

# **NORTH UNIVERSALIST CHAPEL SOCIETY**

## **2016 ANNUAL REPORT**

**Annual Meeting**

**January 29, 2017**



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*Affiliated with the Unitarian Universalist Association*

In looking back over 2016, the Board's work focused on several dominant themes and priorities:

- Facilitating the many different aspects of interim work, as many in NC rose to the challenge of sustaining and strengthening the richness of our community;
- Overseeing the departure of the interim minister and finalizing contractual arrangements;
- Supporting the essential work of each standing committee;
- Forming and actively supporting the Settled Search Committee;
- Forming the 2017 Canvass Task Force and participating in the canvass process;
- Staffing to address the themes that emerged from the 2015 Focus on the Future discussions and from the multiple 2016 community conversations (This culminated in a unanimous vote of the Society to expand Geraldine Fowler's role to include outreach and SE coordination);
- Processing and synthesizing each of the community conversations for use by the Board and the Search Committee;

We started the year with a retreat in February to assess where NC might be at what seemed to be a significant, liminal moment. Together, we assessed North Chapel Strengths, Weaknesses, Threats, and Opportunities. We benefitted from Doug Zelinski's (UUA regional staff member) consultations while we regrouped and dedicated ourselves to truly do the work involved in an interim period, now without the services of a minister.

In August, we held a special Congregational Meeting during which congregants unanimously voted to expand the office administrator/Spiritual Exploration Coordinator's hours and responsibilities into the position of Church Administrator/Spiritual Exploration and Community Outreach Coordinator.

At the same meeting, after thoughtful discussion, a majority of congregants supported a board recommendation to withhold a portion of our annual UUA dues until we recoup the dollars we were obligated to pay the terminated interim minister. Carefully crafted and thoughtful letters were sent by the board to the UUA explaining this decision and expressing our concerns regarding the failure of their interim ministry vetting process.

At the August meeting, we introduced and blessed the Settled Minister Search Committee. They have been hard at work on behalf of all of us making significant headway in the search process since then.

In September, the board hired Rev. Gwen Groff to provide interim professional pastoral care. Although the community had been doing well providing personal care for one another, it was clear that our community missed a professional pastoral presence, which Gwen now provides. She will continue in this role until we have a Settled Minister.

Hosted by the board, every other month a Committee Cafe brought together the NC's stalwart committee leaders and committee members. At these meetings, we discussed topics of common need and interest and provided updates on important topics, such as the canvass and the search process, both of which effect and involve all of us. Polly Forcier and her merry band of helpers regularly provided delicious suppers for all Cafe attendees.

As we wrap up 2016 and prepare for 2017, it seems like a good time to use a few moments of this year's Annual Meeting to acknowledge the big accomplishments of this small UU congregation, our very own North Chapel. The Board wants to acknowledge the "heavy lifting" of every staff member (Diane, Geraldine, Agata and Radek), of the SE teachers (Angela, Jess, Ben and Murray), of every standing committee and task force, and of all the individuals involved in providing diverse and interesting Sunday services, pot lucks, coffee hours, meditation practices, the Life and Hope benefit, the refugee support concert, the canvass. And on and on! All of these many, many essential resources and experiences make NC the vibrant community it is.

North Chapel Board: Chris Bartlett, Anne Dean, Susan Inui, Denise Lyons, Anne Macksoud, Anne Marinello, Deborah Rice and Ann Wynia

The North Universalist Chapel Society

Woodstock, VT

Annual Meeting – January 24, 2016

1. Welcome – Board of Trustees, Denise Lyons and Susan Inui. Denise and Susan welcomed the congregation.
2. Election of Moderator – Neil Marinello of the Nominating Committee nominated Kevin Geiger as moderator. Ralph Lancaster seconded. Kevin was voted moderator.
3. Election of Clerk – Irene Haslin of the Nominating Committee nominated Judy Williamson. It was seconded and voted upon. Judy was voted clerk.
4. Election of Treasurer- David Doolittle of the Nominating Committee nominated Ann Wynia. Anne Macsoud seconded the nomination. Ann was voted Treasurer.
5. Presentation of Annual Report – presented by Kevin Geiger. Peggy Kannestine moved to accept the report Neil Marinello seconded. Annual Report was accepted.
6. Finance and Funds Committee Nominee – Nominating Committee nominates Mark Auriema and Jim Swift. Don Ransom nominated Jim Swift. There was a question asked about what this committee does. Chris Lloyd spoke about the works of the committee. Jim was elected. Don Ransom nominated Mark Auriema. Mark was also elected.
7. Nominating Committee Nominee – Anne Marinello of the Board of Trustees nominated Mary Jeanne Taylor to the committee. Mary Jeanne accepted.
8. Budget 2016 – a) Pledge Drive report by Ann Wynia. A motion to accept the report was made by Neil Marinello. Deb Hawthorn seconded. The Board and the Finance Committee put the budget together. Peggy Kannestine asked a question about item 30 regarding 138 active members. Matt Friedman and Gayle Smith said they had joined today and signed the book, so that they could participate and vote. Gina Auriema asked about the change in the minister's salary. It represented the amount to be paid until the end of June (\$35,890). Matt Friedman asked about the \$40,000 not needed to spend and what were the plans for it. A Board member said that it would not be discussed until June. b) Finance and Funds Committee Report – by Chris Lloyd. He spoke about the Community Loan Fund and others, and reported that Total Investments were \$166,000. Irene Haslin asked if we pay our full share of the UUA. Ann Wynia replied that we do. Ann then reported on the Pledge Drive. To date there have been 97 pledges made representing 144 people. Anne Macsoud acknowledged the work of Karen Wolk and Richard Fox for all the work they did for the Pledge Drive.
9. Committee Updates
  - a. Music and Worship – Jenny Gelfan. She expressed appreciation for the many members who have reached out to volunteer to do reflections, be service coordinators, and contributing in other ways.
  - b. Spiritual Exploration for Children and Families – Ariel Brewer. Shoshanna Belisle said the name had been changed from Religious Exploration. Geraldine Fowler added that there has

- been a change from one class to two classes – one class of children in grades 1st through 3rd and another class of children in grades 4th through 6<sup>th</sup>. She added that they are working with the CTWK and they want to be involved with work they do. Also, the plan is to bring the OWL program in April. They will start trainings for the 4<sup>th</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> graders and the 7<sup>th</sup> through 9<sup>th</sup> graders.
- c. Welcoming and Engagement Committee – Rick Fiske. Rick explained that it is a new committee which began in June 2015. The intention of the committee is to actively welcome all who come through the doors of North Chapel. The committee will ask for greeters. Kathy Fiske and Geraldine Fowler are creating a new brochure for the North Chapel. Name tags will be provided for visitors. One of our members (Naomi) purchased blue mugs for visitors to use during coffee hour. Shoshana Belisle offered the idea for each of us to greet one another at the beginning of the Sunday service.
  - d. Buildings and Grounds – Jack Nelson gave the report. Anne Marinello acknowledged the work done by Anne Dean for changing the former Nursery School space to a chapel.
  - e. Communications – Deb Rice. Deb reported on the website, and offered to help anyone who is not getting church email, or has difficulty going to the site. She added that we finally have an archive of Sunday reflections. They go from the microphone to Geraldine to transcribe.
  - f. Membership – Sherry Belisle. Sherry expressed appreciation to the Welcoming Committee for taking steps to help relieve their committee of some of its work. She also offered a thank you for the altar decorations by members of the congregation. She added that their committee would welcome ideas regarding pot lucks and Circle dinners.
  - g. Nominating Committee – Don Ransom. He reported that they would be looking for two new Board members this year. He added that the Resource Committee is needing help due to members leaving, and their focus would be on the Pledge Drive and talking points of why we need the pledges.
10. Task Force Update
- a. Facilities for the Future – Michael Stoner. Chris Bartlett and Anne Dean have created a task force to look at the needs of the space of North Chapel. Michael is coordinating these efforts. They want a consultant to look at the moisture issues of the building. They have contacted the Preservation Trust for an energy audit of the building. They will look to where to allocate budget monies to address these needs.
11. Planning for our future: Challenge and Opportunity – Board of Trustees – Susan Inui. She spoke of dealing with challenge and finding opportunities. The Board will convene on a retreat February 7<sup>th</sup>. Their focus will be the question of how we do ministry here at the North Chapel (without a minister). They will be looking at the opportunities in front and ahead of us. The time table includes consult with Doug Zelinsky on January 27<sup>th</sup> that will include a group of about 20 or so members/leaders in the congregation. Denise added that Doug felt we really have the opportunity to look with fresh eyes, to pause and think of how we will meet our needs in a creative and sensible way.
- Carol Egbert asked about someone new/a stranger coming to our door needing help. Geraldine is the first point of contact and what resources do we have to meet those needs. Anne Marinello will work with Geraldine and the ministry to locate resources in the area. Anne asked if there

was any interest for providing coverage at the door in Geraldine's absence. A member spoke of having a communications board available. Another suggested putting the time of Sunday service in a visible place. Rick Fiske commented on the excellence in our leadership team, and their patience and courage.

12. Unsung Hero Award – Board of Trustees, Anne Dean. Anne named Wendy Smith as the member chosen for the award this year. Anne acknowledged Wendy's enthusiasm, creativity, and behind the scenes work. She was very busy taking photos and putting the album for Daniel together as a gift from the congregation.

Anne also acknowledged Judith Taylor for the beautiful quilt she created – her banner intended to express the local sustainability. She thanked all who helped in this cooperative effort.

13. Closing – Susan Inui with Diane Mellinger and the choir sang the "Amen" hymn.

14. Following the hymn Hope Yeager made a motion to adjourn. Mary Jeanne Taylor seconded. The meeting adjourned at 12:40 pm

Respectfully Submitted

Judy Williamson, clerk

Special Congregational Meeting of the North Unitarian Chapel Society

August 7, 2016 – Immediately following the Sunday Service

Purpose for the meeting is as follows : To consider the following two motions brought forth by the Board and to announce and affirm members of the Settled Minister Search Committee.

Kevin Geiger was moderator.

1. Motion to withhold a portion of annual dues payable to the UUA until such time as the North Chapel has recovered a total of \$47,994, which represents the \$6900 expense we incurred in payment toward moving expenses for Rev. Wendy Pantoja and the \$41,094 we had paid her in salary and benefits, by contractual agreement, for the 180 days after termination of employment. During this period of credit accrual, the North Chapel will continue to pay \$2000 in annual dues to the UUA, as a sign of good faith and compensation for services received.
2. Motion to expand Geraldine Fowler's position to include responsibilities for SE Programming and Outreach Coordination; to increase her weekly hours form 20 to 32 and, therefore, to increase her salary and benefits during the remainder of our current fiscal year by a projected dollar amount of \$16,023, for a total annual compensation package of \$48, 070.

Motion 1

Peggy Kannestine moved the motion. Deb Hawthorn seconded the motion.

Discussion followed. Johanna Long requested the rational for this motion. Denise Lyons gave the explanation saying: the Board wrote a letter to the UUA requesting reimbursement for the monies spent toward our interim ministry, because the Board felt the process was flawed in the hiring of the interim, and was hoping to have a negotiated settlement with the UUA. Because the UUA denied the financial reimbursement, the Board decided to remain in good faith with the UUA by sending \$2000 a year and withhold any further monies for approximately 5 years, until expenses were recovered.

Lynn Peterson stated that the UUA gives grants for a variety of involvements. He wondered that if we did not pay our "fair share" annually we might not be eligible for these grants.

Another question was raised regarding whether there might be ramifications we might have by withholding monies from the UUA. Susan Inui replied that we would remain in good standing with the UUA. Denise Lyons added that a possible consequence of withholding funds might be that we will get attention. Therefore, we want the UUA to pay attention to their process of vetting interim ministers.

Norwood Long voiced that he disagreed with withholding the funds to the UUA.

Neil Marinello added that he was in favor of the motion, saying that it is the right thing to do.

Kevin Geiger asked for a vote. The motion was passed with one no from Norwood Long.

## Motion 2

Neil Marinello moved the motion. Richard Waddell seconded the motion.

Coral Egbert commented that Geraldine is an extraordinary addition to NUCS.

A question was asked regarding where the funding would come from for the increased costs of giving Geraldine additional hours and benefits. Susan Inui responded by saying that the Board can only spend monies that are in the budget for the remainder of the fiscal year with a cap of \$2500. At the end of the first week of July 2016 the contractual contract with Wendy Pantoja ended. Therefore, with funds from August 2016 to the end of December 2016 could be used, adding that we would also have a pastoral care minister part time as well. The Board would like to redirect funds from 20 hours a week to 32 hours a week. Gina Auriema asked if the Finance Committee agreed with this proposal. Susan said the Board had gone to the Finance Committee with data and crunching numbers to discover that the gap between what was in the budget and what was needed was only \$1200. That would include hiring a full time minister and hiring Geraldine in a new and extended position. North Chapel is in the small church category now and does not have to spend as much financially for a new minister.

A member of the Finance Committee spoke to say that the committee does not make policy, but rather advises the Board. Hiring a full time minister would include a smaller package because we have moved from a midsize church to a small church category.

Susan added that Geraldine's role would expand beyond administrative assistant to take on additional roles in the church.



Hope Yeager added that Geraldine's increased responsibilities would include the S.E. program. This would allow more flexibility for the parents' involvement.

Anne Marinello spoke saying that Geraldine has become the face of our congregation, and that she may do some grant work to support NUCS, as we are in the highest level of compensation for a small church.

Linda Galveo added that we might look at the money spent as an asset versus a liability. Geraldine does the work of bringing in more families and thus increasing our numbers (members).

Gina Auriema said that she was not questioning the motion. She just wanted some discussion on the motion.

Johanna Long made a comment saying she loves Geraldine and wants the increased role for her and us; and added that it is important for us to be able to sustain our congregation as time goes on.

Richard Schramm asked if this increased position and salary aligned with other staff.

Susan Inui responded saying the Board puts questions to the Finance Committee every month. In preparation for the budget they look at all salaries (sextons, Diane Mellinger – choir director, and minister), and visit these salaries on an annual basis, using UUA guidelines. She added that the Board will not change Diane's salary even though our church size status has moved down.

Denise Lyons said they are looking at all the flexible ways to make our minister's position look attractive. She said that expanding Geraldine's role could help with that. She is a collaborative person. Gwen Croft (part time pastoral care minister) expressed what a gem Geraldine is for our church. She believes others would agree.

Neil Marinello commented that in the past when we have needed to raise money, we haven't had a problem doing so.

Chris Bartlett added that on the revenue side of things, Geraldine might attract more members.

A vote was taken via paper ballot. The result was an unanimous vote "yes" for Geraldine's expanded role.

Following the voting of the two motions, Susan Inui shared the names of the five individuals to serve on the Ministerial Search Committee: Angel Rubino, Marsha Peterson, Matt Friedman, Richard Schramm, and Veronica DeLay.

To close, Deb Hawthorn led the group in a blessing.

Respectfully Submitted,

Judy Williamson, Clerk

11:48 AM

01/14/17  
Cash Basis

# North Universalist Chapel Society Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual January through December 2016

	Jan - Dec 16	Budget	% of Budget
<b>Ordinary Income/Expense</b>			
<b>Income</b>			
Pledges	153,005	157,012	97%
Fundraisers	10,810	13,000	83%
Contributions	4,607	4,000	115%
Rental Income	9,370	10,000	94%
Tithe And Offering	12,569	13,000	97%
Reserve Fund	7,500	7,500	100%
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>197,860</b>	<b>204,512</b>	<b>97%</b>
<b>Expense</b>			
Church Expense	25,069	33,036	76%
Payroll Expenses	58,987	56,725	104%
Spiritual Exploration	1,557	2,140	73%
Music	1,108	1,300	85%
Membership	1,730	3,200	54%
Worship	3,864	5,150	75%
Minister Expenses	55,845	40,765	137%
Office Expenses	20,519	24,624	83%
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>168,677</b>	<b>166,940</b>	<b>101%</b>
<b>Net Ordinary Income</b>	<b>29,183</b>	<b>37,572</b>	<b>78%</b>
<b>Other Income/Expense</b>			
<b>Other Income</b>			
Investment Gains/Losses	5,642		
Interest and Dividends	669		
<b>Total Other Income</b>	<b>6,311</b>		
<b>Net Other Income</b>	<b>6,311</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>35,494</b>	<b>37,572</b>	<b>94%</b>

*Ann L. Wynn*  
Treasurer

11:54 AM

# North Universalist Chapel Society

## Balance Sheet

01/14/17

As of December 31, 2016

Cash Basis

	<u>Dec 31, 16</u>
<b>ASSETS</b>	
<b>Current Assets</b>	
<b>Checking/Savings</b>	
People's Checking	110,735
Jantos Fund	6,663
VT Community Foundation	92,314
Wells Fargo Reserve	70,502
<b>Total Checking/Savings</b>	<u>280,214</u>
<b>Accounts Receivable</b>	
Accounts Receivable	(25,891)
<b>Total Accounts Receivable</b>	<u>(25,891)</u>
<b>Other Current Assets</b>	
Prepaid Expenses	1,262
<b>Total Other Current Assets</b>	<u>1,262</u>
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<u>255,585</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<u><u>255,585</u></u>
<b>LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	
<b>Liabilities</b>	
<b>Current Liabilities</b>	
<b>Other Current Liabilities</b>	
Byrne Foundation	15,000
Life and Hope	22,588
VT/Quebec Grant	1,828
Spiritual Practice	2,436
Sabbatical Savings	593
Pizza Oven	851
Permaculture Garden Grant	4,735
Organ Fund	598
NYE/Cranna	2,700
Minister's Fund	1,472
Focus For Future	2,206
Classical Concert	450
Payroll Liabilities	1,596
<b>Total Other Current Liabilities</b>	<u>57,054</u>
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<u>57,054</u>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	57,054
<b>Equity</b>	
Unrestricted Fund Balance	163,037
Net Income	35,494
<b>Total Equity</b>	<u>198,531</u>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	<u><u>255,585</u></u>

*Ann L. Wyman*  
Treasurer

## **Proposed Change to Bylaws Language**

At the Annual Meeting of the Society, the following amendment to ARTICLE VII, Section 9. shall be voted on. The Finance Committee has recommended increasing the dollar amount limitation of \$2500 to \$7500.

The Board concurs with their recommendation therefore, a motion will be brought before the Annual Meeting proposing the following amendment to this article, "The Board of Trustees shall not obligate the Society for an amount in excess of \$7500, except by vote of the Society."

## **Nominating Committee Report**

At the Annual Meeting on January 29, 2017, the Nominating Committee shall present this slate of candidates for the following positions:

- Kevin Geiger to serve as meeting moderator for 2017;
- Hope Yeager to serve as meeting secretary for 2017;
- Ann Wynia to serve as Treasurer of the Society for a one-year term in 2017;
- Judy Williamson to serve a three-year term on the North Chapel Board of Trustees;
- Moira Notogiacomo to serve a three-year term on the Finance/Trustee of Funds Committee.

The congregation will be asked to vote on these nominations.

The current Nominating Committee consists of:

Neil Marinello, Chair (term expires 1/18),  
David Doolittle (term expires 1/17),  
Irene Hanslin (term expires 1/19) and  
Mary Jeanne Taylor (term expires 1/20).

Submitted by,

Neil Marinello

## **The Jantos Fund Annual Report 2016**

The Jantos fund is designated for the discretionary use of the minister of the North Chapel Universalist Society, working in consultation with a small advisory group appointed by the North Chapel Board of Trustees, to provide emergency or transitional support to individuals and families in the greater Woodstock community. Priority will be given to supporting members or friends of the North Chapel.

The funds are to be used to provide onetime, short term assistance to individuals facing hardship (e.g. temporary homelessness; needing to escape an abusive family situation; unexpected inability to pay for heat or utilities; requiring emergency counseling or support; etc.). Funds may also be used to support specific individuals or organizations for needs aligned closely to the North Chapel's vision of social justice.

Over the course of the last year, we have helped 10 families. The total amount of these requests being \$3,325. Requests range from help with heat and electricity to rent deposits, auto repairs and food and shelter for the homeless. We have collaborated with local churches such as Our Lady of the Snows and St. James to better assist those in our community.

Respectfully submitted by Geraldine Fowler

## Music and Worship Committee report for 2016 Annual Report

### Mission

The core mission of the Music and Worship Committee is to ensure that the preparation and delivery of worship services are of the highest available quality, that they connect with both head and heart, that they contribute to the spiritual well being of all people present and that they reflect our church's values as outlined in our basic principles.

Presently our committee consists of Kathy Astemborski, Shoshana Belisle who joined in the fall, Jenny Gelfan (chair), Diane Mellinger, Don Ransom, and Jessica Stout (secretary). Other committee members during the year who have stepped off the committee were Anne Macksoud, Hope Yeager, Carol Egbert, Judith Taylor, Ben Fox, Hugh Belton. A number of people visited and participated in our meetings, including Jay Kelly, Susan Inui, and Neil Marinello. We welcome visitors to our committee meetings.

This last year was another year of change. Our interim minister departed in January, and we were left as a "fellowship" to continue to find our way forward without the prospect of a settled minister anytime soon. The committee and our congregation rose to the challenge, offering to give reflections, suggesting wonderful community members as speakers, even inviting people from afar to visit and share with us for surprisingly rich and varied Sunday Worship services.

We held a committee retreat where we confirmed some core values, clarified our mission as a committee, and continued to ponder the nature of our services and what keeps them most alive for this community.

Last year we also had the gift of reflections by church members and visitors. Those speaking included Rev. Wendy Pantoja, Judith Taylor, Naomi Malik, Simon Dennis, Kate Barta & Sheldon Novick, Anne Macksoud and Carol Egbert, Peg Kannenstine and Rick Fiske, Rev. Kevin Tarsa, Zach Ralph, Rowley Hazard, Deeya Pavelle, Rev. Telos Whitfield, Matt Friedman, Rabbi Dov Taylor, Mary Blanton, Peg Brightman, Kathleen Dolan, Joan Harvey, Tim Traver and Delia Clark, Rev. Nancy Crumbine, Steve Swayne, Lynn Peterson, Annie Bower, Rev. Gary Shapiro, Michael Zsoldos, Alina Bloomgarden, Jan Frazer, Peter Rousmaniere, Jonathan Tuthill, Rev. Kate Braestrup, Jack Manning Bancroft, Bob Williamson, Rev. Gwen Groff, Rev. Hilary Mullins, Jessica Stout and Walter Horak, Ben Fox, Duncan McDougall, Rob Hanson, Rev. Kalen Fristad, Richard Waddell, Jen Canfield, Frank Barth, Rev. D'Vorah Kelly, Richard Schramm, Chris Bartlett, Nan Bourne, Veronica Delay, Eugene Friesen, plus dancers.

We are thankful to all our generous service coordinators for keeping the spiritual cohesiveness of our worship services. They included: Don Ransom, Susan Inui, Richard Schramm, Mary Jeanne Taylor, Mike Backman, Mary Blanton, Chris Bartlett, Barbara Bartlett, Deb Hawthorn, Deb Rice, Carol Egbert, Jenny Gelfan, Peg Kannenstine, Rick Fiske, Anne Macksoud, Joby Thompson, Hope Yeager, John Steinle, Anne Marinello, Jessica Stout, Peter Rousmaniere, and Kathy Astemborski.

Music and movement as well as words uplifted us. The Moving Spirit Dancers were part of three services. Reflections were augmented by the presence and voices of some community members sharing brief personal stories.



We continue to hear from the entire church community that people most want to hear what are own members are open to share with us.

We also are grateful for the other spiritual offerings that take place outside the service, including the weekly Oneness Blessing facilitate by Anne Dean, meditation facilitated by Charity Gray, and Friday's' Evensong facilitated by Veronica Delay, for the adult RE studies of Buddhism led by Michael Stoner and Rick Fiske, and for the abundance of musical events that grace our sanctuary outside the worship service.

Shoshana led us in the development of some Themes to add continuity to 2017's Sunday Worship Services. After discussing the entire year, we decided to initially roll out just the winter months' themes, which are January - Transformation and Renewal, February - Meditation and Mindfulness, and March - Overcoming Obstacles.

#### Music summary for 2016

The all-volunteer choir continued to provide lovely music for most services (on break during the summer). Other guest musicians at services included: Pierre Fournier, Michael Zsoldos, Geoff Dates, Sandi Anderson, Don Ransom, Tim Traver and family, Sarah Saul, Kathleen Dolan, Mark Van Gulden, Jenny Barry, Jim Yeager, Rowland Hazard, Alicia Breer, Jack Snyder, the Bridgewater Community Chorus, and Eugene Friesen.

Respectfully submitted by

Jenny Gelfan with the assistance of Diane Mellinger and the rest of the committee.

## **MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2016**

We have 195 total members listed this year, 137 of whom are active.

Those who joined the list this year are Veronica Delay, Matt Friedman, Gayle Smith, Juris Kaugerts, Diana Perrett, Laurie Marshall and Rosie Stevens.

We are responsible for recruiting altar decorators and we schedule the coffee hour contributors. Weekly creative decor for the altar always touches the North Chapel community and we appreciate the talents and time that this takes. We are grateful to Don Ransom and Susan Inui for scheduling the many ushers for Christmas Eve.

Once a year, we go through the directory to call those whom we haven't seen for a while to ask them how they are doing and if they have any concerns or questions.

The new member meetings in the spring were very successful. We produce Recognition Sunday, the first one in June every year. We also recruit and schedule the Circle Dinners. We welcome ideas for other social activities.

Sherry Belisle, Joanna Garbisch, Joan Harvey, Fran Lancaster, Pru Schuler, Ann Wynia

# Communications Committee Annual Report 2016

Communications Committee currently consists of Marcia Peterson, Deb Rice, Laurie Marshall, Geraldine Fowler and Wendy Smith. The Communications Committee met a handful of times over the 2016 period.

The Communications Committee goal is to support and improve the way information is shared with North Chapel Members and friends by collaborating with Geraldine Fowler, Church Administrator, who produces the monthly Quest, and weekly In Touch, the Order of Service for each week, on the office computer. Geraldine also serves as secretary for the committee by consensus. Geraldine maintains a data base of members' email addresses in Constant Contact and the church database in Filemaker. Geraldine is also able to send out special announcements from the Board (and others with special content from board representative). She produces paper copies of the Quest for bulk mailing. In case the number of recipients of paper copies drops below a certain threshold, it may become more costly to mail these out. The rest of the committee advises and participates in updates, such as the reformatting of the In Touch weekly newsletter in 2015 and the Quest in 2016. Geraldine also continues to post weekly reflections online on the North Chapel Website.

Geraldine created a weekly newsletter for SE families. These are geared with information that would be just of interest to those with younger families and in the SE program. Geraldine also began posting weekly information on the area listserves such as Pomfret, Woodstock and Upper Valley. The North Chapel became Chamber of Commerce Members this year, and our events are now also listed on the Chamber Website.

This committee has responsibility for overseeing the North Chapel web site, created originally with help from Neil Stannard and Dave Sullivan. This year we continued to create, modify and update some of the tabs on the home page, and established links between pages for easier navigation.

The office received a new computer (a Mac) and a new wireless printer this year. This resulted in a couple of technical difficulties (such as the need to purchase updated software in order to run the church database, etc), but these have to do date been sorted out and all systems are running smoothly.

In 2016, the Communications Committee created a new bulletin board in the social hall. This has been maintained beautifully by Wendy Smith. Thank you Wendy!!

Deb Rice also created an easel notice board in the Northex of the building. This is to be used as a way to communicate special events and notices.

We had received word that a number of people were not receiving our communications via email, we were able to help a number of people by contacting their email providers and unblocking our address so that they could receive emails and/or helped people through the process of finding our emails in either "Junk" folders or "other" folders.

Respectfully submitted by Geraldine Fowler (Communications Committee Secretary)

## **Buildings & Grounds for Annual Report, January 2017**

### Year 2016 in Summary

The early winter months were relatively easy on us with very little snow and warmer than normal temperatures. As a result, plowing, shoveling the walkways and salt use was minimal with fewer cleaning and heating challenges. No frozen pipes or freezing parlors.

We got through the Christmas season with a beautiful tree provided by Ann Dean. Wreath making and decorating the Sanctuary and then taking it all apart in January went smoothly.

Right after the new year, we began working with the new Communications Committee by designing and installing signs to help folks navigate the building in a more clear and attractive way. Interior doors in the foyer were painted a cheerful color and a bright poster with the UU principles replaced a dreary portrait in the foyer.

Other winter projects inside and out: Timber Tenders removed a large pine tree from the driveway and Radek replaced some floor boards on Parlor porch, struggled with the lamps along the walkway and continued to monitor the use of salt and sand on walkways. We fought a short, successful fight with ants and a mouse in the kitchen area and made some small improvements in the kitchen to help make it more user friendly and fixed the 'frig doors where the gasket was coming loose. In the attic above the narthex, lights were installed on timers so that our beautiful stained glass window is lit up during the evening.

During the spring, some members of Buildings & Grounds began to work with Micheal Stoner who was appointed to facilitate the Focus on the Future (FOF) initiative to address the moisture, energy and programmatic issues that were identified by that group. (see Michael's report)

We also identified the project that the money from the Vermont/Quebec grant would go towards paying for. For the past several years, Lynn Peterson has applied for this grant to help with some improvement to our building or grounds. This year we voted to apply it to the parking area behind the church.

During the summer and fall, we continued to work on regular maintenance of the buildings, lawn and gardens. We hired Brian Blanchard from Hillbilly Recycling to haul off all the debris around the Pizza Oven and the large brush pile that had accumulated in the back corner of the yard. One other noticeable improvement is the brick work around the garden at the back entrance to the Social Hall and the new path of stone connecting the driveway to the entrance with a shortcut. Radek researched and we later purchased a leaf blower to make fall clean-up more efficient, and during fall clean-up, Mary Blanton came out with her chainsaw and pruned some trees and cleared out some large branches that had fallen into the yard.

The major project during the summer and autumn months had two parts, the first part involved our engagement with FOF and the priority of addressing the moisture problem in our building. We contracted Tom Havill to excavate, regrade, install moisture barrier and drainpipe to the west side of our Sanctuary. When this was complete, we hired Blaktop Inc to pour a new asphalt walkway with improved surface and drainage.

The second part was the work on the lower level of the parking area which involved some excavation and regrading for better drainage and additional hardback surface and reseeding the lawn beyond the parking area. (VT/QB grant)

In addition, Tom Havill came back in November to grade the driveway and improve the surface and drainage - a short term fix until we address that side of our building as part of the larger FOF project.

During the year 2016, the regular maintenance and support of our buildings & grounds was done in addition to, and in conjunction with, the priorities identified by the task force that has assumed responsibilities for work on our facility as outlined in the report presented by Our Future in Focus.

Submitted by  
Gina Auriema

## **Annual Report of the Welcoming and Engagement Committee - 2016**

The Welcoming and Engagement committee has met monthly throughout the year. Our goal has been to create initiatives that encourage an atmosphere of inclusion and acceptance at the North Chapel, to develop and support opportunities and activities for members and friends to engage in the life of the church, and to create positive changes that enhance communication, interaction, and depth of involvement for our church community.

In our efforts identify and welcome visitors, we have taken the following steps:

- We are encouraging visitors to use name tags.
- The blue mugs at coffee hour have been very effective in helping to identify new people.
- Blue cards are now available in the pews so that visitors can share their information.
- The new brochures developed last year continue to be restocked as needed.
- We have interfaced with the Worship committee about our desire to provide an opportunity for visitors to identify themselves and also to take a few minutes at the beginning of the service to greet those sitting nearby.
- The designated Greeter role has been expanded so that more members of the congregation are now participating in welcoming before the Sunday service.

To enhance communication and help visitors and new members become integrated into the community, we have initiated an additional set of actions:

- A new sign now greets everyone at the front door of the church making it clear that all are welcome.
- With the help of Building and Grounds, we have also installed signage near Geraldine's office to direct visitors to various parts of the building.
- Linda Galvao is interviewing and writing articles about new members for the Quest so everyone will get to know them more easily.
- We have coordinated with the communications committee, and Wendy Smith in particular, to keep the communications bulletin board in the social hall up to date and attractive.
- And we have placed an easel in front foyer of church to announce special events, encouraging people to post church events there.

In addition, to increase engagement and participation we have taken the the following steps:

- We have been delighted to see the reception for pot luck lunches that we have reinstated after several Sunday services.
- We have continued to encourage everyone to bring food to share to coffee hour.
- The committee also organized a well received "Feeling Grateful" intergenerational craft project to coincide with Thanksgiving.
- And we encouraged the revival of covenant groups (now Circles of Trust).

In order to receive feedback and increase awareness about the importance of welcoming within church community the committee recently presented an overview of its work at the November Committee Cafe. The comments and suggestions we received were very helpful in setting goals and evaluating our work thus far. This engagement further reinforce our commitment to have the entire congregation become aware of the need for a truly welcoming community.

In the future, we hope to create and support more intergenerational activities. Possibilities include a Mothers/Fathers Day special coffee hour, an ice cream music social, and initiatives to help the Pizza night attract more participants from the wider community.

We also hope to work to integrate the LGBT into the church community through a special service and follow up education.

As always, we invite the ideas and participation of all members of the church community.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Bartlett and Rick Fiske, co-chairs.

On behalf of our committee: Kathy Fiske, Polly Forcier, Joanna Garbish, Richard Schramm, Pru Schuler and Joby Thompson.

# Spiritual Exploration Report Annual Report 2016

## **NORTH CHAPEL SPIRITUAL EXPLORATION... WHERE WE INTRODUCE CHILDREN TO THE UU PRINCIPALS THROUGH YOGA, MINDFULNESS, CREATIVE ARTS, MUSIC, COMMUNITY SERVICE AND CONNECTION TO THE NATURAL WORLD.**

We have enjoyed yet another great year in Spiritual Exploration for Children and Families.

In 2016 we began the year with 5 regular teachers leading Sunday SE with 2 groups each Sunday. A group for ages Kindergarten to 3rd grade and another group of children in 4th grade through 6th grade. Our teachers include Geraldine Fowler (SE Coordinator), Ben Fox, Murray Ngoima, Angel Rubino, Jessica Stout and a Change The World Kid (Jason Drebber). In October we also welcomed Michael Zsoldos into our teaching group. Michael offers a new and exciting spin to SE with his class titled "Music as a Spiritual Practice".

Throughout the first part of the year, we were able to achieve lots of great things in addition to our regular Sunday morning programming. Some of these included:

- Easter Service -We had about 25 children join our Annual Easter Egg Hunt. Thanks to the many people who contributed eggs, candy and goodies we had a huge number of eggs and a very successful egg hunt. Once the hunt was over the children enjoyed time either playing outside with bubbles, on the playground or went into side to sort through their goodies. The cherry on top... Ben and Lucy dressed as the Easter Bunny!
- Continued to have a nice following of children and families to the Community Pizza Nights at during the summer.
- Offered quality enrichment for children during the Life and Hope Fundraiser, hiring outside ArtisTree Teacher Emily Burkholder to work with the children.
- Continued with our connection to the children of the Life & Hope Association - North Chapel House. Linda Galvao did a wonderful job of introducing the kids to Cambodia and the children therein. Linda was able to get some photos of the kids to send, and they were able to write some (simplest) things down to send for translation.

In July of 2016, Geraldine and her children (Aidan and Alexis) were once again blessed to attend the LRE (Lifespan Religious Education) Week at STAR Island where participants explored the theme "Sustainability + Faith : A New Way of Living". The theme speaker of the week being climate activist and co-founder of the environmental group Climate Disobedience Center, Tim DeChristopher. Geraldine also participated in the Workshop Titled "Think Orange". Think Orange is a philosophy of religious education that combines a focus on Family Ministry with transforming Religious Education classes into Small Groups. The five essential themes being: Integrate Strategy, Refine the Message, Reactivate the Family, Elevate Community and Leverage Influence. It was an incredible week of exploring, learning, inspiring, and empowering ourselves in the work that we do.



In August of 2016, the North Chapel unanimously voted to increase Geraldine's hours from 20 to 32 hours per week. This move was in part to increase hours and therefore responsibilities for SE Programming and Outreach Coordination. This change took effect in September of 2016.

Since September our SE program has done the following...

- Harvested the CTWK garden at ArtisTree and donated those proceeds to the Woodstock Food Shelf and Root Cellar.
- We have visited the Buddhist Tea House and learned about Buddhism and meditation.
- We "Ran4Ryland" at the CHaD Hero's day and helped raise over \$11,000 for our team and the Children's Hospital at Dartmouth.
- With Anne Dean's help, we have also planted bulbs in the Permaculture Garden that will bloom in the spring and bring the bees to pollinate our garden and add some gorgeous color as well!
- We have helped with the CTWK Holiday Hearts Program bringing holiday joy to local families in need.
- We have welcome Michael Zsoldos to our Spiritual Exploration Team and he is bringing an incredible wealth of knowledge to our children around "Music as a Spiritual Practice". Michael also directed our Children's Choir for the Christmas Eve Service which also included 2 children playing the saxophone!
- We hosted a Mother Up! A Parents Exchange for Change event where we had a great turnout (12 adults and 13 kiddos), a delicious, farm-fresh home-cooked meal, fun outdoor activities for the kids, and a fruitful discussion with parents! Hopefully more of these events to come!
- We have also started a weekly newsletter for SE families designed to help parents feel Inspired, Connected and Empowered.
- A twice a week walking group which has begun to have a nice little following! Over the winter this walking group is moving into more of a "spiritual fitness" group and we starting to attend a weekly guided meditation at ArtisTree and a yoga class at the North Chapel. The yoga class will have free childcare and we are also looking to offer free childcare at the meditation class too. This is a work in progress.
- We partnered with the NWPL and hosting a Preschool Story Time. The first happened in January and we will continue to host these monthly through May as a trial.
- We have a dedicated SE Family table at the CTWK Cabin Fever Dinners (by donation).

We continue to work on ideas. Looking at challenges and successes and continue to implement quality programming for our children and families. Some ideas that we are working on include:

- Parents Night Out!
- Expanding our outreach efforts and preschool program
- Establishing a SE for Children and Families Committee
- and much more!

We thank the North Chapel Board and the North Chapel Community for its continued support of the SE program.

Respectfully submitted by Geraldine Fowler. (Spiritual Exploration and Outreach Coordinator)

# North Chapel Facilities Task Force Report, 2016

Prepared by Michael Stoner  
Submitted 12 January 2017

## Background

In 2015, a task force led by Chris Bartlett and Anne Dean explored how the North Chapel's facilities could evolve to help fulfill the priorities outlined in the community's strategic plan, "Our Future in Focus." That plan suggested a need for spaces that would better accommodate children's SE activities and adult contemplative and small-group meetings. It also set a goal to reduce our carbon footprint and become carbon neutral by 2020.

As a first step to create funding for such facilities improvements, the board, in consultation with the Finance Committee and the Resource Development Committee, created a special funding challenge as part of the 2015 annual canvass, which resulted in a new budget line-item, Funds for our Future.

In January 2016, the North Chapel board asked Michael Stoner to assume responsibility for carrying forward the recommendations of the original facilities task force. Working with Gina Auriema, Anne Dean, Geraldine Fowler, Norwood Long, Jack Nelson, Angel Rubino, and many others, the new task force is well on its way to presenting a plan that outlines priorities and estimated costs as part of a comprehensive approach to implementing renovations to the North Chapel's physical plant. We expect to have a draft plan that we can share with the community in early 2017.

## A Significant New Challenge

One of our first activities was to engage several professionals to help us further assess our needs and identify any challenges we might have missed in our own planning and analysis. Sabrina Duk, an engineer with Stevens & Associates in Brattleboro, conducted an analysis of our building in January and Robert Black, an architect from Brandon, is working with us to develop the plan, priorities, and estimates for the work ahead.

Both identified a fairly significant problem: water is entering our building in a number of ways, raising concerns about health issues and creating the real possibility that our historic structure could be damaged.

Duk noted that, "Re-grading the area outside of the Sanctuary & Church Office and Chapel is recommended to limit the amount of water pooling and seeping into the foundation." She pointed out that the roof over the offices and Parlors leaks, noting that the roof framing above this area shows signs of water damage. And she noted that water was entering the main building through damaged flashing and siding; it could damage the back wall of the Sanctuary and the organ and contribute to water problems in our basement.

Robert Black reinforced the concerns about moisture damaging our building and noted that water in our basement could create health issues. He believes we should address them as soon as we can. In fact, as we've begun to use the Chapel more regularly, we've observed problems with moisture there. Some people find it difficult or impossible to spend time in this space because the dampness aggravates their mold allergies.

So, although our initial goals were to more effectively meet the community needs outlined in "Our Future in Focus" (e.g., spiritual education, contemplation and meditation, and others), preservation of our building quickly became an additional priority: we need to focus attention and budget on addressing this issue.

## **Progress to Date**

We engaged an excavator to regrade the lawn on the west side of the Sanctuary and install a moisture barrier between the lawn and the building. This means that the water is now flowing away from the foundation and is not entering below-ground spaces.

We spent a considerable amount of time meeting with Robert Black, helping him to understand our programmatic needs and exploring our building. One of our charges to him was to help us identify any other other challenges we may have with our physical plant and to recommend how to deal with them so that we can best balance our various needs and make appropriate trade-offs.

On 1 October, a group consisting of Gina Auriema, Chris Bartlett, Anne Dean, Veronica Delay, Geraldine Fowler, Denise Lyons, Anne Macksoud, Anne Marinello, Angel Rubino, and Michael Stoner, gathered for a half-day workshop that Robert Black led.

At the meeting, Geraldine and Angel presented updates on changes and growth in SE that necessitated another review of how we're using our space. Because SE has grown since 2015 when the initial space planning task force did its work, it is using both Parlors and the room downstairs reclaimed from the Nursery School. One of the ongoing challenges has been to figure out how the Parlors can continue to serve SE's needs — and make sure that they can be used for other purposes, too.

Robert Black presented some of his observations about our challenges, including a discussion of how water was entering our building. Although we addressed the problem on the west side of the building, we still have concerns about the lower level, including the Social Hall and the Chapel. Robert offered some thoughts about how we might deal with these areas and presented sketches of proposed solutions to how our space might work better. The group discussed his ideas and offered recommendations about how we move forward.

In general, we agreed with the need to balance practical concerns (like dealing with our moisture issues) with programmatic/aesthetic changes (like renovating the parlors), while taking into account our carbon-neutral goal in everything we do. We identified some opportunities to fundraise around some of the priorities we discussed (historic preservation, SE, renovation of the Chapel). And we agreed that fixing the roof over the offices and parlors is a priority so we can stem the water leaks coming from that area.

## **Next Steps**

We're now working to refine these priorities, obtain cost estimates for realizing them, and putting together a plan to share with the community. We anticipate that the draft of this plan will be done early this year and we'll have the opportunity to share recommendations and other thoughts with the community by April.

However, we need to move ahead with one decision. In 2017, we want to submit a grant to the Preservation Trust of Vermont for funds to repair the roof over the parlors and offices. Gina Auriema solicited bids from two companies for this work; Jancewicz & Son from Bellows Falls submitted a comprehensive bid of \$36,000. If our grant application is accepted, we will receive half of that amount (\$18,000) but must have our contribution available to match whatever grant money we receive.

## **Pizza Project Report as of July 2016**

The stone and brick pizza oven in the back yard of the North Chapel was conceived of and constructed by our former beloved minister, Daniel Jantos, starting in 2013. His vision was the creation of community through the shared activities of building the oven and making food together around a fire.

This season, through the combined efforts of a dedicated group of volunteers, the vision is realized nearly every Wednesday, as weather permits, at 5:30 when people gather on the lawn and construct their own pizzas to slide into the glowing oven. Donation jars on the tables receive approximately \$5 a person, which is collected by the hosts of the evening and turned in to the treasurer, Ann Wynia, who reimburses those who have made purchases of ingredients or equipment such as the brushes and tools, through a simple accounting system of an envelope in which the receipts and cash are collected and recorded. The team, consisting this year of Sharon Blake, Angel Rubino, Don Ransom, Marcia Peterson, Laurie Marshall, Deb Rice, Tim Traver, Bob Belisle, Brooke Beard, Tom Weschler, Mary Hawkins and Michael Zsoldos, take turns with providing firewood, fire building, food prepping, and set up and clean up, sharing acquired knowledge and ideas among themselves. Ken Woodhead, who made dough last year, has provided training for others to take up the task. Newcomers are welcome to just show up about 3pm and join in, learning as they go.

The oven has also been used for parties and events not directly connected with the church, such as weddings, and so far these others have made contributions toward the project, such as donating extra firewood. Michael Bellefeuille, a local caterer, has provided frozen dough and a case of mozzarella cheese, along with a tool, a pizza docker, which helps tame the dough before toppings go on. (He gets "pizza for life".) There have been suggestions that the use of the pizza oven along with an experienced guide could be an amenity offered to the public, the way our building facilities are available for rent.

Anyone who would like to give input or join in the activities is welcome to contact any member mentioned above, or Geraldine in the office.

Deb Rice