

UNITARIAN SOCIETY *of* HARTFORD



ANNUAL REPORT

For Fiscal Year July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017

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Proposed Slate for the Board

*Presented by the Nominating and Leadership Development Committee –
Virginia de Lima, Chair Members: Will Anderson, Diana Heymann, Bill LaPorte-Bryan, Judy Sullivan*

The Nominating and Leadership Development Committee is pleased to announce the slate of candidates for election at the Annual Meeting on May 21, 2017. This year all Board openings are unopposed. We are fortunate to have such talented, qualified, and committed members willing to assume leadership responsibilities. The candidates' names and bios are shown below. We are grateful to the entire Board for their service to the congregation this year, and send a special thanks to Martha Bradley, John Brancato, Margaret Leicach, and Gloria Francesca Mengual, who are completing their service. The Chair also wishes to thank the members of the Nominating and Leadership Development Committee for their hard work.

Katharine Ann Anderson – *President*
Sherry Manetta – *President-Elect*
Phil Gardner – *Treasurer*
Sarah McKenzie – *Secretary*

Hank Murray – *Chair, Administration*
Chris Wilt – *Chair, Community Within*
Valerie Klokow – *Chair, Social Justice*
Stephanie Briggs – *Chair, Spiritual Life*

Katharine Ann Buck Anderson (President, Term: 7.1.2017 – 6.30.2018) has been a member of USH since the fall of 2013. She is currently an active member of the AIM Task Force, The Accessibility and Inclusion Ministry team, and she is the leader of the mental health sub-group of the Task Force. Previously, she has participated in small group ministry, been an active member of the 20's/30's group, and served as a worship associate. Outside of USH, she serves on the board of CCIU, Connecticut Council for Interreligious Understanding. At the University of Saint Joseph, where she is a professor of human development and family studies, she teaches a course on not-for-profit management. She works to harness these experiences to be an effective leader at USH. In her personal life, she likes to spend time with her husband Will Anderson. The two live in Suffield, CT.

Sherry Manetta (President-Elect, Term: 7.1.2017 – 6.30.2018) has been a member of USH for 6 years. She is currently a member of the Strategic Planning team, is active with the Welcome Volunteers, and is a regular volunteer at pancake breakfasts and picnics. In her nonprofit board service, she has focused on education and social justice, having served as board chair and chair of finance, audit, strategic planning and executive committees for various organizations over multiple decades in Chicago, New York and Hartford. She currently serves on the boards of Misericordia University in Dallas, PA and the Greater Hartford YMCA. In her business career, she recently retired as head of global operations for Conning's Risk Solutions business and has worked in financial, technology and operational management positions in the insurance industry and in public accounting and consulting roles. She is a board member and chair of the audit committee of Jewelers Mutual Insurance Company in Neenah, WI. Sherry and her husband Brian Harvey reside in Avon.

Phil Gardner (Treasurer, Term: 7.01.2017 – 6.30.2018) is a native of California. His career in developing and engineering laser products had stops at Florida State University; Queens, NY; Danvers, MA; Cupertino, CA; and then 14 years ago - Connecticut. He is now happily retired but enjoying the Connecticut Academy of Science and Engineering, as the past treasurer. He has shared this journey with his high school sweetheart, Harriet. They have three children - the oldest son is a research scientist, the second son is a computer and art specialist, and their daughter works in international public health – most recently in Africa. Phil enjoys activities with the Old Guard (a retired men's group in West Hartford), and watching sports especially UConn women's basketball.

Sarah McKenzie (Secretary, Term: 7.1.2017 – 6.30.2019) first began attending services at USH in August of 2014 to check out the new ministers (although she had been here as a teen for YRUU conferences). Prior to then, she had been attending the Universalist Church of West Hartford sporadically, since she was in sixth grade (with a long break when she lived in Vermont). Since coming here to USH, she has been involved with the choir, Meeting House Folk, and a couple of ad hoc committees. Along with her husband Owen, she is thrilled to have such a warm and supportive community here at USH for their family to be a part of, and appreciates the opportunity to serve the congregation as a member of the board.

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Hank Murray (Chair, Administration, Term: 7.1.2017 – 6.30.2018) and his wife, Mary Sherwin, have been members of USH since 1991 when they raised their now-grown children, Liam and Fionna, at the Meeting House. Hank previously served on the Council in the mid-1990s and he and Mary taught for many years in the Religious Education program. Hank is a labor and employment lawyer in private practice in Hartford and he and Mary have lived in Hartford's West End for 38 years. Hank was a merchant seaman for eight years and discovered that he and Rev. Teresa Cooley's father, a chief engineer, served aboard the same ship for nearly a year in the early 1970s.

Chris Wilt (Chair, Community Within, Term: 7.1.2017 – 6.30.2018) has been a lifelong Unitarian Universalist, raised in the Unitarian Universalist Church in Nashua, New Hampshire. Prior to coming to the Unitarian Society of Hartford, he has attended Unitarian Universalist churches in New Hampshire, Vermont, and New Jersey. In 2014, he finished his PhD in Computer Science studying artificial intelligence at the University of New Hampshire. He enjoys running, taking things apart, attempting to put them together again, and cooking (especially baking).

Valerie Klokow (Chair, Social Justice, Term: 7.1.2017 – 6.30.2019) is a nonprofit professional who studied philosophy at Yale and earned a J.D. at The University of Connecticut School of Law. Committed to the arts, creative expression and integrity, Valerie is a writer and a strong proponent of voice. Valerie's story (*Homeless to Yale*) was featured on the Oprah show in a 2002 "Graduates Overcoming Obstacles" episode. Valerie dropped out of school in the 7th grade, eventually living as a homeless person in California before finally, in her 30's, she made her way to Cabrillo Community College's campus – and later transferred to Yale. Valerie is committed to helping make traditionally silenced voices be heard and she looks forward to doing what she can to support social justice issues at USH.

Stephanie Briggs (Chair, Spiritual Life, Term: 7.1.2017 – 6.30.2019) has been an enthusiastic USH-er ever since she first came to the Meeting House in 2014. She has been extensively involved in leadership of the 20s/30s Group, and is especially proud to have established the group's weekly brunch program. Additionally, Stephanie serves as a member of the Stewardship committee, and she delights in sharing the gift of music as part of the Meeting House Folk singing group.

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Unitarian Society of Hartford May 15, 2016

Virginia de Lima, President, called the meeting to order at 12:05 PM.

Note: The Secretary recorded 74 voting members present, according to sign-in sheets.

Rev. Rion Starr led attendees in opening words.

Diana Heymann moved and Jim Venneman seconded approval of the minutes of the minutes of the May 17, 2015 annual meeting. The minutes were approved by a voice vote.

Virginia de Lima, President summarized some of the notable achievements of the preceding year, including installation of the solar panels, pursuing our commitment to social justice, including Black Lives Matter, AIM, and the refugee project. She also updated us on the progress on the 3 Board goals for this year: 1) developing a "Dashboard" or snapshot report to monitor statistics and progress at USH; 2) increasing collaboration with our sister UU churches in the area, and 3) planning "our next chapter," which includes both strategic planning and financial planning. You can read more about these in the written report.

Margaret Leicach, Secretary noted that we reported a membership of 192 to the UUA in February and as of the date of the meeting we had grown to 206 members, breaking the so-called "200 Barrier" for the first time in many years. Margaret described her dream of growing our membership by the same time next year such that finding parking and seating for Sunday morning worship services would be a delightful challenge. She challenged members to imagine *their* dream of how many

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members we might be reporting by the 2017 annual meeting.

Virginia de Lima asked for a moment of silence to remember USH members who had died in the last year: Roy Cook, Ruth Holland, Nancy Prentis, and Margaret Sax.

Louise Schmoll, Treasurer summarized the fiscal challenges and successes of the past year. She noted that the percent of pledges received by April 30 is the highest it has been in years and added that full payment of pledges would go a long way toward helping our bottom line. In regard to the Stewardship Campaign, she suggested that if 100 people could increase their pledge by just \$100 each, we would almost reach our pledge goal for next year. This will allow us to give some modest and much needed pay increases for staff as well as to make some much-needed and also modest capital improvements.

Jim Venneman, Chair of the Endowment Committee, noted that we continue to meet the criteria in our by-laws for the ratio between the size of the endowment and the size of the annual budget and highlighted plans to grow the endowment. He noted that pamphlets are available to explain the ways that members who want to donate or bequeath money to the endowment can do so.

Four of our newer members shared what makes the Unitarian Society of Hartford special for them and their hopes for the future of USH.

Stephanie Briggs, a member for a year, described feeling like 'coming home' when she discovered USH 2 years ago and cited the 20-30's group, The Artist's Way, her feeling of safety, and meeting her boyfriend here as significant events. She described herself as an "evangelist" and dreams of sharing USH with more people, seeing us grow in many ways, having events that draw in more people, and having an increasing impact in our community.

Harriet Gardner credited programs such as Small Group Ministry and the Saturday Salon as strengthening her ties to USH. She dreams that more people will take advantage of all that USH offers and will give of their time, talent and treasure to support the congregation.

Gloria Francesca Mengual has been coming to USH for about 2 ½ years and described her life during most of that time as a 'no good very bad day' during which her mother passed away, her only daughter went off to college, she got divorced, was diagnosed with breast cancer and lost her job. The support of USH members and ministers carried her through that time, gave her 'love when she needed it' as symbolized by the comfort shawl she received, and she reports that she is now healthy and has a great new job.

Mike Sereda was introduced to USH through his mother when he returned to his home town of Bloomfield to be with her during her illness. He sang along with our USH folks who went to Seabury to sing for Joan Sereda in her final days. He loved that experience and joined USH and our choir when he returned here to work.

Peter Meny, Chair of the Stewardship Committee, reported that, based on pledges received to date, we project that we will have \$280,000 of the \$300,000 goal for pledges for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2016. This is a 9% increase in pledges over last year and Peter supported Louise Schmoll's hope that if those who can will increase their pledge by even a small amount, we will be able to reach our goal. Cards were available in the lobby for those who wanted to leave a message about the stewardship campaign and/or note by how much they would like to increase their pledge.

Bill LaPorte-Bryan, Immediate Past President and Chair of the Leadership Development and Nominating Committee thanked the members of the Leadership Development and Nominating Committee and presented the slate of candidates for vacant positions on the Board of Directors:

President-Elect	Katharine Ann Buck-Anderson
Treasurer	Phil Gardner
Chair of the Council on Administration	Hank Murray
Chair of the Council on Community Within	Chris Wilt

Nita Hansen moved election of the slate of candidates, Tara Cote' seconded the motion, and the motion was passed on a voice vote.

Rev. Heather Rion Starr thanked Virginia de Lima for her great job this year as President of the Board, as well as the other outgoing Board members, Louise Schmoll, John Clapp, and Tina Davies, and closed with inspiring words to lead us into our next year.

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Virginia de Lima updated members on the issue of a registered sex offender who had been attending USH. Reverends Cathy and Heather, RE Director Rayla Mattson, and Virginia de Lima worked closely with advisors from the UUA to develop a plan that would protect the safety of the children at USH while honoring our first principle – to affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person. They created a “limited access agreement”, following the guidance in “Balancing Acts,” a document produced by the UUA to assist congregations in dealing with this issue. Virginia noted that the document is available on the UUA website. Unfortunately, the individual inadvertently violated the agreement and was asked to leave USH. There was no incident that put any of our children at risk. Virginia announced formation of a Sexually Safer Congregation Team to review current USH policies and procedures and recommend changes, as indicated.

Peter Meny moved and Jim Venneman seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion passed on a voice vote and the meeting was adjourned at 12:50 PM.

President’s Report

John Brancato

This has been an amazing and eventful year of growth and change for us at the Unitarian Society of Hartford. We are the spiritual home; source of comfort, peace and camaraderie; and passionate guide on social justice initiatives for an ever-increasing number of folks in the Greater Hartford area. Most of the focus for the Board of Directors this year has been on the future of the congregation and our meeting house. One of last year’s goals was planning ‘our next chapter’ and we pursued this work enthusiastically. I’m pleased to share with you here a look back on our work and accomplishments.

In order to meet our responsibilities as written in the Society’s constitution and to ensure responsible management of the Society’s budget, two committees were reestablished, the Finance Committee and the Audit Committee. The Finance Committee has been providing guidance and recommendations on budgetary and other financial issues; the Audit Committee will be presenting its findings to the Board just prior to the Annual Meeting. Additionally, the Strategic Planning Committee worked diligently this year to develop, with congregational input, a series of strategic goals for the congregation. These goals, endorsed by the Board at the March meeting, will inform the development of a strategic plan later this year.

To maximize the benefit of the Society’s growth in membership and vibrancy, as well as the strategic planning process, the Board has engaged a UU stewardship consultant, Mark Ewert. Mark has extensive experience assisting 30 congregations of all sizes over the past 8 years. His visit, occurring shortly before the 2017 Annual Meeting, will help us determine the best ways to continue to move forward with stewardship and planned giving and other ways of keeping the Society on a solid financial footing to support our dreams and plans.

This year, the Society was the recipient of several generous donations. One was an anonymous restricted donation that will be used carefully to study and, ultimately, implement a plan to address sound challenges that are resulting from the fortunate growth of our RE program and the way that noise from the classes can interfere with worship service and vice versa. Two unrestricted donations from the Garvais and Williams families were accepted, as well, with most of the funds going into the Endowment and smaller amounts supporting the following, based on congregational input: A. the building of an accessible playground for our children; B. the bolstering of our Social Justice Fund; C. the establishment of a fund to help support members’ attendance at General Assembly; and D. the replacement maintenance of the newly donated piano in Fellowship Hall.

The efforts of many of our subcouncils and committees have been fruitful for the congregation. A committee is currently completing work on a robust Safer Congregation Policy, to be rolled out later this year, with the goal of providing safety and security to our children and members of all ages. Green Sanctuary is leading the charge for our support of Solarize with Faith, which is a new campaign of the Solarize Connecticut program of SmartPower. Past campaigns have focused on specific towns or cities. This is a new campaign that focuses on specific faith groups as a way to spread the word about the advantages of solar power and to offer special, discount pricing on quality solar systems. AIM (Accessibility and Inclusion Ministry) spearheaded, with assistance from Building and Grounds, the installation of a new hearing loop in the sanctuary, benefitting members who

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use hearing aids. It is looking ahead to projects such as improving lighting in the sanctuary and providing some ASL interpretation of services. It is also sponsoring ongoing workshops to help increase understanding and inclusion of folks with disabilities. B&G is also evaluating the potential extent of a major project to address the continued leaking of the sanctuary roof. It has been a pleasure to see our growing and active 20s and 30s group bring new energy to the congregation and lend their talents to the Board and to many of the efforts mentioned here.

We continue to benefit in uncountable ways from the wisdom, energy and inspiration of our co-ministers, Reverends Cathy and Heather and it was a momentous occasion for the congregation to help them welcome their second child, Braden bell. We look forward to seeing Braden and big sister, Robin, grow up in our midst. We also had the good fortune to welcome Reverend Erica Richmond as our Affiliated Community Minister.

Many of us have found extra solace and solidarity here at the Meeting House with the change in political and social landscape that has taken place since the 2016 national elections. The importance of our support for the Black Lives Matter movement, our contribution to the local welcoming of a Syrian family, our being both a Green Sanctuary and a LGBTQ Welcoming Congregation (and hopefully an AIM congregation, as well) and even the central place of LOVE in our UU covenant could not be more evident than it is today.

All of this good work, this good community flows from the efforts and engagement of each one of us. Every little bit is part of the solution to what is ailing in our greater culture. Let us each continue to contribute generously in time and resources to our community's, this Society's success.

It has been a real honor and pleasure to serve as Board President this year. My fellow volunteer Board members provided me with much wisdom, guidance and support. I look forward to continuing to serve the congregation in other ways and ask that you give your support to the incoming Board.

Co-Ministers' Report

Revs. Cathy & Heather Rion Starr

(Report submitted by RevHeather while RevCathy is on Parental Leave)

2016-2017 will be a year we don't soon forget at the Unitarian Society of Hartford. As we near the end of our third congregational year with you, I am somewhat amused to recall that RevCathy and I started out the year thinking: "well, our goal this year is to keep things going while we have a baby." Then...the November 2016 U.S. Presidential Election happened, and the personal and professional impact on our lives was unexpected and intense. As many of you know, we had a slew of visitors to the congregation in the weeks and months that followed, and we also experienced dramatically increased demands on our time, leadership, attention, congregational staff, service preparation, community engagement, and resources of all kinds.

We are still living into what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist faith community in the Trump Era. Some people would love for us to talk about politics less, and yet we firmly believe and know that "the personal is political." People's lives in this country, around the world, and for lifetimes to come are being negatively impacted by the nationalist, profit-over-people decisions of the Trump Administration, and our commitment as Unitarian Universalists must be to not look away, to stay engaged, to resist and to fight back for our country, for our planet, for humanity, for this world. Our four-year-old Robin asked me recently "what can I do to make sure that Trump doesn't get re-elected?" I brainstormed a list of ideas with her, and she said that of those ideas, the one she wanted to work on was "writing letters to neighbors and friends." I share this with you because this is where we all begin--with the people we know and love, with the communities we are a part of personally--not just during campaign season, but all year 'round, all the time, building relationships and connections locally with people right around us. This is where we all must start, and our faith community brings us together and into connection with people we might otherwise just pass by. *Here* is where we begin in deepening our relationships with each other and building collective strength for all that this world demands of us.

We are truly blessed, here at USH, with a remarkable, dedicated, diverse, hard-working, positive and generous staff team. The

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Unitarian Society of Hartford currently has 17 all-part-time staff (it takes a crew!). Each one brings so much more to this congregation than "just" the work they do. We hope that as our congregational year comes to a close, you will take a moment to appreciate this staff team that keeps this community going in so many ways seen and unseen. Brian, Rayla, Linda, Rebecca, Isaac, John, Kevin, Briana, Sarah, Dominique, Crystal, Martin, Yamel, Jaz, and Rae: an enormous THANK YOU to each of you. Your good energy and willingness to do what is needed, often without being asked, is what makes all the difference in creating the positive "we're all co-creating this community together" energy that people feel when they come to the Meeting House.

I am grateful to all of you, USH Members and Friends, for the steadfastness of so many of you in supporting and maintaining this congregation, and I am grateful also for all the newercomers and new members who have gotten involved and brought us all new energy and vitality. There are a number of areas the congregation would benefit from some new zest and fresh perspectives: Our Planned Giving effort is ready for some new engagement. Membership SubCouncil Chair Brian Harvey is looking to show someone how to take on some of the many important efforts he currently tracks. Adult Programs always welcomes some new course offerings and workshops for spiritual growth. Building & Grounds work days are a great way to come roll-up-your-sleeves just three times a year and help move along projects here at the Meeting House. If you love to sing or play an instrument, the Choir and Meeting House Folk both welcome your participation. We will be looking for creative coordinating energy to run our much-loved Annual Festival of the Season in December. I could go on! Think about what you enjoy doing or a new kind of leadership you would like to experience; think about what skills you have or a way that you can help energize this community. There are so many different ways to be involved.

As we deal with what each day brings, we also are all dealing with our personal struggles, challenges, and celebrating joys and accomplishments. Huge thanks to the Caring Network, our dedicated staff, the Stewardship Committee, the Membership Sub-Council (Brian Harvey in particular) and all of you for all the individual outreach and follow-up each and all of you do. I know that for me, getting out of the whirlwind of my own mind and coming to be together amongst other breathing, beautiful, passionate people is such an important part of my daily life. "It is good to be together," as I often say at the beginning of our services, and I mean that so sincerely. It is good to be together with you all, doing our best to create community that in turn helps us to be our best selves and expand our hearts and sense of what is possible.

And our congregation *is* ever-expanding, growing, and ever-changing. As of this past April 23 Earth Day service and New Member Ceremony, a total of 76 new members have joined USH since we began serving as your Co-Ministers in August of 2014. I still appreciate reminding myself of my own words from a prior New Member service: "We are never exactly the same group of folks on any given Sunday. There are always people who are no longer with us, for a whole spectrum of reasons, and always people who are newly among us, for an equally vast universe of reasons. We are all on our own journeys with our own timetables. There are many right ways."

I wish that maxim for each of you: "there are many right ways." Give yourself permission to take care of your spirit and heart in the ways that you need to this summer. Think about what you'd like to make happen at this congregation and in this Greater-Hartford community, and let us know how we can support you in your efforts. Let this congregation be your basecamp, your launching pad, and let us all work together to bring about some marvelous new connections, collaborations, and possibilities in the coming year.

Secretary's Report

Margaret Leicach

As of February 1 of this year we reported 206 members to the Unitarian Universalist Association, up from 193 last year. This reflects new members joining, former members re-joining and deaths of members and is a net increase in membership of 6.7% compared to this time last year. This number determines our "fair share" contribution to the UUA for this year. Average weekly attendance at Sunday Worship services over the past year was 135. Weekly attendance in our religious education program was around 40-45 children, up from about 30-35 children per week last year. We mourn the loss of five members who have died in the past year: Sid Garvais, Al Angelbeck, Carolyn Cartland, Theodore Space, and Maud Freeman.

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Treasurer's Report

Phil Gardner

The primary activities of the Treasurer are to update the Board on the current status of the budget and to develop a budget for the next year. I am very fortunate to work with Brian Mullen, our Bookkeeper, on a weekly basis to develop these summaries and also sign checks.

This year we have had an excellent team in the Finance Sub-Council that has addressed budgeting issues that come to the church. The team consists of David Newton, Peter Meny, Hank Murray and Brian Mullen with able assistance from RevCathy and RevHeather.

The budget for the current year of 2016-2017 is estimated to be \$415,893 which is 7.5% above the budget estimate made in June 2016. Installing a reliable internet connection and phone system for the church has made it possible to reliably communicate with the outside world. The related expense for these items is one of the reasons that expenses exceed the estimated budget.

This year's challenge regarding income in the budget has been fundraising. To partially compensation for the fundraising reduction an Autumn Request was initiated. The response was excellent, raising \$7,260. Income from fundraising events is an important component of next year's budget as well but beyond the financial side they also are important to the social fabric of the church. We can have a fun time together and raise some funds as well.

The budget for the next year is taking shape and many have made pledges of support. We have a goal of addressing salary issues to meet the level recommended by the UUA for a number of positions. We have made important progress this year and the goal is to continue this process in the coming year. The support of our staff accounts for 67% of the draft budget. Let's keep on making progress to meet this goal and support our amazing staff.

Update to the 2016-2017 Annual Report:

Phil Gardner, Treasurer

From Your Treasurer: The purpose of this note is to update the congregation on the Board's actions related to the draw on the Endowment. The Board has approved the following draws on the Endowment in 2016-17:

Operations expenses \$43,000

Building and grounds small projects \$13,850

Financial consultant Mark Ewert \$2,600

The total expenditures from the Endowment then is \$59,450 or 5% of the Endowment which has a value of \$1,191,216 at the end of April 2017. The operations portion of the draw is the same as last year. The B&G small projects this year was for the hearing loop and the church's new phone system. All are noticeable improvements for our facility. The financial consultant provided some recommendations that the Board will review and provide action items and update the congregation in the near future. In the Endowment Committee section of the Annual Report, a value for the draw on the Endowment included items in the draw on the Endowment that took place before funds were transferred to the Endowment. The Board set up several special purpose accounts from unrestricted donations received this year. The vast majority of the donations were still transferred to the Endowment. –Report submitted 5-24-17

Endowment Committee

Jim Venneman, Chair

Members: Jean Groothuis, David Newton, Steve Noble, Thomas Richardson

Mission: The Endowment Committee is responsible for the prudent and socially responsible investment of Endowment Funds, which will make the USH Endowment more attractive to those considering memorial and other bequests. It takes into consideration the current needs of the Society, preservation of the worth of permanent funds, the original restrictions on gifts and

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bequests, the economic climate and the outlook for the future.

Accomplishments: The Endowment had a balance of \$1,063,894 at December 31, 2016, consisting of \$1,004,358 held with our investment adviser, UBS; \$13,937 in the bridge loan to help pay for the new solar array, and \$45,599 in the UUMSB first mortgage held by USH. The \$1,063,894 represents an increase of \$108,800 since December 31, 2015, which is less than the \$121,000 in 2016 memorial/bequest donations shown in the chart at the bottom of this write-up. The Endowment/2016 memorial gifts contributed \$78,955 to the support of USH during 2016, or 8.2% of the average endowment balance. This compares with the 2016 interest and dividend income rate of 2.9%. The 2016 expenditures consisted of \$43,000 for the regular draw from the Endowment, \$6,955 for identified B&G projects, and \$29,000 the Board authorized in December for several previously unbudgeted items.

During the past several years a substantial effort was made to inform governance-involved members that the operating budget drain on the endowment must be reduced to conserve funds for capital improvements and reverse a continuing decline in the constant dollar value of USH's endowment. This trend continues to be seen and is not healthy over the long-run. Most endowments strive to disburse about 4% of the average balance, which is less than half the 8.2% shown in the preceding paragraph. Your Endowment is managed by UBS, a professional money management firm. As of December 31, 2016, about 25% was in fixed income investments and 75% in equities, which is a typical allocation for a conservatively managed fund designed to provide long-term income with reasonable preservation of capital. The 2016 time weighted rate of return, which includes dividends, interest and capital gains/losses, was 7.76%.

In 2014 USH was asked by the Unitarian Universalist Meeting of South Berkshire (UUMSB), a young UU congregation, to hold a mortgage on their first church building. This is an example of "Doing Well By Doing Good." USH is receiving a higher rate-of-return on a part of its fixed income assets, while UUMSB did not incur closing costs and is paying a lower interest rate than what a bank would charge. This loan is about 4.2% of the Endowment, which minimizes risk to USH.

Another example of the Endowment "Doing Well By Doing Good" is its loan for the new solar array that provides USH with fossil free electricity. This array is being financed by generous contributions from USH members, friends and others; plus a clean energy credit from the federal government that will be received in 2017. A bridge loan from the Endowment is being used until the federal credit is received.

Plans for next year: The Committee will continue to review the Endowment's investment allocations to ensure they are appropriate to meet the needs of the Society. The Committee is working with other members on a Planned Giving Initiative to grow the Endowment. The Committee suggested we should aim for an endowment of \$3-5 million with endowment income to be available for USH capital improvements and/or social justice project(s).

USH Endowment Honor Roll: The Endowment Committee is pleased to thank in advance the following members and friends who have informed the Unitarian Society of Hartford that provision for its continued support via the Endowment is included, in writing, in their wills. Their generosity will continue to help the mission of our Society for many years to come.

Betty Arnold	Richard and Jean Groothuis
Larry Lunden	Peter and Deb Meny
Ed and Marion Richardson	Ed and Marilyn Stockton

Since 1925, 57 individuals/families have given a total of \$914,633 in memorial gifts/bequests to USH. Their generous gifts have greatly benefited USH and are remembered here. Following is a list, in chronological order, of the people whose contributions made our Endowment possible. We thank these people for their foresight and generosity which help us all today.

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Donor	Established	Amount	Donor	Established	Amount
Frank S. Sumner	1925	\$5,000	Charles N. Robinson	1927	\$200
Charles H. Field	1928	\$5,000	Katherine Cornwall Husband	1934	\$4,423
Marion B. Pepion	1939	\$1,000	Estelle Loveland Noerr	1939	\$1,000
William H. Honiss	1941	\$9,000	D.S. Boas Family	1942	\$13,575
Grace A. Bissell	1948	\$9,281	Mabel T. Koch	1950	\$8,065
Maude Hayes	1953	\$2,061	Frank Lester	1958	\$250
Alice Bacon	1958	\$13,582	Roy S. Mason	1961	\$1,000
Hortense Hahn Guett & Monroe Guett	1963	\$40,780	Gladys Crane	1967	\$9,313
Paul Dorweiler	1970	\$7,200	William Harris	1972	\$789
Edith M. Arborio	1974	\$5,000	Frieda R. Smith	1977	\$505
Frances C. Altenberg	1980	\$500	Helen C. Borden	1980	\$500
Rev. Gilbert C. Meyer	1980	\$500	Renata Armstrong	1980	\$2,000
Yvonne d'Elvert Pilpel	1981	\$1,000	Alan L. Hart MD & Edna Ruddick Hart	1982	\$5,000
Jane Lyman Smith	1983	\$500	Arthur G. Engstrom	1987	\$2,000
Ruth Dieffenbach	1992	\$264,489	Helen L. Herrick	1992	\$19,940
Helen L. Herrick	1994	\$16,315	Virginia Delaney	1994	\$35,028
Freeman Meyer	1996	\$6,765	Anne Bailey	1997	\$1,893
Sigmund Aune	1997	\$115,406	Toni Thomas	2000	\$20,000
Lois Stowe	2000	\$46,151	David Schur	2001	\$24,320
Joyce E. (Jones) Bauer	2011	\$3,500	Helen M. Skinner	2012	\$26,000
Charles Huntington	2013	\$14,521	Rosie Rindfleisch	2014	\$4,310
Chris & Jeanette Smith	2015	\$2,795	E. Joan Sereda	2015	\$2,000
Florence Grieb	2015	\$20,726	Ed & Marilyn Stockton	2015	\$5,000
Meeting House 150 th Anniversary Celebration	2015	\$150	Marye Gail Harrison & John Passalacqua	2015	\$15,000
Anonymous	2015	\$300	Jane Stone	2016	\$3,000
Othneil & Janice Williams	2016	\$18,000	Sid & Betty Garvais	2016	\$100,000

Council on Administration

Chair: Hank Murray

During the past year the efforts within the Administrative areas of the Board activities have been concentrated as follows:

- 1) Working with the Stewardship Sub-council to ensure that the Board's overall strategic goals get reflected in the themes and messages associated with the annual Stewardship Campaign;
- 2) Helping the Finance Sub-council achieve an important and on-going role advising the Board on financial matters related to assets and liabilities during the fiscal year, coordinating Stewardship campaign goals with budget aspirations for the next fiscal year and producing comprehensive budget documents each month for the Board to assess out financial health and process during the church year;
- 3) Working with the Building and Grounds Sub-council (B & G) to help produce a comprehensive Five Year Plan that sets out capital improvements and costs for major projects for consideration by the Board based on input from various stakeholders within USH, such as the AIM Taskforce and Religious Education, with a shared interest in improvements to the physical plant of the Meeting House;
- 4) Helping the Board to adopt a revised policy on donations with the joint cooperation and work of both the Endowment Committee and the Finance sub-council.

One of the big strategic goals adopted by the Board and worked on by Administration during this past church year was answering the call to pay USH staff fair compensation. To that end we proposed, and the Board adopted, a mid-year adjustment to the compensation of various staff members on the lower end of our salary structure to raise their hourly rates to a more livable wage and more accurately reflect changes in duties associated with their positions. The Board's commitment to this important goal is also reflected in the draft budget being considered that increases what the congregation has earmarked for staff compensation for the coming fiscal year. This commitment to fair compensation was also reflected in the messages and themes of this year's Stewardship Campaign that placed fair compensation front and center to better inform the decisions congregation members made in pledging for the coming year.

Administration this year was also active in drafting proposals to revise our USH donation policy to both streamline the process and make the policy clearer for both USH members and staff. The Board subsequently adopted a new policy, with the considered help from both the Finance Sub-council and the Endowment Committee that makes clear when unrestricted donations may be used for current operational needs of USH or must go into the Endowment. The new policy also reaffirms the Board's commitment to seek input from congregation members when we receive large unrestricted donations as occurred earlier in the fiscal year with the money received from the estate of Sid and Betty Garvais and the family of Janice Williams.

In addition to the Five Year Plan, Administration worked with B & G and the Board to get commitments to spend the funds necessary to replace and repair sections of the center roof that have been leaking into the sanctuary. Hopefully the "fix" employed will solve that problem permanently.

Stewardship Committee

Chair: Peter Meny

Members: Stephanie Briggs, Carolyn Carlson, Kate Gervais, Ginny Hedrick, Laurie Kelliher, Deb Meny, Rev. Heather Rion Starr

The role of the Stewardship committee is to encourage members and friends to actively participate in activities that further the Society's mission of being a vibrant and active liberal religious community in the Greater Hartford area. We seek to inspire members and friends to give of their time, talent, and treasure so that USH can continue to meet its financial obligations and take on projects, provide programs, and inspire action consistent with our UU principles.

Towards these ends the committee reported our plans for 2017 at the Semi-annual meeting in January. We also hosted an after-service gathering 'Under the Stairs' in March to provide information about the financial needs and future goals of USH. Furthermore, three members delivered 'Pulpit testimonials' expressing the importance and impact our USH community has had in their lives. Finally, information about Stewardship goals and the pledge campaign was published in several E-News articles and for the first time posted on Facebook (USH Stewardship is now on social media!).

The Board, Finance Committee, and Stewardship team worked together to adopt a pledge goal of \$327,000 to enable the Society to take steps toward three vital objectives. These include paying all our staff a living wage, closing a budget gap caused by reduced income from fundraising activities, and providing more funding for social justice work. On Stewardship Sunday March 26 we launched the annual pledge drive with a delectable Pancake Breakfast/Buffer co-hosted by the Membership committee followed by inspiring worship led by Reverend Heather.

We are pleased to announce that as of April 25 we have received \$262,000 in pledges from 118 members and friends. This is a very encouraging result! By comparison, at the same time last year we had received \$223,000 from 98 pledges. We anticipate we will receive as many as 30 more pledges so that our final total may reach \$300,000 or beyond. If you have not yet made your pledge, please do so as soon as possible!

A big thank you and hug to all for making this year's pledge drive a success!

Building & Grounds Sub-Council

Co-Chairs: Stu Spence and Ed Sax

Members: Bill Simmons, Peter Magistri, Peter Meny, David Newton, Ron Sexton, Jim Venneman, Fred Louis, Hugh Schweitzer, Sarah Cassidy, & Toni Gold

Minister Liaison: Rev. Heather Rion Starr

Staff: John Bengtson & Kevin Girouard, Briana Bittel, & Crystal Cruz-Acevedo

Mission: To maintain and improve the physical plant and surrounding grounds of the Meeting House of the Unitarian Society of Hartford.

Accomplishments: There are tasks that get completed, those that are continuing and still others resisting easy solution for extended periods. A substantial upgrade has been made in the phone/internet capabilities of the Meeting House this year. After extended experience with running the internet and old phone system using standard twisted wire phone lines, we observed that service was simply not dependable and the capabilities of the old phone equipment were not adequate. Accordingly, Comcast cable was installed to bring better broad band service to the Meeting House, and the Allworx Phone System serviced by TAB was installed after new wiring drops were created. Necessary staff training was provided, and after some minor set up issues and battery backup were addressed, the system operates in an effective manner.

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During the summer a tree removal project resulted in opening the view from the Chapel in keeping with original architectural plans for the grounds, and a few overgrown trees were removed addressing safety concerns and elsewhere benefitting the Memorial Garden and slightly reducing morning shade falling on the three solar arrays.

As of the end of March, we completed our first year of solar electrical production. Happily, we produced a bit more than 100 percent of electrical power consumption of the Meeting House for one year, as planned. We produced 46.5 megawatts of clean power. In a related matter an energy audit in progress for the entire building appears to find us close to Energy Star designation, a surprising outcome attributable to our efficient boilers, human managed thermostats, and careful use of power generated on premises.

The sound system was somewhat improved by installing new shielded wiring thus eliminating a continuing source of static from the audio system in the Sanctuary.

Also, sound loops were installed making it possible for Sanctuary event attendees with hearing aids equipped with T switches to clearly hear sounds from the sound system arriving through their prescription hearing aids. Such loops are prevalent in Europe and increasingly common in US public venues. The addition has been particularly appreciated by the hearing challenged among our USH members and friends.

Pot holes in the north drive were repaired and the surface coated to extend its life with good results.

Exit pathways and related mechanical and safety issues were addressed. In addition, the storage room for tables and chairs off Fellowship Hall was adjusted with addition of shelving and rearranging of storage patterns for more efficient use.

Customary work parties were held to clean up, arrange and declutter various Meeting House spaces, maintain memorial and other gardens, and otherwise improve the surrounding grounds. Repairs were necessary for two damaged large glass windows and a plumbing leak in the library.

Funds have been allocated for construction of a playscape. Planning is underway.

We continued to grapple with the persistent leak-related issues of the roof portion over the Sanctuary and the general level of light available for services and other events.

A good deal of time and discussion has been devoted to a capital budget plan for the next five years or so as well as related discussions concerning cultivation of the Endowment.

Efforts are underway to replace the portion of the Meeting House roof over the Sanctuary, a particularly troublesome challenge.

B & G extends its thanks to volunteers and employees who helped in different ways during the year including attendance at workdays scheduled for spring and fall and at various ad hoc times. We are particularly blessed with staff workers John Bengtson, Kevin Girouard, Briana Bittel and Crystal Cruz-Acevedo.

Plans for next year: We will continue to work on existing unfinished tasks and such new ones as arise.

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Archives

Co-Chairs: Larry Lunden, Zac Mirecki

Members: Kayla Costenoble

Mission: The Archives: Serves as the institutional memory of USH, and plays an integral role in the management of the church's information. Identifies, acquires, and maintains records of enduring value that chronicle the development of the church. Documents the process of institutional evolution by retaining both the evidence which shapes decisions and the decisions themselves. Preserves essential evidence of the church, including day to day records that have permanent significance. Gives future generations a place to research the church's history.

Accomplishments: We have begun in earnest to continue the work of Margret Sax. She organized the Archives starting in 1993 and spent many years implementing a filing system. We found lots of new records that had been donated to the Archives in the years since. We have been sifting through and filing the records in their proper places. We developed a set of procedures for handling the records, including acquiring and disposing when necessary. We inventoried the contents of the Archive by listing every box and file folder and their locations. We rearranged the shelving in the Fuller room to give us and Chancel Arts, who we share the room with, more storage space. We are filing the records in acid-free boxes to prevent degradation of the paper.

We are monitoring the temperature and humidity in the room. These factors can cause paper to age sooner than necessary. The room gets warm in the summer, and is a negative influence on the records.

We have a collection of reel to reel tapes of the services in the 1950's and 1960's. We don't have a way of playing them, and haven't decided what should be their fate. Other archives also can't play that type of recording.

We received several collections of old records, which we sorted and filed. Many people collect records at home where they are in danger of getting tossed out. If the records are about church business we will accept them and preserve them for the future. We are inviting boards and committees to submit records to the archives. We are missing recent minutes and reports. We are receiving current publications as they are being published.

Plans for next year:

Continue to accept in new records and file them in an organized manner.

Find instances where similar records are filed separately and bring them together.

Highlight interesting finds to the congregation.

Human Resources Sub-Council

Greg Nickett, Chair

Members: Ron Sexton

Mission: To assist the board and minister(s) with personnel administration and to ensure compliance with state and federal employment laws and regulations.

Accomplishments: Assisted with preparation of the agreements for staff members. Reviewing and updating USH HR Policies. Provided advice with respect to completion of USH employee performance evaluations and job descriptions.

Plans For Next Year: Continue to work on updating USH HR Policies.

Church Office

Linda Clark, Office Administrator

The past year has seen my job responsibilities increasing as I continue to take on tasks formerly done by primarily by Brian Mullen and David and Janice Newton. This includes troubleshooting PC, Web and copier issues directly or by contacting the appropriate vendors. I continue to work with Brian Harvey with membership and the Sunday Welcome team. I have office volunteers who help out regularly, for whom I am very thankful. My goals for the upcoming year are to become more proficient in my current tasks while learning new ones as needed.

Would You Like to be Part of a Great Team?

Join the USH Sunday Welcome Team! Please contact Linda Clark at ushlindaclark(at sign)gmail.com, phone the office at 860-233-9897, or talk to Brian Harvey if you are interested in being part of this wonderful group of volunteers. The Welcome Team makes USH outstanding in its open and friendly atmosphere, and helps newcomers find their way around our Meeting House. Office volunteers are also welcome. If you'd like to help out in the office during the week for an hour or two, please contact Linda Clark.

Council on Community Within

Chris Wilt, Chair

During the 2016-2017 church year the various entities under the Community Within banner have continued to flourish, providing warm and welcoming communities for all members of the Unitarian Society of Hartford to join and contribute. I am in the very fortunate position of presiding over a large collection of groups driven by passionate members, and the various sub-councils are, for the most part, self-driving and continued to function well over the last year. If I were to attempt to describe the activities of the entirety of Community Within, I would use the words, "more of the same" which, in this particular case, means more fun, engaging, and welcoming activities for Unitarian Society of Hartford friends and members to engage in.

All of the groups under the banner of Community Within love to have new participants, so if you would like to become more involved in any of the groups, please feel free to contact either myself or the group leaders to learn more about how you can become more involved. More details on the activities of individual sub-councils can be seen within their reports that follow.

Caring Network Sub-Council

Co-Chairs: Eve Pech and Janice Newton

Members: Kayla Costenoble, Katie Doyle, Ron Friedman, Nita Hansen, Ginny Hedrick, Diana Heymann, Joan Kemble, Valerie Klokow, Deb Meny, Rachel Mintell, David Newton, Janice Newton, Eve Pech, Kit Northup, Nancy Reed, Tom Reed, Laurie Rollins, Marilyn Stockton; Rev. Heather Rion Starr and Rev. Cathy Rion Starr: ex-officio members.

Mission: Our mission, facilitated by the generosity of volunteers, is to provide comfort and assistance as needed, to those within the Unitarian Society of Hartford community.

Accomplishments: We have arranged rides to services and activities at the Meeting House, doctor's appointments and day surgeries. We have continued to keep in touch with members and friends who are no longer able to join us at the Meeting House for services and other activities. We have given support through calls, notes, cards and visits.

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We are delighted to have three new members join our Sub-Council this year.

During the year we had three Memorial Receptions, and one Memorial Service with a catered reception. We have copies of the "Final Wishes" document available at the Programs Table. If you wish to complete one, please stop by.

We continue to knit Comfort Shawls. Since the inception of the USH Comfort Shawl Ministry in 2002, we have given 270 shawls! And, we have gained a couple of new knitters! We usually gather Under the Stairs on the second Sunday to knit. We would love to have you join us!

We have made good use of the Take Them a Meal website. We helped our ministers with meals during their parental leave time. We also took meals to several other families. We had excellent support from the USH community. Thank you all. This website has worked out very well and makes it easy for friends and members to participate. We thank Deb Meny for coordinating this effort. The Youth Group keeps us supplied with containers of delicious soup (in the freezer). Thank you to them!!

We are grateful to RevCathy and RevHeather for many calls and visits they have made. We also appreciate their monthly visits to Seabury. Those visits mean a great deal to all our members who have made Seabury their home. We also thank Rev. Erica for her help during RevCathy's and RevHeather's parental leave time.

Often on Sunday we hear about a member or friend needing a card or other contact during a time of sorrow or joy. We have a supply of cards and envelopes at the Programs Table available during Fellowship Hour that can be used to meet that need. Please stop by, get a card, add a note and address it using the USH photo directory that we also have at the Programs Table so that when you get home, it will be all ready to mail!

Plans for next year: We will continue to coordinate with AIM and other Sub-Councils to better answer needs within our community. We are working to be more visible to the USH community, especially those who are new and may not know how to reach out for help. We look forward to continuing to reach out to our members and friends with love, caring and support. We are only able to do this with help and support from those within our community. If you would like to join us on the Caring Network Sub-Council, please let one of the members know. You would be most welcome.

If you have a need or see a need, let us know! We are here to help you in a time of need or celebrate with you on a joyous occasion! You are not alone.

Membership Sub-Council (MSC)

*Sub-Council Members: Brian Harvey (Chair), Ginny Allen, Zean Gassmann, Esther McKone, Yakhonda Mwenelupembe, Bruce Robbins, Judy Sullivan. Council chair: Chris Wilt
Supervising Co-Minister: Rev. Heather Rion Starr*

Mission: To support the growth of the Society by: 1) promoting a congregation-wide culture of warmth and welcome to all visitors, newcomers and members; 2) fostering acceptance and respect for each person who enters the Meeting House; 3) providing information and orientation to visitors and new members about our faith and values; and 4) facilitating spiritual growth and community through involvement of newcomers and members in Society activities.

Accomplishments:

EXTENDING OUR WELCOME—During the last year, about 50 USH members have taken part in our Sunday Welcoming effort, serving as ushers, greeters, and hosts at the Welcome and Visitors Tables. Linda Clark takes care of the weekly reminders and thank you notes. Linda and Brian Harvey produce the quarterly schedule of these assignments. We receive many comments from visitors and newcomers regarding how welcome they feel attending our worship services.

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We made numerous brochures and pamphlets available to newcomers that answer all kinds of questions on a broad spectrum of topics. This information is both purchased from the Unitarian Universalist Association and produced by our staff and volunteers.

We actively reached out to The Village for Families and Children and enjoyed the participation and enthusiasm of the children and their supervisors at the *Festival of the Season* and the *Annual Picnic*.

NEWCOMER FOLLOW-UP: Rev. Heather Rion Starr, Linda Clark, Brian Harvey and Rayla Mattson meet weekly to discuss our contacts with visitors and newcomers. Linda sends an email welcome to each visitor who signs the guest register. Rev. Heather and Membership SC members reach out with additional follow-up where appropriate. The contact information is stored in our members and guests database. MSC members host monthly First Sunday Connections sessions following the service, which visitors are encouraged to attend and which provide them with an opportunity to have small group conversation and learn more about USH. These sessions are joined by Rev. Heather or Cathy and have grown into a small fellowship that serves as a starting point to encourage further engagement.

UU, USH & YOU: With the support of Rev. Heather, we continued to enhance UU, USH & You and offered the program in October-November 2016 and February-April 2017. This series consists of three 90-minute sessions that introduce the principles and history of our congregation and larger faith community and how they translate into ongoing church activities and practice. These workshops also provide newcomers the opportunity to begin to forge bonds and share new perspectives. Following these courses, in December 2016 we recognized 11 new members. In April 2017, 10 new or reactivated members signed the USH Membership Book.

ASSIMILATION and COMMUNITY BUILDING: We worked with other USH sub-councils and committees to have newcomers mix with established members in church-wide events. These activities included the Festival of the Season in December; pancake breakfasts in October and March; a Newcomer/New Member Potluck in May; and the annual church picnic in June. We coordinated with the Communications Sub-Council to produce our updated color USH Member & Friends Photo Directory in December 2016. This directory was published in both electronic and hardcopy versions and serves as a great tool for building connection within our congregation.

Plans For Next year: Continue to integrate more newcomers, new members and young adults into Membership SC related activities including: joining Sunday Welcome Volunteers, helping with pancake breakfasts and potlucks; and feedback regarding their experiences in becoming familiar with USH.

Revisit UU, USH and You course materials.

Support future circle dinners.

Unitarian Alliance Ministry to Women

Submitted by: Nita Hansen

The Women's Alliance has been part of the Unitarian Society of Hartford for well over 100 years. However, with monumental changes over the years, the need for a women's group has also changed. Our local group has become a small core of women trying to maintain a few of our favorite programs. Rather than separate weekday meetings which most women do not have time to attend, we have coordinated activities open to all USH folk, with some emphasis on women's accomplishments.

Three to four Sundays a year, we offer a noontime event of interest to all, often featuring members of our Society. So far this year we have presented an update on their actions by our local refugee settling committee and also a program about studying genealogy. We do sponsor a women's retreat yearly at Senexet House, a chance for women to "get away from it all" and enjoy the company of others. We also award an educational grant to a woman seeking advance study. These are small grants, but can be used for childcare, books, transportation, etc. This past year we gave a small amount to the mother of the refugee family sponsored in part by our Society. We also coordinated a holiday luncheon in December for the Lunch Bunch and any others

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who would like to attend, collecting gift cards and financial contributions for local shelters for men and for women. And we hold a spring picnic and occasionally a food/bake sale. These are small items, but things that might otherwise not get done. We get no funds from the USH budget, but yearly we ask our "friends" to donate to our causes. This allows us to continue our educational grants, to contribute to the Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation - a denominational group advocating for women, and to pay a portion of the cost of mailing weekly E-News copies to those without computer access. We encourage everyone to take part in any of these programs that are of interest to them.

Performing Arts Sub-Council

Chair: Vacant

The Unitarian Society of Hartford is in the process of revitalizing the performing arts venue as this is written! Paul and Laura Cipriano have stepped up to help with organizing shows at USH. We are very thankful for their participation in this and look forward to the events that they plan. Ed Savage, Greg Nickett, and Janice Newton have also volunteered their time and efforts. If you would like to help support performing arts at USH, either as a performer, setting up/cleaning up refreshments, opening/closing, helping with sound etc., please contact Paul or Laura Cipriano at: concertushartford@gmail.com -Submitted by Laura Cipriano

Festival of the Season

Submitted by: Nina Elgo

The 39th Festival of the Season was held on December 3, 2017 and was wildly successful once again! Featured this year was the traditional and ever favorite Graham Cracker/Gingerbread Houses, covered with gooey frosting and colorful candies. The wreath-making craft produced beautiful wreaths by young and old alike, and the cookie decorating was also ever popular again. Santa and his elf delighted the kids who waited in line to meet the merry man. Music emanated from the Coffee House to soothe and warm the soul, including Madrigal singers in fabulous costumes. After Caroling around the sanctuary and a worship moment, a delicious potluck dinner was shared and capped by the beloved 12 Days of Christmas zany sing-a-long. Such an extraordinary event could not have happened without the participation of dozens of volunteers. Thank you to all for making this annual event the source of cherished memories and warm feelings to last for years to come.

Nina Elgo and Sarah Cassidy, FOS Organizers

Programs for Adults and Families Sub-Council

Chair: Janice Newton

Members: Nancy Reed, Judy Robbins, and Janice Newton

Mission: The Adult Programs Sub-Council strives to provide lectures, classes, workshops and other offerings for continued spiritual growth, religious learning and community fellowship. Programs are intended to be of broad appeal while meeting the needs of particular groups where practical and appropriate.

The sponsors of these classes, programs and events affirm the Society's anti-discriminatory position by offering them at a range of times and in accessible locations, accommodating special needs as a standard practice and welcoming individuals and families of all kinds.

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Accomplishments: The Programs for Adults and Families has had a busy year!

The longtime favorite *Friday Night Pizza and a Movie* was again very popular. Not only do participants enjoy delicious pizza, good company and a great movie, but there also is the opportunity for a stimulating discussion following the movie.

This year we had Small Group Ministry groups in the summer, fall and spring. We have had new SGM participants join those who have attended SGMs in the past. Afternoon and evening groups have been available.

A wide variety of workshops and courses were offered this year. This variety includes a continuation of *Building Your Own Theology*, and several new offerings; *Rev. Cathy's Hindsight, Humor and Hope*, Artist's Way class: *It's Never Too Late to Begin Again*, and *Oral History*, presented by Sondra and Bruce Stave, PhD. *The Women's Alliance Women's Retreat* will take place in early May. Tom Gervais is organizing *Faith and Living*, an interfaith discussion group.

Tai Chi, Authentic Connection and Communication, Meditation and Dharma Gathering, and Emei Qi-gong Practice have been well received.

The monthly USH Book Club meets the first Thursdays of the month. Stop by to check out the "book of the month." Is Ballroom Dancing something you would like to learn? We have a group for that, too! Maybe you would like to join the monthly USH Sing-a-Long group. If you don't find an activity that is what you are looking for, maybe you would consider developing an offering!

Performing Arts is filling our spring with many musical opportunities.

We have an online catalog (frequently updated), a weekly entry in the USH E-News and handouts at the programs table describing the various programs. A Book Cart located next to the Programs Table includes books about Unitarian Universalism among others. We are at the Programs Table most Sundays. Come see all the activities happening at USH.

Meeting House Sing-Along

The Meeting House continues to offer a wide spectrum of ways for expressing musical talent. For several years we have hosted a monthly Sing-Along for those who want an informal, collaborative acoustic music gathering. Singers, Song-writers and audience members join in song on the second Saturday of each month from 2 to 5 PM. We use song-sheets and the popular Rise Up Singing series of books. This is a great opportunity to learn how to play and sing some of the most popular music.

We meet, generally, on the first Thursday of the month in David's Den at 5:30pm. All USH Members and visitors are welcome. Like a summer camp sing, we put chairs in a circle and take turns singing or playing, with those who know the tune or words joining in as they wish. Folks come early or come late, whatever fits a family's schedule. Visitors from outside the congregation are welcomed. Some of us bring snacks, but that is not required (or organized). Contacts: Maggie Greene, Fred Louis and Ed Savage
--Submitted by Ed Savage

Plans for next year: We are always looking for new programs to add to the previously offered favorites. We would very much like to increase our sub-council membership. Would you be willing to join us on a Sunday at the Programs Table or offer a workshop or program? Stop by the table and talk to us! We are always happy to see you.

USH Book Club 2016-2017

Submitted by Richard Groothuis

Mission: To foster community, communication and to read books which contain issues of particular interest to UU's.

This church year, members selected:

Mothering Sunday by Graham Swift (a Booker Prize winner's treatment of one day's events following WWI that reflects on rela-

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tionships and the era)

Sheltering Sky by Paul Bowles (an existential classic dealing with individuals immediately after WWII)

Brooklyn by Colm Toibin (an Irish immigrant's search for belonging and identity)

David and Goliath: Underdogs, Misfits and the Art of Battling Giants by Malcom Gladwell (how facing adversity may have surprising results)

Absolute Brightness by James Lecesne (Reverend Heather's choice for the Book Club - how being an "other" is received by society)

La Rose by Louise Erdrich (a tragedy leads Native American parents to give up their son to another family)

Hillbilly Elegy by J.D. Vance (a memoir examining the plight of families in Appalachia)

Also scheduled for the remainder of the year:

The Sellout by Paul Beatty (just named for this year's coveted Booker prize)

Showdown: Thurgood Marshall and the Supreme Court Nomination That Changed America by Wil Haygood

Ninety-nine Stories of God by Joy Williams

Small Group Ministry

Co-Chairs: Esther McKone and Bill Shoemaker

This past year, there were approximately 55 members and friends of USH attending Small Group Ministries in private homes and at the Meeting House. In addition to the traditional groups, there was an abbreviated 4 session group that met during the summer months of July and August. It is important to note that participants of these groups do not have to be members of USH, but in fact, many are friends and not official USH members. Many of these friends of USH do go on to become members, which is optional.

A Family Friendly SGM was not offered for the Fall 2016 due to difficulty in finding a facilitator. However, I am pleased to announce that a Family Friendly SGM has been meeting on Friday evenings facilitated by Gloria Mengual with Miriam Byroade hosting. There are 12 adults and eleven children enrolled. Parents, children and the facilitator gather for a simple supper before the adults separate from their children for the small group ministry portion of the evening. This group will meet for a total of six sessions on Friday evenings at the Meeting House where childcare is provided at no additional cost to the participating parents.

Small Group Ministry is truly a team effort. The SGM Steering Committee depends on a number of skilled facilitators who lead these covenant groups. Each group usually has a host who helps with communicating with group members, providing snacks for the first meeting and some other tasks required to assist in making the meetings proceed more smoothly. The steering committee and co-chairs of SGM are always looking for people who would like to become facilitators. They can be instructed individually or in a group, depending on how many are interested in doing this.

In addition to facilitators and hosts, the SGM program is supported by a steering committee composed of Martha Bradley, Bruce Robbins, Linda Ericson-Ebel and Beverly Spence. I have also gathered a group of advisors to give me feedback on proposed readings and development of questions for these readings. I have met with Anne Bailey from the Fern Street Universalist church to share SGM readings and discuss format. Anne and I have also met with Small Group ministry steering committees from the New Haven Unitarian Society and a shoreline UU church in Madison, CT. Although the format and structure of their SGM programs differ slightly from our SGM program here at USH, I have found these meetings to be informative and mutually beneficial.

Small Group Ministry testimonials from the pulpit are being planned to be included in a Sunday service in Fall or Winter. The testimonial will be presented by someone who has been a member of a covenant group who can share what participation in this program has meant to them. Also, another Small Group Ministry for facilitators will be offered which will also include people who are interested in becoming facilitators in the future.

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Small Group Ministry continues to provide an excellent opportunity for members and friends of USH to get together to strengthen their connections and learn more about each other and themselves. It is a place to come for deep listening and deep sharing, where we can reflect on our life experiences of fears and joys in a safe, confidential environment.

The SGM Steering Committee will continue to offer these covenant groups in the future as they are fulfilling the important needs of connecting, listening and sharing with each other.

-Submitted by Esther McKone with Bill Shoemaker

Council on Social Justice

Gloria Francesca Mengual, Chair

2017 Annual Report from Administration

Council on Social Justice Meeting -- The subcouncils met to plan the potential of collaboration on October 11, 2016.

Report-out from Sub-councils

1. AIM – Bill LaPorte-Bryan

- AIM surveys are coming in
- Survey findings were presented to USH Board in November
- Goal: to present to UUA in January 2017
- Hearing Loop has been installed
- On 10/30, an audiologist will share information about how to take most advantage of the hearing loop
- Educational inservices about AIM-related topics have started with one being “Negotiating the Minefield of Language,” offered in April.

2. Green Sanctuary – Jeff Howard & Mary Sherwin

- Application for reaccreditation has been completed
- Climate Summit was held at CCSU in November.
- Millennial involvement in Green Sanctuary is on the increase
- Focus areas: environmental justice; continuing consultation with worship & celebration; continued work with religious education on transformation of Our World curriculum; sustainable living
- Upcoming goals: strengthening work with NRZs – Blue Hills, West End, Upper Albany – focus on relationship-building as associated with environmental work we are doing
- Community Rainwater Harvesting Project – collaboration with Knox Parks is in very early concept stage
- Group recruited USH attendees to join Earth Day and March for Science supporters for an educational opportunity and rally in D.C. in April. Another goal was to call attention to the cuts in funding to the EPA and rollback of sound policies established by the Obama administration.
- Sustainable Living – planned:
 - i. Permaculture and solar oven use workshops
 - ii. Congregational Clean Energy campaign – USH education campaign on solarizing homes begins in December
 - iii. USH as model of sustainability – future areas of focus: revamping recycling and other efforts within the building

3. Refugee Work – Mike Winterfield

- Syrian family arrived in May, 2016
- Total of about 10 congregations have joined in with USH to help
- Multiple USH members have been directly involved with family – taking them to agencies, appointments, teaching English, etc.

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- Syrian family is doing well; learning English, dad has a FT job
- Now looking to host a second family via IRIS; funds already are in place to assist with this

4. Village for Families & Children – Joanne Orlando

- Activities include:
 - i. Giving of hats/gloves
 - ii. Picnic – Village youth involvement
 - iii. Festival of Season – Village youth involvement
- Kudos: Strong trust exists on the part of Village staff toward USH
- Joanne frustrated with lack of USH involvement in Village – wants this to be USH group effort, not just her own
- Hope is to increase USH awareness of Village and scope of its services
- Presentation by Village person during coffee hour took place
- Village table at Social Justice Fair to recruit greater involvement

5. Knox – Rev. Cathy on behalf of Rev. Heather

- Activities include:
 - i. USH plant labyrinth – several USH members helped with this
 - ii. USH hosted Knox Garden Party fundraiser on Village property

6. SURJ & Moral Monday – Rev. Cathy

- USH participated in Moral Monday demonstration in October. Rev. Erica & member Judy Sullivan were arrested; Rachael D'Agostino was cited: excessive noise ordinance
- Moral Monday calls for involvement will continue. On average, 5 – 10 USH folk regularly show up at Moral Monday events
- SURJ meetings continue at USH – change was made in leadership

7. Noah Webster Partnership –

- Total of about five USH tutors remain active in school tutoring
- Program changed substantially from 1-1 tutoring to playing paraprofessional role in classroom for one hour. Brian and Diana continue to do the work and enjoy it. Others, who preferred the 1-1, have dropped out.

8. Race Matters – Gloria Francesca Mengual

- Participated in Social Justice fair in February.
- Waking Up White – Reading of book in a three-dialogue series took place in October, November & December. Nearly 50 total from both congregations participated in all three sessions.
- USH youth in March watched/discussed “The Children’s March” – award-winning documentary of children’s march on Selma. The discussion following the showing was facilitated by USH youth. A second showing took place during late April.
- Presentation about Implicit Bias offered to all members/friends in June.
- Plans underway to build up a Race Matters steering group to identify future concentration of this sub-council’s efforts

Information and Advocacy

Community Activism:

We have been working with community groups in the North End of Hartford, our neighborhood, for several years and others can volunteer for a variety of community projects there. The list includes:

Facebook and website development in partnership with residents and computer tutoring at the Albany Avenue branch of Hartford Public Library

August 1 – Take Back the Night community picnics –at Granby Street Boys and Girls Club and Albany Avenue. Meet, greet, and help with set-up and cleanup.

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First Mondays – Attend Albany Ave Neighborhood Rehabilitation Zone meeting, 5:30 pm starting September to support local information and advocacy.

First Thursdays – Attend Blue Hills Ave Neighborhood Rehabilitation Zone meeting, 6:00 pm starting September to support local information and advocacy.

Tax season assistance at the Albany Ave Collaborative – helping folks who have not filed for EIC or refunds. Training and schedule will be developed by United Way Tax Service program.

On Call – for last minute action projects such as petitioning the City, supporting a community picnic, or other services to our North End neighborhoods and schools. Contact Ed Savage.

Peace and Reconciliation:

We have continued with the Quaker Meeting and West Hartford Peace and Justice to co-host an annual August 6 – Hiroshima-Nagasaki Remembrance Day- at the Meeting House. Volunteers can help plan, setup and clean up. Planning begins in June. Contact Mike Winterfield or Ed Savage.

Good Neighbor Offerings

Village for Families and Children Uniform Program = \$1,632.00;

North Central Regional Mental Health Board = \$582.00;

Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services = \$952.80;

True Colors = \$398.00;

Village for Families and Children = \$642.05

My Sisters' Place (Sleeping Out in Boxes) = \$1,252.00.

-Submitted by Brian Mullen

The Village for Families and Children

Joanne Orlando, Liaison

Mission: The Unitarian Society of Hartford aims to foster a relationship with The Village for Families & Children that is committed to supporting and caring for the children and staff of the Village in a consistent and loving manner. Through specific programs and activities USH will have an impact on the lives of the children.

Accomplishments:

- In the summer of 2016 USH raised \$1,607 for uniforms to send Hartford children back to school with pride.
- On October 10, 2016 Joanne and Rocco Orlando attended the Annual Meeting of The Village for Families & Children.
- On December 3, 2016 a group of children and staff participated joyfully in The Festival of The Season.
- On Sunday, February 26th, 2017 Sandy Baker, Development Associate of The Village, showed videos and talked about The Village during coffee hour.
- On March 19th, 2017 The Good Neighbor Offering of \$642 was given to The Village for Families and Children.
- The children will be invited to the Annual Picnic in June 2017.

Goals for next year: USH will continue to offer the activities and support as it has in the past while looking for new opportunities to expand its role in the life of The Village. Greater participation in a sub council by more members of USH will help achieve these goals. The caring shown to the children has allowed them to feel confident in our community and USH should be proud of the role it has played in their lives.

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Noah Webster Micromagnet Society School Ministry

Chair: Diana Heymann

Members: Brian Harvey, Diana Heymann, Amy Martin, Deb Meny, Peter Meny

Mission: To bring our loving connections and skills to a school in our neighborhood.

Accomplishments: We spent at least one hour weekly in classrooms with teachers and students who welcome our assistance. In grades K-3, we work on Reading and Writing (Literacy). In grades 4-5 we provide help in Mathematics (Numeracy).

Plans for next year: To continue providing our loving connections and tell everyone at USH who would like, "Come and join us!"

Refugee Resettlement

Richard Groothuis, Chair

During the past 18 months, over 20 USH church members have volunteered to plan for and settle a Syrian Refugee family in Bloomfield. USH is partnering with eight other faith groups and volunteers from Seabury and Duncaster. Tasks have included: locating, contracting for and furnishing an apartment close to public transportation, applying for/obtaining federal and state benefits, providing English language tutoring 5 days a week, assisting the father to secure a position as a pastry chef that makes use of his personal interests and professional skills in Hartford, locating and enrolling the family's 8 year old in a summer school/camp, making numerous, ongoing medical and dental care appointments as well as arranging family outings with a corresponding cadre of available drivers, establishing a schedule of babysitters who provide child care, in twosomes, during the appointments as well as weekly grocery/general shopping, providing support regarding finances including paying bills and understanding costs and budgeting, meeting and planning with local public school administration and staff for the son's first time enrollment in American public schools, obtaining and setting up computers, TV and internet, to support both English and Arabic language/culture programming, completing handyman tasks in and around the apartment and helping family making their own contacts with apartment management, enrolling the parents in evening adult education ESL classes 2 nights weekly over 2 semesters, weekly Sunday afternoon meetings with the family to review issues, progress and tasks/events in the upcoming weeks.

Current challenges include providing content-specific support for the parents to pass DMV drivers' tests, seeking a donated car once driving licenses are secured, continuing English tutoring, helping the father expand his employment skills in order to increase family income before expiration of government benefits, identifying appropriate year-round early childhood programs for the two remaining children (toddler and preschool age) and exploring the possibility of a home purchase upon establishment of credit.

Increasingly, our overall goal is to carefully support family members to gradually assume responsibility for various tasks, e.g. use of public transportation, upkeep of the weekly calendar, completion of handyman chores, in order to operate with substantial independence from our help. Clearly much has been accomplished yet more work remains ahead.

Volunteering and working with the family, USH members and the numerous individuals from our partner groups, have provided a tremendous personal and spiritual experience for all of us. We continue to need volunteers—particularly for driving and babysitting.

The AIM Team

Team members: Katharine Ann Anderson, leader of the mental health group; Briana Bittel, leader of the chronic pain and illness group; Paula Bleck, leader of the mobility group; Lisa Campo; Dennis Gallant, leader of the perceptual group (hearing, sight, sensory); Debi Gosselin, secretary; Flo Grieb; Susan Hope; Cat Lanser; Bill LaPorte-Bryan, chair; Larry Lunden, leader of the food and chemical sensitivities group; Peter Magistri; Owen McKenzie, leader of the learning and intellectual disabilities group; Tom Reed; Edith Savage; Rev. Cathy Rion Starr, lead minister for the AIM team

Mission: The Accessibility and Inclusion Ministry (AIM) task force is charged with “welcoming, integrating, and supporting people with physical or psychological disabilities and their families in our congregation” (UUA.org).

Accomplishments: What a year! Our first full year as a group of people, passionate about our mission, who are dedicated to making USH, our congregation and our Meeting House, a church where everybody can find themselves supported and included, no matter who they are. We’ve been working hard together to create a church that welcomes and supports everybody who’s seeking a safe place to be themselves. During the year, we conducted a survey of the congregation to better understand what changes people needed to improve their experiences in our church. We’ve offered workshops to our congregation and anyone in the Greater Hartford community who wants to participate ... a workshop on using the new hearing loop in the Sanctuary in November, a webinar on mental health offered by our New England Region in February, a workshop on “Negotiating the Minefield of Language” in April, and an SGM-like workshop in May based on an essay from the NY Times disability series. We’ve made improvements to the Meeting House ... we installed a hearing loop in the Sanctuary in September. We’ve made continuing improvements to our church’s website. We’ve established mutually beneficial relationships and partnerships with groups inside and outside of our church ... on the inside, with Building and Grounds, Communications, Small Group Ministry, Membership, the 20s & 30s group, the Caring Network, RE, the Board, the staff, and our ministers, and on the outside, with Unified Theater, the University of Hartford and Hartford Stage. We’ve identified physical problems that would hinder a rapid evacuation of the Meeting House in the case of an emergency and fixed many of them.

Plans for next year: Next year the AIM team is planning to do more, much more! We’ve submitted our plans to the UUA AIM review committee to get their suggestions and agreement as we work to get accredited by our denomination as an officially designated “AIM church.” We’re planning to offer an interactive workshop called “Get Involved” to the congregation and the community in July or the first half of August that will be facilitated by a professional from Unified Theater. We’ll be working closely with RE and B&G to build a new accessible playground on our lawn. Our plans also include making additional improvements to the Meeting House to make it more fully accessible to everybody. We’ll be working with B&G to make proposals to the Board to improve the lighting in the Sanctuary this summer and to install a projection system in the Sanctuary next spring. We’ll be restarting a support group for people in our church who have mental health issues. We’ll be starting another group for families and supporters of people who have mental health issues. We’ll consider the possibility of offering American Sign Language interpretation in some of our worship services and then we’ll meet with the Executive Director of the nearby American School for the Deaf to investigate a mutually beneficial partnership between our church and the school. We’ll continue our efforts to design and document an evacuation plan in the case of an emergency that will serve the needs of everybody. And, last but not least, we’ll be working closely with our Director of Religious Education to educate our classroom teachers and assistants on approaches they can use to support any students in their classes with a disability with respect for them and the other students in their class.

Green Sanctuary Sub-Council of the Social Justice Council

Co-Chairs: Mary Sherwin and Jeff Howard

Members: Craig Best, Lisa Galinski, Marilyn Giese, Marye Gail Harrison, Sharon Lanza, Peter Magistri, Bev Prager (Chair Emeritus), Ed Savage, Edith Savage, Rev. Heather Rion Starr

Mission: To help our congregation live in harmony with and create a healthier world environment by spearheading continued

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activities that will educate and engender greater awareness of our impact on the environment and how we can bring forth positive change in personal lifestyle choices, congregational activities and the broader community.

Accomplishments: Recertification—GSS had applied for and received certification of USH as a Green Sanctuary in 2010. Certification is granted to UU congregations that pledge to accomplish activities in Worship, Religious Education, Sustainable Living, and Environmental Justice. This year the GSS completed and forwarded the USH Application for Recertification as a Green Sanctuary to the UUA's review committee. Upon reviewing it, the UUA pronounced USH as an official candidate for recertification, one of only a handful of UU congregations that have qualified for this step. Part of the reaccreditation involves submitting a five-year Action Plan, of which we are part way through year one.

1. Climate Justice is one of the Environmental Justice pillars of the USH Action Plan and this year involved activities such as helping organize and finance a delegation to march in the April 29 People's Climate March in DC and rallying at the April 22 March for Science in Hartford. GSS has been promoting the energy-efficiency legislative agenda of the CT Roundtable on Climate and Jobs, of which GSS is an affiliate, and continues to sponsor and help lead the statewide Climate Stewardship Summit. Another Environmental Justice activity of GSS has been exploring the potential for rainwater harvesting to supplement water use at the adjacent Knox community garden.

2. Worship and Celebration activities included coordinating the annual Earth Day service and discussion with other members of the congregation on the GSS agenda for high-profile congregation-wide environmental action in the coming year.

3. The Religious Education agenda includes a plan to begin discussions with the RE committee about the possibility of incorporating the UU "Our Place in the Web of Life" curriculum into RE programming.

4. The Sustainable Living agenda has included working with the Board and B&G to participate in Connecticut utilities' energy-efficiency program for houses of worship to benchmark and audit the Meeting House's energy use and identify improvements that would further reduce our carbon footprint and save money. GSS also sponsored programs on the environmental cost of bottled water and meat production and carried out the Holiday Re-Gifting Sale that netted the Meeting House over \$1,500.

Plans for next year: The *Environmental Justice* program of GSS will continue to include a strong focus on climate-justice activities plus working with Hartford community groups on mutual EJ agendas. *Worship and Celebration* activities will include more attention to seasonal celebration such as equinox and solstice events and working with humanist and UU pagan groups plus the Earth Day service. We plan to begin more actively working on *Religious Education* by working with RE to incorporate more nature and environment content into the RE curriculum. *Sustainable Living* activities will include a solar-oven workshop, applying for the U.S. EPA Energy Star award for the meeting house, and developing permaculture gardening programs on site as well as upgrading the recycling infrastructure in the meeting house. Most importantly, we hope to continue to inspire the active participation of all at USH in truly becoming a Green Sanctuary, one that inspires the transformation to a healthier Earth.

Council on Spiritual Life

Chair: Martha Bradley

Mission: To support the work of the sub-councils within the purview of the Council on Spiritual Life; Religious Education, Music, Worship Arts and Chancel Arts, and act as a liaison with the Board of Directors re: the activities and needs of these sub-councils.

Activities:

Held a joint meeting of the sub-councils to coordinate efforts.

Participated in the Councils Fair in order to promote the work of the Spiritual Life Sub-Councils and help recruit volunteers.

Developed job descriptions for Council and Sub-Councils.

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Assisted Sub-Councils with their efforts as needed (see Sub-Council reports)

Reported to the Board on budgetary needs of the Sub-Councils, and their goals for 21st century sanctuary.

Chaired Music transition and search team.

Chaired Parental Leave Team.

Goals:

Increase volunteer participation on Sub-Councils.

Review and update volunteer job descriptions.

Develop term limits/ rotation of leadership for volunteer positions.

Develop consistent volunteer recognition program.

Use Consultant Mark Ewert's report to guide fundraising initiatives.

Worship Arts Sub-Council

Chair: Vacant

The USH Worship Associates have continued to provide a lay presence in every service during the last church year--services with the co-ministers, and pulpit guests during the church year and throughout the summer.

During this last year, two new members joined our group and less experienced worship associates have been mentored in the expanded role of the worship associate with a pulpit guest. We participated in the Spiritual Life Fair and identified three people who may have an interest in becoming worship associates.

In the fall a new member orientation and educational program occurred. Our second annual educational meeting and pot luck dinner is scheduled for late May. Planning for summer services was well underway prior to Rev Cathy beginning parental leave in February - the theme is "What informs your UUism?" The final details for the summer will be completed at our next meeting. This year, Martha Bradley and I will share coordination of the summer services.

The efforts of Revs. Cathy and Heather to have UUA Regional workshops happen in Connecticut, and more specifically at USH, have been effective. There is a Sermon Writing for Lay Preachers workshop led by Rev. Sue Phillips scheduled on May 20 from 10am -3pm here at USH.

USH Worship Associates, what a fine group of people...John Brancato, Lisa Galinski, Julie Grace, Laurie Kelliher, Margaret Leicach, Peter Meny, Judy Robbins, Carol Simpson, Susan Spaniol, and Rick Tsukada. Thank you one and all for your thoughtful and compassionate presence throughout this last year and throughout this coming summer.

Respectfully submitted, Sue Smolski, Worship Associate Coordinator

Music Committee

Patrice Fitzgerald, Chair, Rebecca Pacuk, Staff Liaison

The Music Program at USH enjoyed a great deal of success during the 2016-2017 church year under the leadership of Rebecca Pacuk, Choir Director, in consultation with Rev. Cathy Rion Starr and with the input of the choir.

Accomplishments:

Two spectacular Music Sundays. For the first, we combined forces with members of the Universalist Church of West Hartford and included many talented instrumentalists from our congregation. The second will take place on April 30th and

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will combine music with spoken text to highlight musicals with roots in social activism to both entertain and educate our congregation.

Continuation of the Composer-in-Residence Program, for which student composer Samuel Moffett was chosen with the assistance of Hartt Professor Dr. Robert Carl to create pieces for the USH choir to perform.

The continuation of our full choral scholar program with a firm emphasis on highlighting our scholars' talents through solo and small ensemble work.

Hiring Isaac Reguera-Duran as Accompanist, who came in with fresh ideas on piano music at USH, bringing his improvisational skills and unique background to the forefront.

A resurgence of our desire to incorporate the many talented instrumentalists of our congregation with the choral music we perform, by including drummer Tom Gervais, violinist Ann Stowe, violist Ginny Allen, cellist Cathy Rion Starr, flautist Alexandra Tucker Slap, and others. Their musical gifts continue to brighten our Sunday services.

Being the host of a variety of other musical events for both the congregation and the broader community, including holding drum circles and sing-alongs, housing the "Hartford Gay Men's Chorus" rehearsals, and two concerts affiliated with the long-running Women Composers Festival.

Throughout this musical year, the USH Choir has continued to strive to broaden its musical horizons. From women's choruses to barbershop groups and choral scholar quartets, we have highlighted the many talents of our singers in new and exciting ways. We have sung a variety of pieces from around the world and different time periods to ensure that everyone in the congregation is touched by our music in some way. Highlights of the musical year included more popular numbers such as "I Will Survive," during which congregants were dancing up and down the aisles, to more classical and traditional numbers such as Brahms' "How Lovely is Thy Dwelling Place" along with the Christmas Eve and Solstice services, and of course our Music Sundays.

Last year, the Music Committee hoped to "establish and support another excellent team for providing service music, continue with four Choral Scholars, present two Music Sundays, and choose another Composer-in-Residence." We have been able to accomplish all of these goals in the 2016-2017 year and more. We continue to strive for these things as we look forward to the 2017-2018 church year. Long term, we hope to provide musical experiences for the children and youth of our congregation, work to further ties and combine forces with choirs from other worship groups in the area, include the organ in the occasional Sunday worship experience, and bring in more guest musicians and performers to USH.

Finally, thanks to the members the USH Chancel Choir who donate their talents faithfully every week, many of whom have been volunteering their musical abilities for decades.

Chancel Art Committee

Chair: Kathie Ferguson

We have had a very productive year. Our membership has increased. The result is a lighter load for all committee members. New members bring new ideas and new designs for the chancel. Our members have been very willing to share their time and talents. We have been working on a hanging for the library. Paula Bleck will be putting together all the work our members have contributed. It has been very heart warming to see our members participate in the creative process to produce this banner.

We have also had some preliminary discussions on providing a commemorative hanging in honor to the donors for the solar panels. It is hoped that the committee will pursue this project further this spring. Last year's sub councils fair was very worthwhile for our committee. We got new members. We hope this year will again be successful for us.

Thank you to our members who have made our year so successful. They are:

Diane Cadrain, Paula Bleck, Linda Ericson-Ebel, Tina Davies, Debi Gosselin, Maggie Green, Kit Northup, Yakhonda Mwenelupembe, Martha Bradley

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Religious Education Sub-Council
Rayla Mattson, Director of Religious Education
Co-Chairs: Currently Vacant

Members: Joan Nicoll-Senft, Diana Heymann, Kristen Pildis, Bill LaPorte-Bryan

Mission: To guide our youth and children in gaining a respect and appreciation for themselves, others, all living things and the environment; becoming integral parts of our Meeting House family; developing an awareness of, and appreciation for, our Judeo-Christian heritage and other world religions that influence the formation of our religious beliefs; experiencing the joy and inspiration of music and the arts; becoming responsible persons who are able to make ethical decisions in which they show their care and concern for all humanity; to welcome all children, including those with special needs, and will make every effort to accommodate all children into our program.

Accomplishments: The program covers children and youth from birth to age 18. The program is supported through the collaborative efforts of our Co-Ministers, the DRE, RE staff, the RE Sub-council and over 30 Congregational volunteers.

The RE program has continued to see growth. Our average Sunday attendance generally ranges from 40-50 students each week with over 75 students having participated so far this program year.

We continued our Chapel service which usually takes place once every two months during the first 15 minutes of the worship service. The Director of Religious Education leads a separate worship service where the children assist with doing readings, singing, playing instruments and designing the flow and order of the service. This summer they will take what they have learned and lead their second full worship service. The children enjoyed leading their first service last summer and look forward to doing it again. The Chapel is also time for the children to check in with one another and bring any areas of discussion or concern directly to the DRE.

This year we expanded and continued to explore ways of incorporating the children and youth into the worship service. Our all ages services as well as Christmas Eve have incorporated the children and youth more. This year, in addition to role playing, the children and youth helped narrate, plan and even played instruments during the services. They are developing new skills and they enjoy being a part of the service and sharing with the congregation.

The DRE continued to develop her network of colleagues, allowing for continued support and growth as well as opportunities to collaborate with other DREs worldwide. The DRE attended a weeklong RE program on Star Island this summer and participated in a total of three Renaissance Modules which are continuing education work for DREs. She also hosted a module here at USH this winter. She attended, for the first time, Finding Our Way Home. This year this conference was held in Baltimore, MD and is for professional UUs of color. Her connection to regional DREs has continued to expand and includes hosting regional gatherings. These opportunities have been worthwhile and help to expand and grow her knowledge base, resources and opportunities. This information she is then able to bring back and offer here at USH.

USH received some generous funds and we are now in the planning stages to build a playground this spring! The children and families are ecstatic that this will be happening. The planning team has been working with AIM and Building and Grounds on this effort.

The Youth Group, under the direction of interim advisor, Nina Elgo, has once again logged over fifty hours of outreach work making soup, preparing lunch, and feeding the homeless at Church St. Eats. In November, they raised \$1,252 for My Sisters' Place by sleeping-out in boxes. They are developing leadership skills by choosing subjects of interest and concern to them and facilitating group discussions. This year they have continued to host several Youth Groups from other CT UU congregations. The groups have joined them for Sunday morning discussions as well as soup making. They are learning the broader definition of what it means to be a UU.

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Our middle school students have been focused on *Coming of Age (COA)*. They have been looking at their own spirituality as well as looking at themselves in the context of the broader world. Each student participating in the program received a mentor from the congregation. They are currently working on community service projects as well as preparing to share their personal statements with the congregation in June. The group has also been fundraising in order to be able to have the funds for Our Whole Lives (OWL), our Unitarian Universalist human sexuality education program. The course will take place during next year's program and is the first time it has been offered here in at least ten plus years. The class has continued to grow in size for the third year in a row.

The 3rd-5th grade class has focused on community outreach this year, collecting supplies and monetary donations for My Sisters' Place. This was done over several weeks where they made and sold craft items and baked goods after service. They also visited My Sisters' Place as a class to drop off their donations and learn more about the facility. Another community outreach was collecting books for children and youth at the East Hartford Family Shelter. The class has focused on learning through service. They have realized that even as children, they can make a difference. The focus was also on self-led learning where the students helped make decisions about what they learned based on what was important to them. They also planned and carried out a *Time for All Ages*, sharing with the congregation what they had been working on and what was meaningful to them.

The Pre-Kindergarten through second grade class has grown exponentially this year, making it one of our larger classes. This program looked at how the students saw the world around them and then used classics from Dr. Seuss to explore Unitarian Universalism concepts. The group also learned how to deal with the challenges of having a larger group with a wide range of ages and learning styles.

The nursery group, ages birth to three, has continued to experience growth and will continue this growth into next year. The program's growth has required additional staff and the larger room is still working out well. We continued our theme-based circle time which includes working with them on introducing themselves, learning a chalice lighting with hand movements, story-telling, and an introduction to basic UU concepts and themes.

Other activities involving our children include our one room classroom where students from all grade levels work on a project or activity as a collective group; our Family Friendly SGM, a new social justice group and our many multigenerational events.

Plans for next year: We will continue to work towards our goals outlined in the mission statement. Our most pressing needs are for an expanded Religious Education Sub-Council, new teachers and assistants as our classes are growing and there is a need to break up some of our larger groups, especially our prek-2nd grade class. We will continue to update our curriculum materials to better meet our classroom needs. Our goal is to have a 3 year rotating curriculum for each grade level.

We are also expanding our offerings to meet the needs of our growing program. We will again be offering a 7-9th grade OWL (Our Whole Lives) which has not been offered here in many years. This program will focus on our 7th and 8th graders as they work on moving from being children heading towards adulthood and learning more about their own sexuality. This is their next step after finishing their COA work and move towards more meaningful connections here at USH, dig deeper in into the UU Faith and take a closer look at themselves.

The DRE will continue to work on professional development and is looking forward to entering the UUA Credentialing program for Religious Educators, attending again *Finding Our Way Home*, and continuing to grow and expand her collaborative efforts with other UU congregations.

In conjunction with our Co-Ministers we will continue to involve and incorporate the youth and children in the morning worship service. The Director of Religious Education will continue making connections with other UU congregations and organizations in Connecticut and around the country as well as continuing to maintain membership in Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA) and other professional groups. Finally, the Religious Education Sub-Council will continue efforts to make more meaningful connections with groups here within the congregation as we expand on the connections and interactions we have established.

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Thinking Ahead to Next (Congregational) Year: [Your Report Here!]

Are you trying to figure out how to make something happen at USH?

Or are you wishing for a way to get to know more of the people here?

Here are some ideas brainstormed at our weekly Newcomer Follow-up Meeting with input from some staff and lay leaders.

Would you be interested in:

- Energizing some new Small Group Ministry groups?
- Scheduling post-service Reservoir and/or Elizabeth Park Walk & Picnics?
- Conducting & writing up periodic "Spotlight on a USH Member" interviews for the E-news?
- Organizing Multi-Generational Game Nights in the Fellowship Hall?
- Coordinating Circle Dinners with volunteer Hosts?
- Inspiring Table Topic Discussions during Fellowship Hour?
- Teaching or assisting with a class in our Religious Education Program?
- Gathering a Recipe-of-the-Week for our Weekly E-news?

These are just some ideas to get your own energy moving.

Let us know what you'd like to make happen at USH, and how you can imagine yourself helping us all to deepen our knowing of one another here.

-Submitted by the Newcomers Weekly Follow-up Group,

Brian Harvey, Membership Sub Council Chair

Linda Clark, Office Administrator

Rayla Mattson, Director of Religious Education

RevHeather, Co-Minister Lead for Membership

USH Board of Directors 2016-2017



President
John Brancato
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jbranca2@comcast.net



President Elect
Katharine Ann Anderson
256/655-2777
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Secretary
Margaret Leicach
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Treasurer
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**Spiritual Life
Council Chair**
Martha Bradley
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marthabradley49@
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**Administration
Council Chair**
Hank Murray
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**Community Within
Council Chair**
Chris Wilt
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**Social Justice
Council Chair**
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Updated: 5/4/2017

USH Staff 2016-2017



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Reports to the Board



Co-Minister
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Reports to the Board



**Director of Religious
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Reports to Rev. Cathy



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Reports to Rev. Cathy



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Reports to Rayla Mattson



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Reports to Rev. Cathy



Nursery Staff
Dominique Bourgeois
Reports to Rev. Cathy



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Reports to Rev. Heather, Stu
Spence, B&G



Accompanist
Pi-Hsun Shih



Nursery Staff
Yamel Fernandez
Reports to Rayla Mattson



Assistant Sexton
Kevin Girouard
860/508-5604
Reports to Rev. Heather & John
Bengtson



Sunday Sexton
Crystal Acevedo-Cruz
Reports to Rev. Heather



Nursery Staff
Rae Bittel
Reports to Rayla Mattson



Custodian
Briana Bittel
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everaftr33@gmail.com
Reports to Rev. Heather



Sunday Sexton
Martin Barrows
Reports to Rev. Heather



Nursery Staff
Jazaira Perez-Acevedo
Reports to Rayla Mattson

Unitarian Society of Hartford - Council Personnel (2016-2017)

Updated: 5/8/2017
and ever changing

LEGEND

Red Font = Rev. Cathy is Lead Minister
Blue Font = Rev. Heather is Lead Minister

Board of Directors (Elected)

President - John Brancato
President-elect - Katharine Ann Anderson
Treasurer - Phil Gardner
Secretary - Margaret Leicach
Administration - Hank Murray
Spiritual Life - Martha Bradley
Community Within - Chris Wilt
Social Justice - Gloria Francesca Mengual

Mtgs: 1st Tuesday of the Month 7-9 PM

Endowment Committee - Chair: Jim Venneman (2015-17); David Newton (2015-17), Jean Groothuis (2015-18), Tom Richardson (2015-18), Steve Noble (2016-19)

Planned Giving - Jean Groothuis

Safe Congregations - Virginia de Lima, Barbara Fraher, Rayla Mattson, Joan Nicoll-Senft, Rick Tsukada

Nominating Committee - Chair: Virginia de Lima; Ron Friedman, Diana Heymann, Judy Sullivan, Will Anderson

Audit Committee - (year-to-year term)
Nancy Mandly, Tom Richardson

Strategic Planning - Sherry Manetta, Tom Richardson, Virginia de Lima, Kate Gervias, Rev. Heather

Council on Administration - Chair: Hank Murray

Stewardship - Chair: Peter Meny; Ginny Hedrick, Laurie Kelliher, Deb Meny, Joe Rubin, Brian Mullen (staff)

Building & Grounds - Co-Chairs: Stuart Spence & Ed Sax; Vincent Hall, Fred Louis, Peter Magistri, Peter Meny, David Newton, Ron Sexton, Bill Simmons, Jim Venneman, John Bengtson (staff liaison), Kevin Girouard (staff)

Archives - Co-Chairs: Larry Lunden, Zac Mirecki

Library - Sherry Williams

Art - Chair: Sara Sturges; Peter Upton

Human Resources - Chair: Greg Nickelt; Ron Sexton

Finance - Chair: Phil Gardner (Treasurer); David Newton (Endowment), Peter Meny (Stewardship), Hank Murray (Administration), Brian Mullen (Bookkeeper), Rev. Cathy

Council on Spiritual Life - Chair: Martha Bradley

Worship Arts - Chair: vacant; Worship Associate coordinator: Sue Smolski

Music Committee - Chair: Patrice Fitzgerald; Rebecca Pacuk (staff liaison)

Chancel Art Committee - Chair: Kathie Ferguson

Religious Education - Chair: vacant; Paula Bleck, Bill LaPorte-Bryan, Rachael D'Agostino, Joan Nicoll-Senft, Kristen Pildis, Rayla D. Mattson (staff liaison)

Council on Community Within - Chair: Chris Wilt

Communications - Chair: vacant

Caring Network - Co-Chairs: Janice Newton, Eve Pech

Membership - Chair: Brian Harvey

Unitarian Alliance Ministry to Women -
Contacts: Louise Schmolli & Nita Hansen

Seabury - Contact: Marye Gail Harrison

Knitting Group - Contacts: Janice Newton, Jen Cook

Performing Arts - Chairs: Paul Cipriano & Laura Stewart; Cipriano

Festival of the Season - Co-Chairs: Nina Elgo, Sarah Cassidy

20s & 30s - Contact: Adam Brown

Programs for Adults & Families - Chair: Janice Newton

SGM Steering Committee - Co-Chairs: Bill Shoemaker, Esther McKone

Council on Social Justice - Chair: Gloria Francesca Mengual

The Village for Families & Children - Chair: Joanne Orlando

Noah Webster Partnership - Chair: Diana Heymann

Food Pantries - Deb Meny, John Bengtson

Upper Albany NRZ - Chair: Ed Savage

Race Matters - Chair: Gloria Francesca Mengual

Refugee Resettlement - Chair: Richard Groothuis

SURJ - Contact: Rev. Cathy

Knox, Inc. - Contact: Rev. Heather

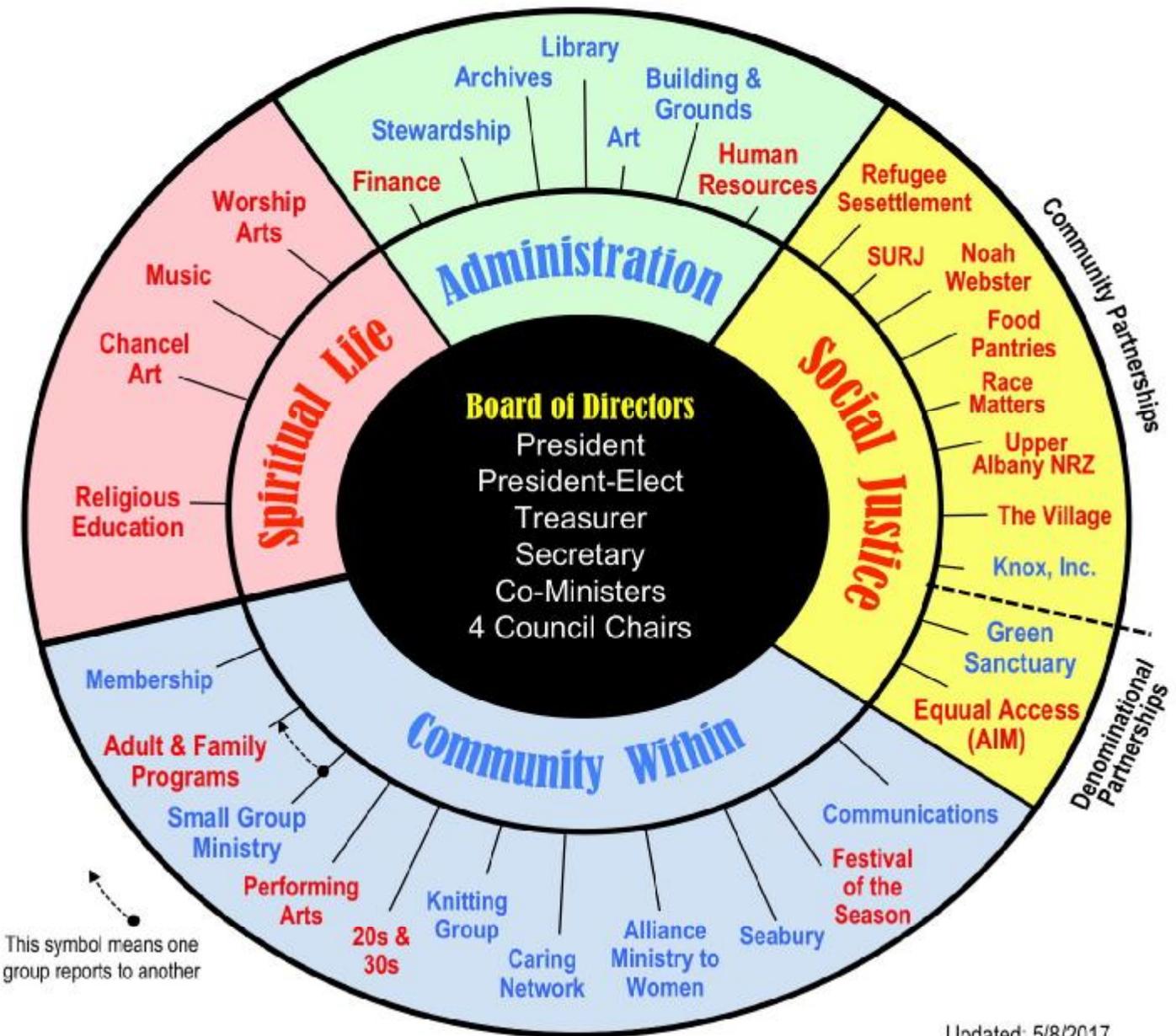
Green Sanctuary - Co-Chairs: Mary Sherwin, Jeff Howard

Equal Access/ AIM (Accessibility & Inclusion Ministry) -
Chair: Bill LaPorte-Bryan

Community Partners

UUA

Unitarian Society of Hartford - Council Structure



Updated: 5/8/2017
and ever changing

Committees that Report to the Board of Directors

Audit - Nominating - Endowment / Planned Giving
Healthy Relations - Strategic Planning - Safe Congregations

Staff Positions

Co-Ministers
Director of Religious Education
Bookkeeper - Choir Director
Office Administrator - Custodian
Sextons - Nursery Staff -
Sunday Sextons - Accompanists

LEGEND

Red Font = Rev. Cathy is Lead Minister in this Area
Blue Font = Rev. Heather is Lead Minister in this Area



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