

## USH Board Meeting - January 16, 2018

Present: Sherry Manetta, Joe Rubin, Hank Murray, Chris Wilt, Judy Sullivan, Stephanie Briggs, Sarah McKenzie, Phil Gardner, and Rev Cathy Rion Starr and Rev Heather Rion Starr (ex officio members)

Guests: Janice Newton, David Newton, Stu Spence, Kate Busch Gervais, Caron Lanouette, Ginny Hedrick, Tara Cote

6:31 - Sherry called the meeting to order

Hank - opening reading about Imbolc

6:35 - Stephanie read the Board Covenant

6:36 - any changes to agenda? Sherry has stuff for "short items" that will take more than 3 minutes to discuss

6:38 - thank you notes this month are for Hugh Schweitzer, Virginia DeLima, Rick Tsukada, Mary Heafy, Linda Clark, Chris Wilt

6:38 - consent agenda Joe Rubin made motion, Hank Murray seconded (Consent Agenda attached)

Ayes - 7

Nays - 0

Abstention - 0 (Phil was absent for this vote)

Motion passes

6:40 - Dialogue with Stewardship Sub-Council: (Handout from Stewardship is attached)

Series of gatherings of members at a member's home to discuss stewardship, social events rather than a lecture-type situation.

Month of March will be pledge drive, will end at the end of the month, limiting the amount of time gives it urgency.

Looking into the different ways members can make and pay their pledges (electronic payments, stock transfers, etc...)

Mark Ewert will be here to meet with Stewardship, Hosts for Home Meetings, Board on Feb 2 & 3.

Home Meetings/Parties should all have: Host (homeowner), Assistant (assist host), Emcee (optional - could also be assistant/liaison - keeps it moving), Speaker, Liaison (from the Stewardship Committee).

Hoping to invite 15-20 people to each gathering, anticipate 12-15 coming. Staggered time-wise to attract a wide range of attendees. Each host makes the contact with their list of attendees (evites, mailed invites, phone calls, etc).

No "Pledge Sunday" this year, will be more focused on the gatherings.

Speakers/Board's role - want to have a speaker at each gathering who is part of the board leadership to talk about how/why the community is important. Want each of the board members to be at at least one of these gatherings. Board to develop unified talking points for consistency re: key things to communicate to congregation about stewardship this year.

Questions from Stewardship:

What to call the home meetings?

How to get people excited?

What is the feeling about money and how could it be more positive?

Sherry asked for a few talking points so the board has some answers at hand when they get questions from the congregation.

7:41 - Motions (motions are attached)

Roof Repair and endowment funding - Hank Murray moved to approve as written, Phil Gardner/Joe Rubin second

Aye - 8

Nay - 0

Abstention - 0

Motion passes

Meeting House Presents financial commitment for FY 2019 - Chris Wilt moved to approve financial backstop up to \$5K (as detailed in the attached motion). Some discussion as to how this will work going forward, but it is too soon to make predictions based on only the first half of the first season. Joe Rubin second

Ayes - 8

Nays - 0

Abstentions - 0

Motion passes

Strategic Plan Goals - Sherry Manetta made the motion as written, Hank Murray seconded

Ayes - 8

Nays - 0

Abstentions - 0

Motion passes

Current UUA by-laws do not allow LREDA members to be voting delegates at the UUA General Assembly. Joe Rubin moved that the Board vote on signing on to the request to support the addition of a Motion at GA this year to allow LREDA members to become voting delegates. Sarah McKenzie seconded. (LREDA document attached)

Aye - 7

Nay - 1

Abstentions - 0

Motion passes

7:59 - Finance Report (Financial highlights attached)

Additional discussion re: current year pledges, and the Board may take responsibility for contacting members who are behind on pledges.

Sherry pointed out that our current budget includes \$ that came in in prior years, but is being counted as current year revenue. We are not bringing in enough \$ on a cash basis to fund our current operations.

8:15 - Intern Minister (Mark Robel's info is attached)

Rev Heather and Rev Cathy are both in Final Fellowship (empowered to supervise an intern), Mark Robel lives in New London, and is finishing his M.Div at Union Theological Seminary in NYC, and was given USH's information by Carolyn Paterno. The option exists for a 2-year, PT Sept-June internship. He approached us after the cutoff for USH to apply to the UUA to be a teaching congregation. There is an opportunity to come in late to the internship program (once all existing congregations have been matched, there may be \$ leftover in the UUA funding, THAT date is 3/1) Sherry wants to know what the steps we need to take are (since there may be significant congregational involvement needed). Should we, and if we should, what are the compelling arguments for this congregation?

Heather - board decision whether to make a commitment. Vote in Feb, and then set up the things that need to be set up.

Sherry - What is he expecting? And what do we want him to do? And how do we go through the process of determining that?

Stephanie - how do we make a decision? How do we know if this fits with our vision and our goal. What is the vision of the ministers for this?

Heather - he would come work with us for 2 years, Sept to June, 15 hours a week for \$10K a year. He would be involved in all aspects of congregational life, with maybe an internship project focusing on Adult Learning.

Cathy - it's a way for us to connect to the larger community of our faith. Gives us a way to give back to the larger community.

Sherry expressed concern over the short time-frame and lack of internship committee being convened, and making the financial commitment (which may mean not fulfilling some of the things we really want to do financially). Allow for weigh-in from other stakeholders (Worship Associates, etc.)

Joe R - Is there a way, if we resolve the issues brought up by Sherry, to say "yes, we'd like to do this", but make it contingent on the outcome of the stewardship.

Heather - what is the degree of detail we need to provide to the UUA by March 1 in order to move forward?

Joe R - helpful to have discussions with relevant spiritual life people, and helpful to find out from UUA if we need to make a firm decision before we have a chance to see the numbers from the Stewardship Campaign.

Sherry - To move forward: make decisions re: how/who to convene. Stephanie will take point on figuring out a potential internship committee & convening to come up with answers to some of our questions.

8:44 - Email any suggestions for Semi-Ann Meeting to Joe

8:45 - Minister's Report (attached here)

8:46 - Sherry - follow up actions: reference to B&G report from Dec that we didn't focus on was lighting, and perhaps there is someone in the congregation willing to fund some lighting updates/upgrades. Short term - add some additional lighting in the sanctuary. Long-term - what do we do about the hockey puck? AIM would like to add some technology/projection that the hockey puck may not be compatible with. IF we want to do something on lighting and take advantage of this offer (before the end of 2018), do we want to look at the WHOLE lighting question (we would need to accelerate some things around the capital plan). \$ is only available for THIS calendar year. Should we get info and buy-in from all groups that may have input? Hank and Sherry will work with B&G to initiate the evaluation of lighting needs in the current calendar year.

8:50 - Mark Ewert's visit in February - what would the board like to discuss with our available time with Mark, and who is available?

Talk about Ministerial Sabbatical(s) at February Board Meeting

8:56 - Executive Session

9:09 - Board came out of Exec Session, Hank read closing words from Rumi (January 16 from "A Year with Rumi")

9:10 - Meeting was adjourned

Respectfully Submitted by Sarah McKenzie, Secretary

## Consent Agenda

### USH Board meeting January 16, 2018

1. **Co-minister housing stipend:** "For the 2018 tax year, the housing allowances for Rev. Heather Rion Starr and Rev. Cathy Rion Starr will be no more than \$12,363 for each minister."

This motion by the board is required to allocate a portion of the co-ministers' salary towards housing expenses for their tax purposes. It does not change the amount paid to the co-ministers. This has been reviewed by the Treasurer.

2. **Note:** The December board minutes were approved by email vote. The motion was declared passed on January 9 and the minutes were posted to the USH website.

## Motions

### USH Board meeting January 16, 2018

#### 1. Roof repair and endowment funding (Hank and Phil)

Motion to authorize Building & Grounds Sub-Council (B&G) to proceed to develop a contract with Eagle Rivet Roof Service Corporation pursuant to their bid of \$38,8000 for work on the Sanctuary roof as solicited in a Request for Proposal—Partial Roof Replacement as Revised 12/3/17, pursuant to the recommendation of Hugh Schweitzer of Clohessy, Harris & Kaiser LLC and B&G. The Administration Council chair will work with B&G in the contracting process, review the contract in conjunction with representatives of B&G and recommend signature to the President of the Board.

In addition, funds of \$38,800 are authorized to be paid from the endowment in amounts in accordance with the contract with Eagle Rivet and when authorized jointly by the Chair and Vice Chair of B&G and the Administration Council Chair.

#### 2. Meeting House Presents financial commitment for FY2019 (Chris)

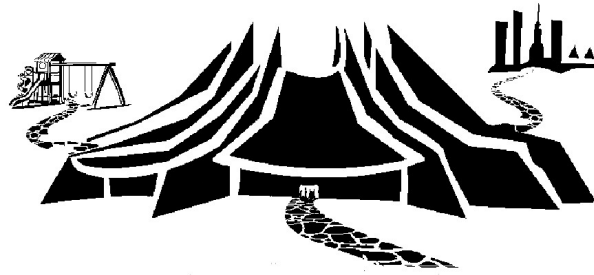
Motion to provide a \$5,000 financial backstop for Meeting House Presents for FY2019 with the stipulation that marketing and other activities for each performance will continue unabated and that a positive financial goal for FY2019 will be established in conjunction with the board during the budget process.

#### 3. Strategic Plan Goals

Motion to adopt the USH Strategic Plan goals as stated in the attachment to the Board minutes.

#### 4. USH supports UUA by-law change to include LREDA members as voting delegates at General Assembly (RevCathy, Joe)

Motion to complete the designated form and submit to UUA by February 1 in support of the UUA by-law change in order to include LREDA members as voting delegates at General Assembly.



Unitarian Society of Hartford  
Stewardship 2018-19  
Presentation to the Board 1-16-18

- Messaging—the board has provided input on several occasions through RevCathy, but I understand this is still a work in progress
- Approach and timeline
- Financial target (they are looking for input from the board)
- Board role in the drive
- Schedule on Feb 2-3 with Mark Ewert
- Concerns or needs—we know the committee needs more participants

The Stewardship Committee is branching out to engage all the areas where we bring in funds for the ongoing financial needs of our beloved community, and planning and strategic thinking for future needs. We are also engaging in issues such as our community's thoughts about money and funding for our Society's needs.

We are planning an in-depth, fun, thoughtful Stewardship Campaign this year with the help of UU Stewardship Consultant Mark Ewert.

**This campaign will consist of:**

- A. Training / Education with Mark
- B. A focused period of time to seek pledges – the month of March, 2018
- C. A theme that unifies a series of personal stories about giving and the meaning of USH in our lives
- D. Hosted events at members/friends' homes to share information about the Campaign
- E. An expanded service focused on Stewardship at the beginning and end of the Campaign
- F. Specialized printed educational materials to be shared with members
- G. One or more mailings
- H. One or more electronic communications including social media
- I. New ways to pledge and pay pledges

**Mark Ewert**

- February 2 & 3 – leaves Sat. nite
- Specifically, Fri. afternoon 4-5pm meet with Stewardship
- Fri. evening 6p-9p 1st Orientation
- Sat. morning 9a-Noon 2nd Orientation

- Sat. afternoon 1p- 2:30p – meet with Board. (The time here is flexing a lot)

## **Key messages: (From Strategic Plan 1-2017. See Plan for objectives.)**

### **Nourishing Spirit**

Goal 1: USH will offer a comprehensive, lifespan, **religious learning and growth** program in order to support the spiritual needs of the USH community.

### **Building Community**

Goal 2: USH will be a congregation that maintains **relationships** based on respect, understanding and safety.

Goal 3: USH will commit to an innovative financial model with **stronger and more diversified revenues**.

Goal 4: Attract a health stream of **visitors**.

### **Working for Justice**

Goal 5: The Greater Hartford community will recognize USH as a leader of the community's **social justice initiatives**.

### **Messages from brainstorming**

- We need everyone to sail forward
  - We are charting a course, setting a direction
  - Need everyone on board
  - Waters not fully ready to navigate
  - Getting it ship shape
  - Sailing over rough seas, sailing over the storm in our society
- 
- Shore up our team by shoring up compensation of our staff.
  - Modern Noah's Ark
  - Quest, journey
  - The ship is our home
  - We are not the Queen Mary, not a luxury cruise ship, not the Titanic
  - We are celebrating this ship
  - Sailing onward
  - My Blue Boat Home -
  - This weird space ship tent with this pirate ship
  - A modern Noah's ark - there was 2 of every kind - there is room for everyone
  - On a journey
  - Especially important right now - there is so much storm happening now in our society that is really triggering - this feels like a safe space - both in our personal lives and in society



- Have to do with that quest - journey -

Contributions are the wind in our sails

Whitney Houston

Children and OWL, and the Choir, and

All of the different participants, My Sisters Place, Caring Network, A place for the community beyond

Some highlights in last year:

- Programs (OWL & Coming of Age)
- Community suppers
- Music
- Meetinghouse Focus
- Meetinghouse Presents
- SGM
- Caring Network
- Educational series
- Family experiences (pancake breakfast, Festival of Lights, etc.)
- Playground

Every 'party' should have:

Host

Assistant

MC – optional if short on people

Speaker

Liaison

Questions:

What to call the Home Meetings?

How to get people excited?

How to do the sign-ups?

What is the feeling about money? How could it be more positive?

**Summary** (with thanks to Lisa Maria Andreoli Steinberg). You may place your church/congregation/fellowship's name where she has written [congregation]) and adapt as needed.

Read further for more details and instructions.

### **Request for Board Support of a Bylaw Proposal to the UUA's General Assembly**

- The Board of the Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA) is seeking to have a [Bylaw Amendment](#) at this June's General Assembly to give Delegate Status at General Assembly to all [Active Members](#) of LREDA also employed by a congregation.
  - There are two routes to have a Bylaw Amendment put to a vote at GA; 1) the UUA Board of Trustees can put forth an Amendment to vote or 2) a minimum of 15 congregations request an Amendment to be voted upon. To make the strongest case, LREDA is seeking the Amendment through both channels, although only one is required.
- Why is this proposal's support being requested of the [Congregation] Board?
  - [Congregation] has a proud history of being a voice for justice. This is a justice matter in our Association, and part of the larger work of dismantling white privilege and hierarchical structures within our faith. I have wonderfully experienced this congregation's respect and care for my ministry and role as a non-ordained religious professional. I believe that if [Congregation's] governing board decides to support this Amendment to be put forth to a vote at General Assembly, it will be another step towards justice and equality that this congregation can add to its history of seeking to create a more just world.
- Why is this Amendment being proposed?
  - LREDA is deeply aware that we have much work to do in dismantling white supremacy and hierarchical structures within our professional organization and our faith. We are also aware that for religious educators to be a part of our faith's larger conversations and decision processes, we must have the opportunity for religious educators' voices to be heard.
    - Currently, Directors of Religious Education are disenfranchised with a voice in our Association because most DREs are not members of the congregations they serve (this is recommended in [LREDA's Best Practices](#)), and many of those DREs are not members of any congregation (geography, logistics, etc.). However, membership in a congregation is required to attain delegate status at the UUA's General Assembly.
    - Currently, the only avenue to delegate status available to most religious educators is through the credentialing process (Masters level), which is inaccessible to many and supports [white supremacy culture](#).

## Who?

Currently, religious education professionals having achieved Credentialed Religious Education – Master Level and employed in the congregation may be delegates to the UUA's General Assembly.

LREDA proposes to change the UUA Bylaws so that **LREDA members at the "ACTIVE" level who currently serve a congregation** may become delegates and participate in the governance of the UUA.

## What?

The UUA is made up of congregations. The business of the UUA General Assembly is voted on by delegates. Delegates are voting members of congregations (1 for every 50 members, minimum of 2). Every congregation decides how to select their member delegates.

Delegates familiarize themselves with the business items on the GA agenda and may or may not discuss these items in advance with their congregation. Sometimes congregations instruct their delegates how to vote. They need to learn how to effectively speak in General Session (Robert's Rules of Order), and research any candidates for election. Delegates attend General Sessions in person or via livestream online and vote, as needed, in person or online. Funding to get to GA in person is up to the delegate, at times offset by fundraising and/or a congregational budget line.

Currently, religious education professionals having achieved Credentialed Religious Education – Master Level status and employed in the congregation may also be delegates. Our proposed change would provide LREDA members at the Active Level who are currently serving a congregation the option to become delegates and participate in the governance of the UUA.

## Why?

LREDA is deeply aware that we have much work to do in dismantling white supremacy and hierarchical structures within our professional organization and our faith. We are also aware that for religious educators to be a part of our faith's larger conversations and decision processes, we must have the opportunity for religious educators' voices to be heard.

Current practice is for non-ordained staff to refrain from being members of the congregation they serve. However, membership in a congregation is required to attain delegate status at the UUA's General Assembly.

We seek to provide our members with the same voice they would have if they were able to join the congregation they serve. The only criteria for becoming a "member delegate", as set out in the UUA Bylaws, Section 4.8.(a) is:

Each certified member congregation is entitled to be represented at each General Assembly by delegates who are members of such congregation, selected in accordance with its bylaws or procedures.

## Where?

The LREDA Board submitted a bylaw change proposal to the UUA board on January 4, 2018 so that it may be considered at the January board meeting.

The UUA is an association of congregations, not individuals. So we ask that this call for a Bylaw change also come from our highest power, the congregation. The LREDA board calls for at least fifteen congregational governing bodies to submit a form voicing their support to the General Assembly Bylaw process by Feb 1. We have provided this information sheet to make this easy for congregations. If your governing body votes to support the proposed amendment, it must submit a form to the UUA Board.

## When?

**Congregations must have this form completed and sent to [generalassembly@uua.org](mailto:generalassembly@uua.org) by February 1st.** The text of the bylaw change, needed for the form, is [here](#).

## How?

Those LREDA members and friends who wish to invite participation from their congregational board should first seek the support of their supervisor. Not all religious educators will be in a position to move this bylaw change process forward.

## Questions from LREDA members and friends:

- Could you clarify what is meant by "delegate status" and "the delegate status imbalance"?

*The UUA is made up of congregations. The business of the UUA General Assembly is voted on by delegates from those congregations. Although many people may attend business meetings at GA, only delegates may cast a vote.*

*From the UUA Bylaws, Section 4.8.(a):*

*Each certified member congregation is entitled to be represented at each General Assembly by delegates who are members of such congregation, selected in accordance with its bylaws or procedures.*

*What we meant by imbalance is that since current practice is for staff to refrain from becoming members of the congregation they serve, most religious educators fall into a place where we are incapable of having a voice. The only avenue to delegate status available to religious educators is through the credentialing process (Master level), which is inaccessible to many and supports [white supremacy culture](#)*

- Would it be at all helpful or useful if a minister communicates her endorsement independent of a congregation's board?

*Having your minister colleague's support communicated to your congregation's board leadership is the appropriate way to gain support for this action. LREDA is not asking you to approach your board alone or without your minister's support.*

*While we appreciate the support from our ordained colleagues very much, the official process requires congregational support, in the form of a submitted Proposed Amendment to Bylaws form.*

- The credentialing issue is a result of the white supremacy culture within our denomination and should NOT be how we determine educators' worth or competency. Credentialing should not have anything to do with whether or not religious educators should have delegate status. It is a way of limiting democracy (similar to voting laws in the South).

*LREDA elected not to pursue delegate status for only those religious educators who are credentialed, but rather is advocating for a voice equal to that available to voting members in congregations, a voice that is unavailable to those of us who refrain from becoming members of the congregations we serve, which is the current practice for all non-ordained staff.*

- It is not in our best interests to certify delegates who are not on a certified credentialing path nor who have not vowed to adhere to the best professional practices for the profession.

*When you become a LREDA Member, you agree to adhere to a [Code of Professional Practices](#) by checking the following:*

*We, the members of the Liberal Religious Educators Association affirm this Code of Professional Practices. LREDA members who are professional religious educators pledge to hold themselves ethically accountable to the code.*

*We are not aware of criteria beyond membership in a congregation, "selected in accordance with its bylaws or procedures" for those chosen as delegates. We question why religious professionals would be held to a standard higher than those selected by congregations to represent them.*

- Who is telling DREs that they shouldn't be members of congregations and why?  
Wouldn't it be easier for DREs to join the congregations they serve?

*It is now common practice / preferred in congregations for all non-ordained staff to refrain from becoming members. This would include music directors, administrators, membership professionals, childcare staff, custodians, etc. The primary reasons are that the congregation is a workplace for these people, and it's difficult for your workplace to also be your faith home; the confidentiality required, "behind the scenes" knowledge gained, and even a staff status can change a member's relationship with other congregants; and, it's impossible for your chief of staff to be your minister. No matter how clear everyone's boundaries are, there are power dynamics present that make for an unhealthy minister/congregant relationship. We do recognize that many religious professionals are, in fact, happily members of their congregations. But those*

*are some of the key reasons behind the current practice/preference, which LREDA endorses in section 11 of our [Best Practices for Employment of Religious Education Professionals](#).*

- Some past board members did not necessarily see the DRE as a professional -- if they were still around, they might object to the privileging of the DRE over other members of the congregation who wanted to participate in GA.

*We want to point out that active LREDA members receiving delegate status would be in addition to however many delegates a congregation is entitled to. It would in no way take away from the number of congregational members allowed to become delegates, or prevent those interested in participating in GA from doing so.*

**Continue reading for support** for filling out the form, which your governing body will need to submit to the UUA, should they approve this proposed amendment.

Support for completing the [Proposed Amendment to Bylaws](#) form.

**Deadline: February 1, 2018 by 5:00 p.m. (or postmarked by January 25, 2018)**

**Required Materials (Rule G-14.2.1):**

- The exact text of the proposed amendment and the section that it is proposed to amend:

**Underlining indicates insertion; brackets indicate deletion.**  
**UUA Bylaws and Rules**

**64 2B ARTICLE III Membership**

**211 Section 4.8. Delegates**

245 (b) Minister Delegates and Religious Education Director

246 Delegates. Each certified member congregation is also

247 entitled to be represented at each General Assembly by the

248 ordained minister or ministers in ministerial fellowship with the

249 Association settled in such congregation, and by the director

250 or directors of religious education who are Active Members of the Liberal Religious  
Educators Association (having achieved

251 Credentialed Religious Educator – Masters Level status by

252 the Association) and employed in such congregation. In

253 addition, each certified member congregation is also entitled

254 to be represented at each General Assembly by any minister

255 emeritus or minister emerita of such congregation in

256 ministerial fellowship with the Association and by any director

257 of religious education emeritus or emerita having achieved  
258 Credentialed Religious Educator – Masters Level status by  
259 the Association designated as such by a vote at a meeting of  
260 the member congregation not less than six months prior to  
261 the General Assembly, provided that any such minister has  
262 been settled previously in such congregation, and any such  
263 director of religious education who has been previously  
264 employed in such congregation.

- A concise summary of the principal arguments on which the proponents rely.

The UUA is an association made up of, and governed by, congregations.

Membership in a congregation is required to attain delegate status at the UUA's General Assembly. However, current practice is for non-ordained staff to refrain from being members of the congregation they serve.

Active members of LREDA are invested in and committed to the congregations they serve, yet most are unable to represent us and our issues, and those of interest to the UUA as a whole, at General Assembly. They have no access to our democratic system, which is otherwise available to voting members of our congregations.

Informed voters are key to our democracy, and we feel that Active Members of LREDA serving congregations are as informed as the members we choose as delegates.

We support providing Active Members of LREDA currently serving a congregation with the same voice they would have if they were able to join that congregation.

- Other articles or sections affected by the proposed amendment and suggested text of any necessary conforming amendments.

None.

- Certification forms (below)



Amendment to the Bylaws:

Article: **ARTICLE III Membership**      Section: **Section 4.8. Delegates**

Complete the Certification and Contact Person section of the [Proposed Amendment to Bylaws](#) form.

Mark B Robel

Hello! Let me take this opportunity to introduce myself. My name is Mark Robel, and I am currently finishing my Masters in Divinity at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. Becoming an ordained minister has been a dream of mine for my entire life. Being raised a Roman Catholic, I would never have thought I would end up in a liberal tradition such as Unitarian Universalist, but here I am, finally at home in a faith tradition that speaks deeply to my soul. My road here, however, has seen many twists, turns and bumps.

On a personal level, I am married to my long-time partner Tom Lescoe, and our twenty one year old son lives with us at home. Tom and I were married at First Parish in Milton, MA in 2004, and became very active in parish life there. Tom and I met in Boston, where we both lived for most of our adult lives. Boston took us to Vermont, then to Northampton, and finally here to New London. We are currently members of All Souls New London, and have called New London home for the past three years. New London feels like home – our church community is loving, committed, wild and fierce! Tom is currently the treasurer at All Souls, and I have served time on the Worship Team, and taught Religious Education.

For the past twenty years, I have been a pediatric nurse practitioner. I received my Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, my nursing diploma from Somerville Hospital School of Nursing in Somerville, MA, and my Masters in Nursing from Simmons College in Boston. My specialty – and passion – has always been children with special health care needs. I worked for many years at Mass General Hospital in Boston, helping to organize and open the Coordinated Care Clinic serving children with special needs. While living in western Massachusetts, I worked for a program called Special Kids Special Care, providing home health care to special needs children in DCF custody in foster care. I currently provide per diem care in the New London School Based Health Clinics. Tom works for Fidelity Investments as a compliance officer, where he has worked for over twenty years, and our son Mark Lescoe Robel works as a teachers aid in a local magnet school here in New London.

I am a Unitarian Universalist because I believe in the power of love, and I believe that power can change the world. That Divine Spirit – however we see it, and however we name it – is the power of justice, the power of equality, and the power of our human oneness. In my lifetime, I have never experienced the hunger for something greater than ourselves than I do now. I believe humanity is crying out for beloved community, but often lacks the words and tools to firmly articulate that need. I see the Unitarian Universalist faith tradition as a means to that end. Unitarian Universalist allows each of us to seek what is holy and true in our lives, and challenges us to live it out loud.

My goal, going through this education and discernment process, is to live and work in this messy, wonderful human world – whether through parish ministry or directly in the community. I am currently doing a Field Education placement at SAGE New York – Service and Advocacy for LGBT elders, and feel a real connection providing pastoral care to this community. I have lived long enough, and been around the block enough times, to know “we will get there, heaven knows how we will get there...but we know we will.” I have faith in man-kind, and hope that together, we can change the world.



Tom and me at a recent family wedding. I'm in the green shirt on the right, Tom's on the left.



Our son Mark.

The boss of the house – “Monty”





## **January 2018 Co-Ministers' Report**

*2017-18 themes: Collaboration and Joy -- How might we embody these in all we do?*

### **A few spiritual & programmatic notes:**

December was full of rich worship – from Festival of the Season to Vespers, Solstice, and Christmas Eve. Thanks to Rev. Erica Richmond for leading a lovely New Year's Eve morning service. We are grateful for all of this – and grateful to return to “ordinary time.”

### **Nourishing Spirit:**

Our Worship Associates met for our quarterly gathering last week – it is truly a program to celebrate, with more than a dozen spiritually grounded, diverse, dedicated Worship Associates. Many thanks to Sue Smolski, who's coordinated our WAs for the last 3 years, and for her succession planning – she will be stepping down in June and has recruited Laurie Kelleher to take her place. / Also in the vein of Nourishing Spirit (as well as Building Community), there will be more to discuss at our January Board meeting about bringing on Mark Robel as a two-year part-time Intern Minister. The Board needs to vote on that at most \$10,000/year commitment (likely quite a bit less with UUA support) in February.

### **Building Community:**

We are working with Brian Mullen on our annual Certification with the UUA – compiling lots of data about membership (among other things). RevCathy is working with Gloria Francesca Mengual, Margalie Belizaire, and Rayla Mattson to organize a potluck for members and friends who identify as people of color in February--to build community and for the Revs to hear from our members & friends of color about their experiences at USH. Stewardship is working on organizing several neighborhood gatherings for the stewardship drive (as you'll hear more about at our meeting)--and we are excited for the community-building aspect of this [and also appreciate Chris Wilt for organizing Circle Suppers this year as an on-going opportunity for connection]. RevCathy is also working on a “Volunteer Audit-lite” –an Excel file of all of our over-300 active adults categorized by level of involvement, age, and length of time at USH. Stay tuned, and let me know if you want to see it or help make it useful!

### **Working for Justice:**

RevCathy and Judy have had initial conversations about our justice ministries and I'm grateful for the energy and enthusiasm Judy is bringing to that work. There's So Much happening in our justice ministries, from Green Sanctuary to Race Matters to refugee ongoing work to a new interfaith organizing initiative and the upcoming Hartford Women's March. As I've said before, I hope that the Board will resume receiving quarterly reports from each Council so you can be regularly updated on the great work of so many of our sub-councils!

### **Calendar:**

The Revs will be out of town the last week of January for our every-3-years continuing education conference, Professional Development Institute—we'll be learning and worshipping with colleagues in warm Florida. We have had initial conversation with Sherry Manetta, Joe Rubin, and Phil Gardner about Sabbatical planning and look forward to a conversation with all of you about that soon.

## Dashboard:

Date	Worship Attendance	RE	1st Time Visitors	Total Attendance	Total Offering	Notes
12/3	136	25	9	161	\$2,496	GNO: Unified Theater
12/10	89	26	3	115	\$1,421	GNO: Friends of Music
12/17	146	n/a	6	146	\$4,000	Winter Solstice service
12/24	43	15	0	58	\$388	GNO: Ministers' Discretionary Fund
12/31	87	15	15	102	\$4,322	GNO: Ministers' Discretionary Fund
<b>Special services:</b>						
Xmas Eve 4pm	132		12	132		
Vespers	25		1	25		
<b>Average this month:</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>\$2,525</b>	
Average:	Worship Attendance	RE	Visitors	Total Attendance	Offering	
<b>TOTAL 2017:</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>\$2,066</b>	
<b>TOTAL 2016:</b>	111	35	8	146	not tracked	
<b>Total 2015</b>	118	34	not tracked	152	not tracked	

*Note on these numbers: I'm not sure why total attendance appears to be down for 2018—I have a hunch that we're not tracking RE numbers well, but haven't had a chance to talk with Rayla about this (I'm pretty sure we're stable or increased from last year) --RevCathy*

Number of current members: 213

Pastoral updates: So many of us are grieving Jan Bennett's death – Jan was one of those quiet folks who did so much – teaching RE and a key leadership role in both Meditation and Non-Violent Communication. Her service will be Feb 9<sup>th</sup> at 11am – we hope several of you can attend. And while there are a number of other people that we and the Caring Network are tracking closely, there is, wonderfully, nothing else urgent to report (in terms of pastoral issues) at this time.

**With love and care,  
Revs Cathy & Heather**

### Budget Highlights through Dec 2017

Budget Item	Budgeted Amount	YTD	Year End Estimate
<i>Income Items</i>			
Income from the Endowment	\$47,150	\$21,500	\$43,000
Pledge	\$285,000	\$181,485 (63%)	\$278,023
Rental Income	\$22,496	\$7,956 (35%)	\$22,496
Total Fundraising items less expenses	\$17,900	\$11,097	\$15,440
<i>Expense Items</i>			
Office supplies	\$2,800	\$1,903	\$3,800
Workers' compensation insurance	\$3,300	\$609	\$2,509
Minister's insurance	\$18,653	\$7,958	\$16,025
Director of Music Ministries	\$11,520	\$6,900	\$16,900
Net ordinary income	\$38		(\$7,255)