercare was a major concern for many participants. Specific issues here included: the high expense of home care with the burden on families, lack of resources and cost for people with Alzheimer's, need for improved oversight of nursing homes, and centralized information resources to navigate the eldercare system. The fact that the pandemic has caused community-wide mental health problems should be recognized and addressed.

As one would expect at this time, mental health was a common concern, especially the children's mental health crisis. The need for more affordable mental health care was mentioned.

#### ***Housing***

Issues around housing were mentioned several times. These include: affordability; neighborhood safety issues such as absentee landlords, property conditions, crime and violence; more housing for elderly near public transportation; and handicap accessibility. Also mentioned was the housing disparity between cities and towns, the need for more tenants' rights, and more housing options for refugees.



### ***Transportation***

Transportation issues mentioned included access to affordable mass transit, unreliable and inadequate routes, long commutes, and safety issues, especially at the transfer station on the Green. Also mentioned was the difficulty for people who need medical care. It was suggested that more energy efficient vehicles should be used.

### ***Education***

Several people mentioned inadequate resources in schools to address the children's mental health crisis, as noted above. This includes more mentors and more trained people to help students. The need to address violence in schools was mentioned. There is too great a focus on policing and security rather than community building and mental health services. Also, there should be more services for young mothers.

The inadequate and unfair way Connecticut schools are funded was recognized. There should be greater funding equity among school districts. Participants mentioned the large inequities in teacher pay between school districts, with educators leaving and low morale among staff. Another major issue mentioned was the physical state of school buildings, with superior facilities in wealthier towns. Someone mentioned the need for better student loans for college students.

### ***Climate Change and Environmental Justice***

Several participants mentioned the need to address climate change, especially for environmental justice communities. People of color are (and will be) disproportionately affected. It was noted that low-income people need greater access to energy savings and clean energy resources like the Home Energy Solutions assessment program and that this service should be free (It is: HES-Income Eligible). It was also suggested that there was a need for better education in our communities about the health effects of pollutants.

### ***Democracy and Voting Rights***

Issues around democracy, voting rights, and public discourse were brought up by several people. Voter suppression and the need to expand voting rights were mentioned. Also, there is the need to find common ground, have respectful discourse, and challenge fake news and misinformation with facts.

### ***Gun Violence Prevention***

Participants stated that CONECT should continue with efforts to address gun violence. This included continued support for CONECT's involvement in the *Do Not Stand Idly By* national program. Someone mentioned the need to include gun owners' perspectives in developing legislation.

### ***Other Issues and Themes***

An overall theme that ran through a lot of the concerns of participants was economic inequality, along with universal health care, and the need to address these major issues. Other items mentioned include immigration support, greater involvement of youth, consumer fraud, scam calls, computer scams, and targeting vulnerable populations such as elderly and youth. Several issues of great concern, but that

CONNECT does not address, included the Ukraine crisis, general peace issues, abortion rights/right to choose, and Right to Die Legislation.

### **Some General Suggestions**

- CONNECT should encourage mixing congregational groups instead of us sitting with our own members at Assemblies, work together on an issue/organizing.
- USNH and Congregation Mishkan Israel should be more connected.
- More community volunteers are needed, especially for elders, school students, and individuals with health issues.
- Need for a CONNECT Kids' Service Team – for kids under 12 and youth; five congregations could each do one activity per year.

### **Stewardship Committee**

**Committee Membership:** Becky Friedkin (chair), Sarah Forman, Holly Hawkins, Linda Mehta, Peggy Rae, and Rev. Lindasusan (Management Team representative)

Because of late recruitment of additional committee members, the team did not start meeting until January 12, 2022. The committee met every other week through February, then weekly into May. Becky Friedkin is completing her third and final year on Stewardship, but there will be good continuity from this year's team to next year. New members are needed for the coming year, preferably with a two- or three-year commitment, to ensure continuity from year to year.

### **Campaign**

Key features of this year's stewardship campaign include:

- Retaining the **Living Our Values Every Day** (LOVED) theme and high-quality logo, with the appeal letter focusing on **What We Do Here Matters**.
- Setting an **ambitious campaign goal of \$480,000**, which would represent an average 4% increase among households that pledged in spring 2021 for FY22.
- Continuing a **pre-launch leadership appeal** to all members of the Board, Management Team, Social Justice Council, CONNECT leadership, finance-related committees (Stewardship, Finance, Endowment & Legacies), all other committee chairs, and social justice task force chairs, which raised almost \$205,000 in advance of Stewardship Sunday on March 13, 2022.
- Continuing "**green**" **communication** for appeals and acknowledgements. Appeal letters were sent by postal mail to households not using email, and to those who did not open any of the email communications.
- Putting weekly Stewardship items in the **newsletter** during the campaign, typically including one or several responses to the question "Why do you support USNH" in the online pledge form. A banner at the top of each newsletter reported on progress and included links to pledge online or download and print a pledge form.

- Continuing the year-round **Stewardship Testimonials** during worship services, which began in December 2020. Monthly testimonials were offered in October through February, with twice-monthly testimonials during the campaign - March through May. There are no stewardship testimonials in June, July, or August.
- Revising the [Stewardship webpages](#), building on the complete revamping done last year. The existing information and pages were carefully reviewed, with the fresh eyes of new committee members, and the webpages were improved, both aesthetically and with respect to content.
- Continued emphasizing of **economic welcome and accessibility** at USNH. Although pledging is a requirement of membership, anyone may take a waiver simply by checking the box on the pledge form. Annual submission of a pledge form or other communication is, however, required of members wanting a pledge waiver. (Waivers for reasons of cognitive disability are granted on an ongoing basis by the minister and/or stewardship team.)
- Committee members following up, via email, phone, and written notes, with members and pledging friends whose pledges had not been received. These **follow-up communications** were first and foremost about connection and care, with the secondary purpose being to facilitate the pledging process. Follow up also included **staffing a table in the Lobby**, with pledge forms, mission-based budget visualizations, FAQs, and Hershey's Kisses, after every service.
- Creating **vines of community** on the front windows of the lobby in late March, adding leaves for every household that pledged. Many leaves have pictures, gathered from USNH files, Facebook, etc.
- In consultation with the Management Team, **reducing the budget goal** for pledges to \$460,000, as pledges were received more slowly and at a generally lower level than hoped.
- Emailing a **Budget and Stewardship Update**, signed by President Emily McCave, Rev. Lindasusan, the Management Team, and Finance and Stewardship Committees, to members and pledging friends on April 22, 2022. The email reported that there was a large (\$40,000) gap between projected revenue and expenses and that our operating budget is already lean. The appeal asked for **increased FY23 pledges or one-time gifts for FY23**, if they were able to do so. This appeal was reiterated in the newsletter and during the LOVED (Living Our Values Every Day) talk on May 1.
- Concluding the campaign in mid-May with a total of \$445,435 pledged, including \$4,100 in increased pledges after the second appeal; a total of \$15,665 in one-time gifts, for a total of \$461,100 stewardship income for FY23 as of May 20. Unfortunately, 32 member households have not yet submitted pledges or requested waivers for FY23. We expect that some of these members will submit pledges in the near future. Those who do not will be contacted by Rev.

Lindasusan in late fall to clarify the USNH membership policy and their intentions.

#### **Other work of the committee:**

- At the request of the Management Team, the committee provided information about its roles and responsibilities, goals and plans, and challenges and concerns. This document can be found [at this link](#).
- Incorporation of the **8th principle** into our activities and perspectives:
  - The most important and salient aspect of stewardship work relative to the 8th principle is making **pledge waivers** automatic (there is no need to discuss one's circumstances with the minister). The team implemented this practice last year (2020-21) and sought to elevate it further this year. Every communication about stewardship includes a sentence or phrase about waivers being easily available. This goes to social class oppression and economic inclusivity.
  - We intentionally recruited members with a variety of identities to provide stewardship testimonials during worship.

#### **Potential goals for 2022-23**

A recommendation from the stewardship consultant retained in 2018-19 (Rev. Megan Lloyd Joiner's final year as our minister) was to further **normalize discussion about money at USNH**. Having regular stewardship testimonials during worship and emphasizing the availability of waivers support this goal. Another recommendation was to sponsor workshops on family finance, money, generosity as a spiritual practice, etc. The committee hopes to implement at least one such workshop in fall 2022.

#### **Sunday Morning Team**

**Committee Membership:** Becky Sandmann (chair), Pam Niles, Theresa Childs, Sally Connelly, Michele DeMuisis, Mary Donohue, Greg Feeley, Kathy Lindbeck, Laura Patey, Barbara Orrok, Karen Swanson, and Ray Zalenski.

Even though we are still dealing with COVID concerns and are unable to socialize in the building, the SMT has been able to provide coffee all year outside, even in freezing weather. We began including snacks individually packed this spring.

We continued to have soup lunch but virtually. Folks brought in their soup in containers and others took them home and at the next Zoom Social Hour gathering we ate together.

Over the summer we hosted cookouts that were very well attended and enjoyed by all. We provided burgers/dogs/rolls/condiments and asked members of the congregation to bring sides to share. This seemed to work very well.

We attended every Saturday drive thru and often provided coffee.

We assisted with Rev Lindasusan's installation by organizing the coffee/tea/etc., setting up outside stations, and getting and setting up cupcakes from a local health food store.

Other tasks members of our team perform include:

- buying supplies needed for coffee hour,
- keeping items in the kitchen stocked,
- staffing the table to check in folks to make sure they have been vaccinated,
- making name tags for whoever needs them,
- helping the Membership Committee as requested,
- assisting with set up and the hosting of the Zoom meeting for worship services and host virtual coffee hour, and
- running the used book sale.

## **Worship Committee**

**Committee Membership:** David Jones and Jim Peters (co-chairs), Lisa Anderson, Jeannette Faber, Jordan Heeley, Susan Linsley, Rich Stockton, Rev. Lindasusan V Ulrich (ex officio)

The Committee was happy to welcome Sue Linsley back into the Worship Committee fold. We are so grateful for her service, as we are for everyone else on our current roster. We are truly blessed with a team that consistently supports one another as we work week by week to support worship at the Unitarian Society of New Haven.

Over the last 12 months the COVID pandemic has played a significant role in USNH worship planning and services themselves. Last summer's services were entirely remotely produced and shared via zoom and YouTube to the congregation. Happily, on September 19th, the Sunday after the church-year-opening Water Communion, we were able to open the sanctuary doors and allow participants into the sanctuary for the first time since March of 2020! While we closed the sanctuary again in mid-December as the Omicron variant became an increasing concern, we were by the latter part of February again able to worship in person.

During the December-February re-closing period we moved away from pre-recording services during the week and presenting the completed services on Sunday mornings. Instead, a small group of socially-distanced participants came to the sanctuary each Sunday and the services were streamed live (and also recorded for people to view later on). Thus, since September, worship at USNH has returned to exclusively offering live services. We expect to continue this practice going forward.

This seems the right moment to express appreciation to three groups of people without whom worship at USNH could not have taken place this year.

The first is our tech-support team of Mary Donohue and Robb Camm who have problem-solved issue after issue after issue as we made the transition to livestreaming

our services. The impact of their extraordinary commitment to our community cannot be overstated.

The Worship Committee is also deeply grateful to the BRAG (Building Reopening Advisory Group) chaired by Gwen Severance who helped navigate the endlessly-shifting pandemic landscape. BRAG helped to set, and then to adjust, policies as the conditions continued to evolve. Their work has helped to keep us all more safe, and more confident in our procedures and policies.

Last, but absolutely not least, the Worship Committee remains deeply grateful to the USNH staff for the generosity with which they share their many gifts. Oscar Adorno, the Sexton, is always supportive and helpful with our many requests to move furniture hither and yon. We were also so appreciative of Anna Flores, former Membership Coordinator who helped us with communication around Joys and Sorrow and other member-related needs. We look forward to working with Jane Ferrall as she has returned to the role following Anna’s departure. Jamie Ross is both a fount of institutional knowledge and is the quickest person to reply to emails in our experience -- a true joy to collaborate with as we pull each week’s service together. And we could not ask for more talented, collegial and collaborative worship partners than Jesse Greist and Reverend Lindasusan.

We join the chorus of voices who will deeply miss Erika Schroth and Jeffrey Douma, whose exemplary musical talents were balanced by their deep kindness and generosity of spirit. They lifted our spirits and guided our voices both remotely and in person. Our sadness at seeing them go is mitigated by knowing that Bill Braun will continue to provide matchless musical leadership at the piano for the foreseeable future.

**Looking Back**

The last 12 months of worship at USNH are worth reviewing. They represent hundreds of hours of professional and lay effort, with a vast array of themes offered to the community. The Worship Committee is deeply grateful to everyone who supported worship over the last year with their presence in person or online.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Worship Leader(s)</b>	<b>Service Title</b>
May 23, 2021	Rev. Lindasusan	Dismantling White Supremacy
May 30	Rev. Lindasusan	Layers
June 6	Rev. Lindasusan/Jesse	Doing by Learning: A Celebration of Religious Education
June 13	Jesse Greist	Youth Led Service
June 20	Rev. Lindasusan	Flower Communion
June 27	UUA	GA Sunday Service
July 4	UU Congregation of Rockville MD	
July 11	Tara Humphries	Live These Words
July 18	Green Sanctuary	Saying no to the line 3 pipeline and yes to life
<b>Date</b>	<b>Worship Leader(s)</b>	<b>Service Title</b>
July 25	Ethan Loewi	The Holy New

Aug 1	USNH Board	Our Gifts to Give, Our Gifts to Receive
Aug 8	Jeannette Faber	Poetry Service
Aug 15	David Jones	Music Service
Aug 22	Jim Peters	The National Memorial for Peace and Justice
Aug 29	Josh Pawelek	Drop in on UUS:E
Sept 5	Jim Peters, Jason Kyle	Our Sanctuary Home
Sept 12	Rev. Lindasusan	Water Communion
Sept 19	Rev. Lindasusan	A Marvelous Victory
Sept 26	Rev. Lindasusan	Six Impossible Things Before Breakfast
Oct 3	Rev. Lindasusan	Whose are We?
Oct 10	Rev. Lindasusan	Shameless
Oct 17	UUSC	UUSC Service
Oct 24	Rev. Lindasusan	With These Hands
Oct 31	Rev. Lindasusan	Our Beloved Dead
Nov 7	Rev. Lindasusan	One Hands Down and Another Takes Up
Nov 14 (am)	USNH	Voices Across Seven Decades
Nov 14 (pm)	USNH and guests	Installation Service for Rev. Lindasusan V. Ulrich
Nov 21	Rev. Lindasusan	The Gratitude Makers
Nov 28	Bill Braun, Jim Peters	New England Transcendentalists
Dec 5	Rev. Lindasusan	The 8th Principle
Dec 12	Rev. Lindasusan with The Haven Quartet	A Rose in Winter
Dec 19	Rev. Lindasusan	Winter Solstice
Dec 24	Lindasusan, Jesse	Christmas Eve Service
Dec 26	Rev. Lindasusan	Books, Books, Books
Jan 2, 2022	David, Jim	Quieting the Noise – Meditation Service
Jan 9	Rev. Lindasusan	Intention in Tension
Jan 16	Rev. Lindasusan	Living out MLK's Legacy
Jan 23	Jim, David	Intending Self-Kindness
Jan 30	Rev. Lindasusan	Must Be Present to Win
Feb 6	Kevin Staton	Lessons in Faith Actualized
Feb 13	Rev. Lindasusan	Widening the Circle of Concern
Feb 20	Members	One Wild and Precious Life
Feb 27	Rev. Lindasusan	All Our Relations
March 6	Rev. Lindasusan	Between Trapeze Bars
March 13	Rev. Lindasusan	Faith in What Matters: Stewardship Kickoff
March 20	Jim, Rich, Members	The Servant Loved his Prayers – Rumi
March 27	Rev. Lindasusan	Falling Through Air
April 3	Rev. Lindasusan	Awakening Wonder
April 10	Lindasusan, Jesse	Blessing of the Seedlings
April 17	Rev. Lindasusan	What Lives On – Easter service
<b>Date</b>	<b>Worship Leader(s)</b>	<b>Service Title</b>
April 24	Ellen Greist	For the Beauty of the Earth – Earth Day

May 1	Rev. Lindasusan	Beauty and Justice
May 8	Rev. Lindasusan	Beautiful Rage
May 15	Beth Roth	Joy in the Midst of Suffering

### **Looking Forward**

After co-chairing the Worship Committee since June of 2020, David Jones and Jim Peters are stepping down from that role after the Flower Communion Service in June. Both David and Jim are planning to remain on the committee as members. The committee continues to hold discussions as to how to sustainably manage the leadership responsibilities.

The Worship Committee would like to note that current practice at USNH has this committee actively working 12 months each year. The Summer season – 12 weeks between the Flower Communion service in mid-June and the Water Communion service in mid-September – is a time off for the music and liturgical staff at USNH but not for the Worship Committee, whose responsibilities are thereby increased at this time. Given the expectation that Worship Committee members participate actively in services throughout the liturgical year, this puts WC leadership in particular in a role that has no established down-time. The Worship Committee encourages the Board and the Management Team to consider ways to relieve the Committee from active leadership during the summer so that this committee can enjoy a needed break as other USNH institutions enjoy.

Respectfully submitted,  
 Jim Peters and David Jones, USNH Worship Committee Co-Chairs