



**Unitarian Society of Hartford**  
**Annual Report**  
**For Fiscal Year July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019**

# Table of Contents

<b>Annual Meeting Agenda .....</b>	<b>3</b>	Festival of the Season.....	36
<b>Proposed Slate for the Board .....</b>	<b>4</b>	Membership Sub-Council (MSC).....	37
<b>Annual Meeting May 20, 2018</b>		Meeting House Presents .....	39
<b>Review .....</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Council on Social Justice.....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>President’s Report .....</b>	<b>9</b>	Race Matters Update.....	42
<b>Co-Ministers’ Report.....</b>	<b>11</b>	The Village for Families and Children	43
<b>Secretary’s Report .....</b>	<b>16</b>	Noah Webster Micromagnet Society	
<b>Treasurer’s Report.....</b>	<b>17</b>	School Ministry .....	43
<b>Director of Religious Education</b>		Refugee Resettlement .....	44
<b>(DRE) .....</b>	<b>18</b>	Accessibility and Inclusion Ministry	
<b>Director of Music Ministries.....</b>	<b>21</b>	(AIM) .....	45
<b>Church Office.....</b>	<b>22</b>	Green Sanctuary Sub-Council .....	46
<b>Building Rentals.....</b>	<b>22</b>	USH Watkinson Community Garden	
<b>Board Committees.....</b>	<b>23</b>	Plot.....	47
Endowment Committee .....	23	<b>Council on Spiritual Life .....</b>	<b>49</b>
Safer Congregations .....	25	Chancel Arts.....	50
<b>Council on Administration .....</b>	<b>26</b>	Worship Associates Sub-council 2018-	
Stewardship Committee .....	27	2019 .....	50
Building & Grounds Sub-Council .....	28	<b>Strategic Plan Goals .....</b>	<b>51</b>
Archives .....	30	<b>Thinking Ahead to Next</b>	
Human Resources Sub-Council.....	31	<b>(Congregational) Year: .....</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>Council on Community Within .....</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>USH Board of Directors and Staff....</b>	<b>53</b>
20’s and 30’s.....	32	<b>USH Council Personnel.....</b>	<b>54</b>
Adult Programming .....	32		
Unitarian Alliance Ministry to Women			
.....	34		
Caring Network Sub-Council.....	34		
Connection Circles.....	36		

# Annual Meeting Agenda

*The Unitarian Society of Hartford, May 19, 2019*

*Submitted by Sherry Manetta, President*

1. Call to Order.....Sherry Manetta, President
2. Reflection.....Joe Rubin, President Elect
3. Approval of May 20, 2018 Annual Meeting Minutes.....Sherry Manetta
4. Election of Board Officers.....John Brancato, Chair, Nominating Committee
5. President’s Report .....Sherry Manetta
6. Co-Ministers’ Report..... Rev. Heather Rion Starr, Co-Minister
7. Secretary’s Report .....Sarah McKenzie, Secretary
8. Treasurer’s Report .....Tom Richardson, Treasurer
9. Adult Programs .....Carolyn Carlson, Chair, Community Within Council
10. Sanctuary Lighting Project ..... Hugh Schweitzer, Member, Building & Grounds Sub-Council
11. Social Justice .....Judy Sullivan, Chair, Social Justice Council
12. Q&A and Closing Remarks .....Sherry Manetta and Joe Rubin
13. Closing Reflection ..... Rev. Cathy Rion Starr, Co-Minister
14. Adjourn .....Sherry Manetta

# Proposed Slate for the Board

*Presented by the Nominating and Leadership Development Committee*

*John Brancato, Chair*

*The Nominating Committee has provided the following slate of nominations for the Board of Directors, to be voted on at the Annual Meeting on May 19, 2019. The Nominees are:*

*President – Joe Rubin for a one-year term 7.01.2019 to 6.30.2020*

*President-Elect – Martha Bradley for a one-year term 7.01.2019 to 6.30.2020*

*Secretary – Sarah McKenzie for a two-year term 7.01.2019 to 6.30.2021*

*Chair, Spiritual Life Council – Peter Meny for a two-year term 7.01.2019 to 6.30.2021*

*Chair, Social Justice Council – Judy Sullivan for a two-year term 7.01.2019 to 6.30.2021*

**Joe Rubin** (President, Term: 7.1.2019 – 6.30.2020) Joe and his wife, Diane Cadrain, have been active members of USH for over 30 years. Their three daughters grew up attending the Meeting House. Joe has previously served on the USH Board, taught RE classes, and served as a member and chair of the RE and Stewardship Committees. He works as the Assistant Deputy Attorney General in the Connecticut Attorney General's Office.

**Martha Bradley** (President-Elect, Term—7.01.2019 to 6.30.2020) Martha has been involved at USH for almost 10 years. A lifelong UU, and retired HS teacher, she served in other congregations as chair of RE and a youth group advisor. At USH she has been a member of Chancel Arts, Stewardship, and various ad hoc committees, and participated in many groups. She has served on the Board as Chair of the Council on Spiritual Life, and chaired the most recent Ministerial Search Committee. She is currently chair of Connection Circles (formerly known as Small Group Ministry). Martha is deeply appreciative of USH as a spiritual home and place for learning and community connection.

**Sarah McKenzie** (Secretary, Term: 7.1.2019 – 6.30.2021) 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.

**Peter Meny** (Chair, Spiritual Life: 7.01.2019 to 6.30.2021) I have been a member of the Society since 1985. I grew up in Hartford and was raised as a Catholic. My professional

career was spent in Glastonbury where I worked as a school psychologist for the public schools for 33 years. I continue to be a part-time consultant. At USH I've served in a variety of capacities including Bouncil President, Trustee, and chair of the Stewardship Committee. Presently I'm a Worship Associate and member of the Building and Grounds Committee. My wife Deb and I live in West Hartford and our daughter Olivia is an Art teacher in Oregon.

**Judy Sullivan** (Chair, Social Justice, Term: 7.1.2019 — 6.30.2021) moved to CT from MA in 2013 and now lives in West Hartford. She has a BA from Wilkes University and received her RN from Albany Medical Center School of Nursing. She is a past board member for United Way, former state representative for National Patient Advocacy Foundation, lobbying on state and federal levels for healthcare issues, and past board member for PA Oncology Hematology Management Society. She has been a foster child care program volunteer mentor and volunteer for Hospice at Hebrew Healthcare. Judy has five children and eight grandchildren in four states, and one small dog who thinks he is an only child. Judy is currently on the USH Welcoming Team and the Interfaith Refugee Resettlement Committee. She has served as chair of the Council on Social Justice since December 2017 and is now running for another term.

***Listed below are the current Board Members whose terms continue until 2020:***

**Tom Richardson** (Treasurer, Term: 7.01.2018 – 6.30.2020) and his family (John, Ellie and Maddie Brancato) have been members of USH for more than 10 years. At USH, Tom has served as a Religious Education Assistant Teacher and Teacher and on the Stewardship, Endowment, Strategic Planning and Audit Committees. Tom is the Administrative Director of the Clark Science Center at Smith College and is the former Vice President of Strategic Planning, Marketing & Communications at Connecticut Children's Medical Center. He has also held several positions in academic administration at Harvard Medical School and Brown University. Tom has a Bachelor's degree from Bowdoin College and a Master's degree from Boston College.

**Sue C. Tenorio** (Chair, Administration, Term: 7.1.2018 – 6.30.2020) Her formal education and training has been in special education with early childhood specialization. She has served as executive director of nonprofits which included collaborative program planning, budget development/management, building maintenance, fund raising and grant writing. She has also been a university professor and public school administrator. Her travels have been extensive, domestic and abroad. By nature and actions, she is an advocate for under-represented and underserved individuals, particularly dual language learners. She is a member of the USH Choir and Book Club, and has also served on the USH Syrian Refugee ELL Team, Audit, and Director of Music Ministries Interview committees and Sunday Pancake Breakfast crew.

**Carolyn Carlson** (Chair, Community Within, Term: 7.1.2018 – 6.30.2020) Carolyn became a member of USH in 2014. She was a member of the Stewardship Committee in FY 17 and FY 18. She was also active in supporting the resettlement of the Syrian refugee family USH supports and is a member of the Caring Network. Carolyn spent 34 years in a variety of disaster management positions domestically and internationally with the American Red Cross. She managed programs in Croatia, Turkey and Kosovo during her 2.5 years overseas. Carolyn recently retired after spending 2.5 years at UConn School of Law working with international students and then event management. She has a MS in Management and lives in Hartford with her husband Ed Williams.

## **Annual Meeting May 20, 2018 Review**

*Submitted by Sarah McKenzie, Secretary*

12:00 - Call to order - Sherry Manetta

12:04 - Reflection - Joe Rubin

12:06 - We think this is the 54th meeting in this building, and 100+ for the congregation - Sherry made a motion to approve last year's minutes, the motion was seconded, no oppositions, no abstentions; The motion passes.

12:08 - Election of Board Officers - John Brancato introduced the slate of Board Candidates:

- President - 1 yr term - Sherry Manetta
- President-elect - 1 yr term - Joe Rubin
- Treasurer - 2 yr term - Tom Richardson
- Chair of Administration Council - 2 yr term - Sue Tenorio
- Chair of Community Within Council - 2 yr term - Carolyn Carlson
- Chair of Social Justice Council - 1 yr term - Judy Sullivan

John Brancato proposed that the congregation vote for the slate of candidates, the motion was seconded, no oppositions, no abstentions; The motion passes.

12:10 - President's Report - Sherry highlighted board activity over the past year:

- Improving governance
- Improving planning
- Improving financial health
- 2 retreats covering planning and governance
- Finalized strategic plan goals
- Outstanding stewardship drive/year, broke 300K pledge mark for the first time ever
- Standardized some endowment reporting to create more transparency
- Focused on capital improvements
- Thanks to all board members

- Finances - looking forward. This year we are concerned that we could have a deficit, expenses should come in at the level they were last year, and on budget. Shortfalls are on the revenue side - we were previously receiving \$15K/year for 3 years from an anonymous donor. That has ended, and the deficit has not been completely filled. In last year and prior years, we had done a second round of stewardship ask, which was not conducted this year. Pledge collections are behind for current year. If you are in a position to complete your pledge, please do so. Next year - still need to make some trade-offs, as the budget for FY 19 is not yet balanced/passed. Future - we are planning on implementing a planned giving program for legacy gifts. There is a matching grant program entitled Wake Now Our Vision Collaborative Campaign Legacy Challenge, which will provide a 10% matching cash gift, up to \$10,000. The program is funded by a grant from the UU Congregation at Shelter Rock; at this time, approximately 50% of the available funds have been allocated, so we need to begin soon to make our claim on the funds.

12:23 - Co-Ministers' Report - Rev. Heather Rion Starr

- 4th year serving as co-ministers: relatively normal and stable year, and that is something to celebrate.
- Highlights of year - 19 new members, auction, stewardship drive, maintaining freedom of pulpit, Meeting House Presents, Revs did an intro at all concerts.
- Played a slide show of events of the congregation over the prior year and narrated for the congregation.

12:33 - Secretary's Report - Sarah McKenzie

As of February 1 of this year, we reported 209 members to the Unitarian Universalist Association, a slight increase over last year. The increase is reflective of new and former members joining/rejoining and deaths of members. Average weekly attendance at Sunday Worship services over the past year was approximately 118. Average weekly attendance in our Religious Education program was around 35, with current enrollment at about 75.

In the past year 19 new members have signed the membership book. Two members have moved away and/or resigned their membership in USH:  
Peter Magistri, Leslie Waite.

The following members have died in the past year:

Jan Bennett, Marilyn Giese, Ken Reed, Ellie Revill, Ed Stubbs, Peg Van Dyck (moment of silence).

12:36 - Finances - Phil Gardner

- Highlights - excellent team (Carolyn Carlson, Tom Richardson, Hank Murray, Peter Meny, Rev. Cathy, Brian Mullen)

- Gave estimates for current budget deficits, approx 16K, highlighted shortfalls in pledges
- Highlighted income from auction and Meeting House Presents, always open to creative ideas for fundraising
- Next year - we would like to increase staff income to fair share wage and cost of living increase for other staff, reduction in fundraising income by about \$2K to match actuals from this years, draw on endowment to remain similar. Increased expense for Buildings and Grounds, and for intern minister. Still have a shortfall for next year. Please bring any ideas to the board.

12:44 - Building Enhancements - Hank Murray - Work started on the roof this week, we are all hopeful that the new roof fixes the leaks in the sanctuary. Few months ago, anon donor came forward w/ \$ for improved lighting in the sanctuary, a task force was put together to deal with pew lighting, chancel lighting, sound and projection.

12:46 - Endowment Committee - Jean Groothuis pointed out that the endowment has saved us constantly, for example, the money to repair the roof is coming from the endowment. 2017 - two major donors who donated just as market was rising. 2018 - market is down, expenses are up. Upcoming budget is \$441K, we have to hold back \$882K per the bylaws (twice the annual budget). Committee wants to grow endowment to \$3mm, in order to be able to spend at a higher level than we have been, and still continue to grow the endowment.

12:52 - There was no other business, so Sherry closed with 3 things for the congregation to think about:

- Get involved
- Fulfill this year's pledges
- Please pledge for next year, if you haven't yet

The meeting was adjourned at 12:53pm.

# President's Report

*Sherry Manetta*

It's been a very good year. Our USH community continues to refresh itself. Board planning through semi-annual retreats and jam-packed monthly Board agendas have allowed the Board to chart a steady course through FY2019 and provide a solid foundation going into FY2020. Your participation and input have been invaluable every step of the way.

Within the framework of the USH January 2018 Strategic Plan, the Board prioritized a set of objectives that have governed much of our work for FY2019.

**Leadership Development and Capacity Building.** This is an ongoing process to engage members more fully in the life of the congregation and build capacity for the future. Many members would like to be more involved and the Revs, the Board and sub-council leadership need to be more effective and creative in engaging each of you. The membership sub-council is just one area re-evaluating its approach which will result in more opportunities to become involved. Leadership development is an ongoing process and will continue well beyond this fiscal year. We look forward to engaging each of you more fully in the life of this congregation.

**Anti-racism.** The primary focus of Social Justice this year was anti-racism work, to chart a path to changes in culture and attitudes with respect to race. This is happening through programs such as Sunday Race Matters discussions and the Beloved Conversations curriculum. It will be a multi-year process and will engage the entire congregation.

**Sustainable Financial Model.** We continue to put in place the controls and mechanisms to better manage the finances of USH under the direction of Rev. Cathy and Brian Mullen, working with our Treasurer Tom Richardson, and the Finance Committee. Stewardship and fundraising, managing the endowment and our building & grounds, as well as our rentals program under Rev. Heather and Rayla Mattson, and Meeting House Presents under Paul and Laura Cipriano, are integral to our long-term financial well-being. It requires collaboration and a common perspective about what is needed to effectively raise, invest and manage our financial resources.

There has been a steady stream of enhancements and ongoing maintenance of the Meeting House. The FY2020 budget process will include a more systematic approach to planning and budgeting for capital improvements over a multi-year period. We need to be better at this so that we can more effectively manage our resources and consider a capital campaign in late FY2020.

**Adult Religious Education.** Adult programs have been going through a transition period and will continue to evolve as faith formation for adults is better defined. Progress has been made but we expect to get even greater traction when our intern minister joins us in January 2020.

**Congregational Covenant—Right Relations.** It is now policy for all RE staff and volunteers to be screened through the state’s background screening process. A Safer Congregation team is in place to manage any concerns that might arise. The Revs semi-annual evaluation process is being put together and the board is focusing on clarifying various policies. These are just a few aspects of our work as we all strive for healthy congregational relationships.

### **And All the Rest!**

The strong and growing Religious Education program under Rayla Mattson and her staff and cadre of volunteers, our delightful music ministry under the direction of Director of Music Ministries Sam Moffett, the quality and diversity of our services under the Revs and Worship Associates, the pastoral care provided by the Revs and Caring Network, and Adult programs led by dedicated volunteers—all nourish our spirits and help us live out our values.

### **And More—Looking to the Future**

Other upcoming activities that are in the planning stages:

- Planning for the Revs sabbatical October to December
- Planning for the arrival of our half-time intern minister in January
- Exploring various Social Justice initiatives including an increased focus on immigration issues
- A planned giving program that will be led by the Endowment Committee

As we close out FY2019, I will be stepping down from the Board to be succeeded ably (upon your vote) by Joe Rubin. Joe has been a full partner to me throughout my tenure which will assure a seamless transition. I am enormously grateful to Joe and our fellow Board members, to the Revs, and to all of you who make USH the vibrant community that it is.

# Co-Ministers' Report

*Revs. Cathy & Heather Rion Starr*

We're coming into the station of completing our fifth year as your Co-Ministers, and already looking ahead to our sixth. This is such a profound time for reflection. As many of you know, this congregation has not had a minister stay longer than 5 years for 20 years (since Rev. Jon Luopa left in 1999 after 13 years of ministry here). In this past year when our congregational theme has been "Deepening and Connection," it feels especially significant to simply be staying put, staying in relationship with all of you and staying here in the Greater-Hartford area, continuing to deepen in our ministries here and in our nourishing of spirit, building of community, and working together for greater justice in our communities and our world.

After five years with you, we have a better sense of what we feel like works here with this congregation. We have certainly had some bumps along the way--and we are sorry if those bumps were with you!--and we have learned so much here, and grown together in multiple ways as a community of caring people. As we prepare for our first ever (for each of us) sabbatical October through December 2019, and the first for this congregation since Rev. Luopa's (7-months in total) sabbatical in 1993, we are confident that you, the lay leaders of this congregation, know how to run things on a day-to-day basis, and we trust that our time away will soon seem like simply a nourishing, short absence in the rear-view mirror of our time here at USH.

The theme of **Deepening and Connection** has been helpful in keeping our hearts and minds focused on the purpose of our community amidst all the cacophony of the larger world. And we continue to lift up the most succinct version of our USH Mission Statement by focusing this report on the themes of "Nourishing Spirit, Building Community, Working for Justice."

**Nourishing Spirit: Worship services** are our communal weekly spiritual practice, our opportunity to be together as a community and to welcome and get-to-know newcomers, visitors, and one another better. The Sunday service is truly essential to our congregation, and so we want to highlight the worship services we have created together with you:

- Spiritual Practices Summer reflection: "Open Hearts for Learning & Unlearning"
- "Living the Labyrinth" (RevCathy, August 5 service)
- "Listening: Soaking in Another's Voice" (RevHeather, August 26 service)
- Water Heal My Body & Deepening and Connection Ingathering service
- "Chances for Healing" service in tandem with
  - Hartford Stage's production, *Make Believe*

- "Beloved Stories, Beloved Community," kicking off the Beloved Conversations program
- "Managing Our Monsters – Together"
  - Harry Potter-themed Multigenerational Halloween service
- All Souls Day service – "What They Dreamed Be Ours To Do"
- post-Election Day 2018 service on "Engaging Our Democracy"
- "Begin Again in Thanks" Thanksgiving service sharing gratitude & recipes
- "Something Beautiful" service on the importance of cultivating beauty in our lives
- Solstice service--"Where Is the Light?"
- Winter Solstice Chanting evening service and Christmas Eve "Ancient Story" service
- "What Is Possible?" at the beginning of the new year
- "Learning to Be Human"
- "Answering the Call of Love" on engaging with the requests of the larger community that USH be an Immigrant Sanctuary congregation
- "How We Choose To Be" on building and re-building trust throughout our lives
- "Steady As She Goes" and "Calling Each Other Onwards"--
  - Stewardship and Community-Building services
- "Can We Do Better?" service reflecting on Harriet Beecher Stowe
  - Women's History month, ways to do better in our collective work towards equality, followed by a group tour of the Stowe Center
- "Earth Day Easter: Practice Resurrection"
- "The Days Are Long, The Years Are Short: 5 Years at USH"

We also put a fair amount of energy into coordinating and connecting with guest speakers and worship leaders, and this year that has included Khaiim the RapOet, singer-songwriter Peter Mayer, percussionist Matt Meyer, Rev. Janet Bush (with Northampton UU members), Rev. Erica Richmond, Rev. Tom Schade, Rev. Jane Thickstun, and Rev. Sunshine Wolfe.

Worship is a collaborative creation – we are so grateful to our choir and Sam Moffett for the music, to Linda Clark and our office volunteers for creating our orders of service, to Rayla Mattson for the Time for All Ages, to our ushers and greeters for their warm welcome, and to our Worship Associates who not only share in every service, but also take the lead on our summer services and with our guest preachers – they are a strong and spiritually grounded group of leaders!

We continue to use **monthly theme materials** gathered and produced by the Unitarian Universalist group "SoulMatters" ([soulmatterssharingcircle.com](http://soulmatterssharingcircle.com)). USH Worship Associates, Small Group Ministries/Connection Circles, and the Religious Education programs all have access to these materials. Over 600 UU worship leaders nationwide now draw upon SoulMatters materials for inspiration and connection.

**Building Community:** Now for the second year, the living-into the newer model of doing our annual pledge drive through neighborhood gatherings continued to have lovely community-building results with the Neighborhood Soirees. RevCathy again worked closely with the **Stewardship Committee** to create many distinct opportunities for connection which simultaneously sustain this congregation. The Fall 2018 Service Auction generated a myriad of ways to connect more personally with one another. The Annual Pledge Drive effort galvanized a dozen Stewardship Soirees in congregant homes--an opportunity we have appreciated to get to visit and spend time with many of you in a condensed and structured way. Working with the Stewardship Committee has been a significant area of focus for RevCathy and thus far the strengthened relationships and earlier-in-the-year pledging indicate that this was time well spent.

Our **Membership** effort continues apace with its core programs--First Sunday Connections, the twice-yearly Path to Membership series UU, USH, and You, the Newcomer & New Member Potluck, New Member Ceremonies, and our every Tuesday afternoon Newcomer-followup meetings. These programs rely upon USH member and volunteer Brian Harvey and we talk regularly about how to plan ahead for the time when Brian will step back from leading this aspect of USH life--likely in January-February 2020. Please let Brian and/or RevHeather know if this is an area of connecting more meaningfully with the congregation and the denomination that you'd like to be involved in. In February 2019 we certified with the UUA at 215 members.

**Communications:** We now send our **Weekly E-news** out to more than 600 e-mail addresses. How many people read it is an ongoing question. The E-news is our central hub for sharing and communicating news of the congregation and larger community, so please try to make it work within your life and various e-mail systems to receive, open, print if that works for you, share and savor this important weekly communication. We also continue to improve and update our website (which was completely overhauled in 2015) and are ably assisted by website consultant Paula Pierce on an as-arranged basis.

**Pastoral Care:** Given RevCathy's increased financial responsibilities for USH (Finance, Stewardship), RevHeather has tried to take on more pastoral care this year, and that has been meaningful and rewarding. It is such a joy to get to visit with you in your homes--we can't emphasize enough how profound it is to get to visit with you in the context of your most lived-in space. If you would like to schedule a visit, please reach out to RevHeather anytime (best by e-mail or cellphone), or RevCathy (best by cellphone or at <https://RevCathyRionStarr.as.me/>).

We have celebrated births and grieved many losses this year. Naming them here would inevitably cause us to later realize we'd forgotten someone, so for now let us simply marvel at the continual cycle of life with all its coinciding mystery, and also appreciate this community as a

place and people to gather among in times of joy, of struggle and of sorrow. Our thanks to the Caring Network for its ongoing attention to the details of so many people's lives and for much-appreciated connection with the Revs whenever called for.

**Working for Justice:** Many thanks to Council Chair Judy Sullivan and all the other leaders carrying forward our justice work at USH! They have shared much in the Council report, so this is brief: We are glad that the Board has made anti-racism a priority and that so many folks are participating in Beloved Conversations – this work will continue to be rich, important, and at times really really hard – thank you for being on the journey together. RevCathy is participating in a professional development program on Grounding and Growing our Prophetic Ministries that has been profound and challenging, in addition to providing the push for us to engage more deeply in immigration issues and to explore becoming a Sanctuary Congregation. As we have sung: “When the world is sick, can’t no one be well – and I dreamt we was all beautiful and strong.” Let us keep tending to healing the earth and her people together.

**Administrative:** Building highlights of this year must start with the amazing **resurfacing of the central roof**. We saw buckets in the Sanctuary only a very few times this winter, and that is a huge improvement from past years. Having a more effective central roof (along with the warranty which brings professional roofers here for repairs whenever there is an issue) frees up time, energy and resources for working on other aspects of the building, which is marvelous! We also continue to have inexpensive indoor cameras in public areas of the Meeting House as a security measure and safety precaution. We have had no further building intrusion issues. Great thanks to the Building & Grounds committee for all your dedication and hard work.

**Rentals use** has steadily increased with the work of Rayla Mattson as Rentals Manager, and we continue to try to make the Meeting House more attractive as a meeting and gathering space for multiple users. As of this writing (April 2019), we have met our goal of \$19,000 of rental income for this FY19 fiscal year. Huge thanks to Rayla for her steady, diligent work in this area--please see her Rentals Manager report for further details.

**Appreciations:** We greatly appreciate **Rev. Erica Richmond**, USH's Affiliated Community Minister, and all that she brings to our USH community. Rev. Erica is a full-time Palliative Care Chaplain at Hartford Hospital. Through her work there she has visited countless USH members and friends during their hospitalizations. She has led worship for USH twice this year (as planned, yearly, in her Affiliation agreement). Sadly (for us), Rev. Erica will be leaving Hartford this summer for a full-time position as Assistant Minister of Faith Formation at North Parish in North Andover, Massachusetts.

**Staff:** Our stable staff team makes everything else at USH more possible and manageable. In particular, we appreciate Rayla Mattson (Director of Religious Education), Linda Clark (Office Administrator), Sam Moffett (Director of Music Ministries), Brian Mullen (Bookkeeper), Briana Bittel (Custodian), John Bengston and Kevin Girouard (Sextons), Jazaira Perez-Acevedo (Sunday/Fellowship Sexton), and all our other supporting staff, Nursery Care Providers and Choral Scholars. We wish Crystal Cruz-Acevedo well as she stepped down from being our Sunday/Fellowship Sexton after five years of dedicated service! Not including the half-time Co-Ministers, we hover around 16-18 all part-time staff, a number of people which continually surprises those not on our staff team. Thanks to all who keep this community running, who help take care of this Meeting House and all the people of all ages within it, and all of you who support this organization of people caring for one another.

**Board:** We are grateful for the engaged Board leadership this year. A particular highlight was our February 2019 retreat at Sherry Manetta & Brian Harvey's home, ably facilitated by UUA New England Regional Staff Joe Sullivan. We continue to improve our communication, governance clarity, and long-range planning practices. Huge thanks for all your work, time, heart, thoughtfulness, and dedication, to Board members Sherry Manetta, Joe Rubin, Sarah Harmon McKenzie, Tom Richardson, Sue Tenorio, Carolyn Carlson, Judy Sullivan, and Marye Gail Harrison.

Over the past two years there has been a request for more data-sharing to the Board, and we now have a practice of including the following monthly attendance numbers in our monthly Board reports. These numbers are annualized for the Annual Report.

**Overall Attendance trends:**

Average	Worship Attendance	RE	Visitors	Total Attendance
<b>Total 2018</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>134</b>
<b>Total 2017</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>138</b>
<b>Total 2016</b>	111	35	8	146
<b>Total 2015</b>	118	34	not tracked	152

**Looking ahead to 2019-20 and beyond**

We're excited about bringing on a 2-year half-time Intern Minister, Dianne Daniels, who will start her internship with us in January 2020. Thanks so much to all who have participated in and enthusiastically supported this new endeavor in making USH a Teaching Congregation from January 2020-December 2021. RevHeather will be Dianne's supervisor. Her office space is being created and your donations of office furniture are most welcome--please

speak with RevHeather if you are downsizing, moving, or upgrading this summer--if you have office or home study furniture to donate.

As we look to the future, the notes of Gratitude and Curiosity sound in our minds. We are grateful for the freedom this congregation affords us to think, dream, and experiment--what is possible with this community of people at this time in our country? What can do we together to impact our portion of the world in a positive way? In a time of well-known waning affiliation with organized religious communities, particularly in New England, what can we do with our combined resources that is more than just struggling to maintain status quo or striving to return things to the way they may once have been? In a time of increasing climate disruption, could this congregation be more of a resource hub for the larger community? These are some of the questions we journey with as we look ahead to the coming years.

**A Message from Affiliated Community Minister Rev. Erica Richmond:**

I write this with so many conflicted feelings! After three and a half years, I am leaving Connecticut, leaving Hartford Hospital, and therefore leaving USH. It has truly been an honor to be your affiliated community minister. Thank you for welcoming me and thank you for your kindness over the years. I am departing for a new and exciting adventure—I will be serving as the Assistant Minister of Faith Formation at North Parish in North Andover, Massachusetts. It is a huge transition, but I am looking forward to bringing my chaplain self into congregational life. USH has been such a wonderful spiritual home for me—thank you, thank you, thank you. Our faith is mighty but small so I look forward to crossing paths with you in the future.

## Secretary's Report

*Sarah Harmon McKenzie, Secretary*

As of February 1 of this year, we reported 215 members to the Unitarian Universalist Association, a slight increase over last year. In previous years, this number would determine our “fair share” contribution to the UUA, but as of 2018 the “fair share” contribution will be calculated as a percentage of operating expenses rather than based on the number of members.

- Average weekly attendance at Sunday Worship services over the past year was approximately 118. Average weekly attendance in our Religious Education program was around 35, with current enrollment at about 75.
- In the past year, the following members have passed away: Marion Cook, Marion Richardson, Bill Westervelt, Louise Willett.
- We welcomed 7 new members in December and 6 in April as part of the services.

# Treasurer's Report

*Tom Richardson, Treasurer*

As the USH Treasurer, my primary function is to update the Board on the current status of the budget and to coordinate the development of a new budget for the following year. Another function is to review and approve checks that are issued to pay vendors and our staff. This effort would not be possible without the critical experience of Brian Mullen who generates all the checks, periodic budget reviews, detailed draft budgets, updates on stewardship, and several other periodic reports. I also chair the Finance Sub-Council, which brings together representatives from the Endowment Committee (Steve Basche), the Council on Administration (Sue Tenorio), Building & Grounds (Peter Meny), Stewardship (Caron Lanouette), Reverend Cathy Rion Starr and Brian Mullen. Finance monitors current year income and expenses versus the budget, advises the Treasurer in developing the subsequent year's budget and provides for a forum to discuss any issues that come up throughout the year involving money.

**Current Year Finances:** Projected income for Fiscal Year 2018-19 (\$442K) is expected to exceed the budget (\$430K) by around \$12K. Payment of current year pledges is on track to meet the budget. Payment of prior year pledges (special thank you to those of you who worked to "catch up") and rental income are exceeding budget expectations. The Endowment and Meeting House Presents generated the expected income while The Festival of the Seasons and Adult Programs generated less than expected. We also were fortunate to receive a gift from the Garmany Fund at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving to support our exceptional music program.

Projected expenses for Fiscal Year 2018-19 (\$442K) are expected to exceed the budget (\$430K) also by around \$12K, reflecting higher than anticipated expenses for information technology, general maintenance, natural gas and lawn care. On the other hand, we are spending less than expected on lawn care. The good news is that we expect to achieve the Board's goal of a balanced budget for the current year.

**Next Fiscal Year:** The Board has again committed to a balanced budget for Fiscal Year 2019-20 and plans to approve it in June. We are expecting no increase in pledge income based on the results to-date of the Stewardship Campaign and a reduction in Endowment income based on the performance of our portfolio of assets. We also expect that the cost of delivering our programs, administering the Society and maintaining our physical plant will only continue to increase, even if only as a reflection of inflation. We are not facing financial crisis, nor are we at a momentous turning point for USH. We simply have to continue our earnest work to ensure our income and expenses are aligned as we have been doing for decades.

# Director of Religious Education (DRE)

*Sub-Council or Council: Religious Education Sub-Council*

*Director of Religious Education (DRE): Rayla D. Mattson*

**Our 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.

**Our accomplishments this year:** The program covers children and youth from birth through the completion of their senior year of high school. The program is supported through the collaborative efforts of our co-ministers, the DRE, RE staff and over 30 Congregational volunteers.

- The RE program maintained a steady number of participants this year. Our average Sunday attendance generally ranges from 30-50 students each week with over 75 students having participated so far this program year.
- We continued our Chapel service which usually takes place once a month during the first 15 minutes of the worship service. The Director of Religious Education leads this gathering where the children assist with doing readings, singing, playing instruments and it is also time for the children to check in with one another and bring any areas of discussion or concern directly to the DRE. It also allows the DRE to know what is important to them and goals that they have for the RE program.
- This year we continued incorporating the children and youth into the worship service, this year re-thinking ways in which we may expand upon this in coming years. Our all ages services as well as Christmas Eve continue to incorporate the children and youth. They are developing new skills and they enjoy being a part of the service and sharing with the congregation.
- The Youth Group, under the direction of advisors, Nina Elgo and Rob Spector, has once again logged over fifty hours of outreach-work making soup, preparing lunch, and feeding the homeless at Church St. Eats. They are developing leadership skills by choosing subjects of interest and concern to them and facilitating group discussions. Last year one of our youth attended Thrive which is a national convention for UU youth of color. This year, three of our youth will attend.
- Many of our middle school students have been participating this year in *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. This year's program is being taught by the DRE with

support from Esther McKone who has functioned as a senior advisor for many years. The group has been able to fully immerse in all the program has to offer due to a generous donation the program received two years ago and ongoing fund raising efforts of the DRE.

- This year, for the first time in over seven years, we took our COA and Youth Groups to Boston. Many UU COA groups from around the country travel to Boston each year. It is a journey they take to learn more about our UU faith. Our group visited the UUA and met with Bart Frost who runs our denomination's youth and young adult program. They were also able to visit the UU College of Social Justice and learn about work and volunteer opportunities for UU youth around the world. These are programs and events that they are all eligible to participate in. We toured the outside of King's Chapel which is a historic UU church in the area and finally the groups enjoyed shopping at Quincy Market. There were fifteen of us in total and a trip the group agreed should be done again.
- The 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade class has focused on a new curriculum "Let's Talk" written by our own Annie Witzler. The curriculum looks at getting the children to have more open and honest conversations about issues and events that matter to them.
- The Pre-Kindergarten through second grade class has taken this year to learn about our world and the wonders that it holds. The end of the year they will be working on social projects that interest the members of the class.
- The nursery group, ages birth to three, has maintained a steady stream of little ones. We have continued to hire additional staff.
- Other activities involving our children include our one-room classrooms where students from all grade levels work on a project or activity as a collective group, social justice activities involving other congregations and school groups as well as other multigenerational events.

**Our plans for next year:** We will continue to work towards our goals outlined in the mission statement. We will continue to update our curriculum materials and continue to strive to have each age group engaged in some type of social justice project. Additionally we will work to connect our children and youth to the broader, world-wide UU faith community.

Next year will also be our Second Our Whole Lives year (OWL) for our year's 7-9th students which we alternate with Coming of Age (COA) program for our year's 6-8th students. Curriculums for the other grade levels are still in the works.

The DRE will continue to work on professional development and is looking forward to working on her continued education. This year she will complete grades 7-9 and 10-12 OWL training. She once again attended *Finding Our Way Home* which is a yearly gathering of UU professionals of color. This year the group met in Miami, Florida.

This year she was also a recipient of two scholarships that will aid in funding the cost of her credentialing program. She also continued, though not as frequently, to act as a

contributing writer for Braver/Wiser which is a weekly message of hope and courage supported by the UUA. She is also working on a book which explores the dynamics of being a single black mother in a predominately all-white UU space.

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 as well as bring more national attention to the good work being done here.

The DRE and her family hosted a Unitarian exchange student from a congregation in Germany. In the upcoming years, Bradshaw will travel to the student's home to visit the world of Unitarianism from the German perspective. The group organizing the program is always looking for UU families in the states to host as well as students who would like to travel to Germany and be hosted by a family there. The program runs about 10-14 days in the summer and in the fall.

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 LREDA (Liberal Religious Educators Association) and other professional groups. This year she joined the Board of the New England Chapter of LREDA and has worked on other projects in collaboration with other religious professionals and the UUA.

Finally, the RE program would not be a success without the many dedicated volunteers and nursery staff. Between the two, there are well over 40 adults who lovingly work and nurture our children and youth. It's these individuals, their time and dedication, whether it's weekly or once a year, that I appreciate from the bottom and top of my heart. Of course, they will tell you that they are touched by our children as well.

Please consider working with the children and/or youth in a meaningful way this summer or next program year. This summer we will be looking at ways in which we can work more closely with our environment to better sustain the place we all call home.

# Director of Music Ministries

*Sam Moffett*

The Music Program at USH enjoyed a great deal of success during the 2018-2019 church year under the leadership of Sam Moffett, Director of Music Ministries, in consultation with RevCathy and with the input of the Choir.

## **Accomplishments:**

- Two successful Music Sundays. For the first, we programmed music in order to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Leonard Bernstein's birth. The second will take place on May 5 and will be in celebration of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Pete Seeger's birth.
- The continuation of our choral scholar program, with the new hire of Alexandra van der Hulst, soprano, Julianna Curran, alto, and Steven Carlson, tenor, as well as continuing the employment of last year's bass choral scholar, Chris Dunn.
- Successfully re-instating our composer-in-residence program with the hiring of Josh Stitt as well as two successful performances of his music (with a third upcoming).
- Being the host of a variety of other musical events for both the congregation and the broader community, including hosting rehearsals for the Hartford Gay Men's Chorus, as well as the successful second year of our Meeting House Presents series.
- Recruiting new choir members.
- Hosting a music workshop led by Matt Meyer.

## **For next year, the USH Music Program has these current goals in mind:**

- Recruitment of new choir members from the USH community and otherwise.
- Continuation of our choral scholar program.
- Continuation of our composer-in-residence program.
- At least one combined Music Sunday with the Universalist Church of West Hartford (UCWH), currently in the planning stages between Sam Moffett and UCWH music director Ted Hine.
- Programming of other (non-choral) ensembles made of musicians within the community and otherwise.

Thank you to all members of the USH Chancel Choir who donate their talents faithfully every week, many of whom have been volunteering their musical abilities for decades. Thanks especially to our members and guest musicians: Carol Sexton, Edward Pawlak, Edith Savage, Ed Savage, Laura Stewart Cipriano, Mary-Anne Mulholland, Kim McClain, Louise Schmoll, Brian Smith, Theodora Ruhs, Tina Davies, Paul Hansen, Sarah McKenzie, Sue Tenorio. Alexandra van der Hulst (Choral Scholar), Julianna Curran (Choral Scholar), Steven Carlson (Choral Scholar), Chris Dunn (Choral Scholar), Pi-Hsun Shih (Guest Accompanist), Sam Spear (Guest Saxophonist).

# Church Office

*Linda Clark, Office Administrator*

This past year I have become more proficient in my role as office administrator. I continue to find ways to streamline and become more efficient. Brian Harvey and I have implemented SignupGenius to schedule the Sunday Welcome Team and it is working very well. I have wonderful office volunteers who help out regularly, for whom I am very thankful. My goals for the upcoming year are to continue to learn and expand my skills.

*Would You Like to be Part of a Great Team?*

Join the USH Sunday Welcome Team! Please contact Linda Clark at [ushlindaclark@gmail.com](mailto:ushlindaclark@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.

# Building Rentals

*Rentals Manager: Rayla D. Mattson*

This year with our rentals, the goal was to continue to increase funds coming into USH from outside sources in order to diversify our income streams. With over a full year of learning, we were able to make some changes to our rentals and we are still working to streamline our fees and processes.

The purpose of having a Rentals Manager is to facilitate the use of the building for non-church related events whether it is events hosted by our own members or outside organizations or persons wishing to use our facility. Internal USH sponsored events are still handled by Linda Clark, Office Administrator.

In the past the majority of our rentals came from current rentals and direct inquiries. This year we looked at expanding that with direct ask and targeted offering of our space. We will expand on this next year with some additional marketing and targeted brochure mailings. A beautiful brochure will be complete before the end of the church year with the goal of more community outreach.

This year we have again rented the building for several weddings, memorial services, retreats, family gatherings, concerts, staff gatherings, birthday parties, and private meetings. We were also able to take on another long-term rental where a contract was signed guaranteeing those funds for at least twelve months. Having more long term contractual rentals allows for easier budgeting and also gives us a base with which to grow.

The renting of USH will exceed income projections for this budget year giving us more income in the budget than was expected. The goal is to increase contractual rentals and directed and targeted marketing, which can continue to grow the expected income generated next year.

USH is in a great location with great gathering and meeting spaces and ample parking, located on the bus route. We hope to continue to use the space here as a means to bring in the broader community and to raise additional funds to help further our mission.

## **Board Committees**

### **Endowment Committee**

*Chair: Steve Basche*

*Members: Bob White, Eve Pech, Greg Nickett*

The goal of the endowment committee is to ensure the endowment will continue to be able to generate sufficient income to fund a portion of the congregation's current operating budget, including operating expenses and small capital projects. To accomplish this goal, the endowment committee oversees the investment of the endowment assets in a prudent fashion balancing the need to generate income and preserve capital. In addition to overseeing investment of the endowment assets, the endowment committee also recommends to the board a level of withdrawal of funds which the committee considers prudent based on the value of the endowment and the expected rate of return. The board has the ability to draw additional funds, over the recommended withdrawal rate.

This past year, in addition to a withdrawal of \$47,150 for operating expenses, and a withdrawal of \$3,522 for small projects, \$39,00 was withdrawn from the endowment for the roof repair, for a total withdrawal of \$89,672.

The endowment has several components. The bulk of the endowment is invested in an account at UBS, consistent with prior socially related restrictions against investing in certain

fossil fuel sectors. The value at the beginning of the year was \$1,147,083, and was \$989,820 at the end of the year (was back up to \$1,089,761 as of 4/15/19), net of withdrawals.

In view of the information from UBS that the expected rate of return may not keep up with the recent historical returns, the endowment committee recommended to the board that withdrawals from the endowment be limited to \$47,262 for the upcoming fiscal year.

The endowment committee believes that significantly growing the endowment over the next few years is advisable in order to increase the income available for current operations and small projects. To gauge enthusiasm for such an effort, the committee has prepared a survey of the congregation to be distributed in the near future.

The survey results will be published when they are received and compiled. If there is support for increasing the endowment, the committee anticipates beginning a planned giving campaign to obtain larger lifetime gifts and bequests by will or trust to grow the endowment.

Several years ago, the board approved a mortgage loan to the Unitarian Universalist Meeting of South Berkshire (UUMSB), in the amount of \$50,000. UUMSB has made all of the timely payments required by the mortgage, which will increase to the WSJ prime rate plus 1% in June. UUMSB requested, and the Endowment Committee and the USH board approved, an additional loan in an amount not to exceed \$30,000 to further assist UUMSB, and to provide USH with a fixed rate of return for a portion of the endowment. This loan should be finalized by the end of the fiscal year.

Summary of the endowment as of 12/31/18:

Held at UBS	\$989,820
Held at UBS (restricted for noise abatement)	\$110,153
Loan receivable (Solar panels)	\$73,422
Loan receivable to UUMSB	\$41,987
Total Endowment	\$1,215,382

# Safer Congregations

*The Sexually Safer Congregations Team*

*Submitted by Barbara Fraher*

This team was charged by the board in 2016 as follows:

- Motion 1: The Board approve using the UUA guidance presented in “Balancing Acts—keeping children safe in congregations” as the basis for how USH addresses issues of a safe congregation.
- Motion 2: The Board charge the Safe Congregation Team to review existing policies and procedures that ensure congregational safety and make recommendations for new policies or changes to existing policies.

The initial members were Rev. Cathy, Virginia de Lima (then board-president), Rayla, Joan Nicoll-Senft (RE Subcommittee), Barbara Fraher (social worker), Rick Tsukada (therapist). Rick Tsukada and Virginia deLima contributed greatly to the team and have finished their service. Myself, RevCathy, Rayla as DRE, and Joan Nicoll-Senft continue to serve, and President-Elect Joe Rubin has just been appointed to join the team. Susan Hope (therapist) has also joined the team. Barbara Fraher will chair meetings. We have a first meeting scheduled in May.

The team has continued working on the 18 areas of a Congregational Self Assessment from the Religious Institute, as well as on drafting policy to bring us up to best practices. Some of our practices, like always having two unrelated adults in classrooms and doing background checks for all volunteers who work with children, are terrific. Other areas need work (eg, social media policy and practices).

There are many other layers to a Safe and Healthy congregation that this team is NOT addressing – from falls on the ice to fear of an active shooter to disruptive non-sexual behavior. Some of this could (and should!) be addressed with a broader “Disruptive Persons” policy paired with a Congregational Behavioral Covenant. These all need to be addressed and are outside the scope of our work – we are focused primarily on the safety of children (and adults) from sexual predators and sexual harassment.

# Council on Administration

*Chair: Sue C. Tenorio*

Administrative Council is comprised of five sub-councils: Archives, Building and Grounds, Finance, Human Resources, and Stewardship. Administrative support and involvement has been provided through ongoing communications, attendance of sub-council meetings, and direct participation in sub-council activities, highlights of which are provided here followed by further details in individual sub-council reports:

- A congregation-wide All Council Fair was conducted in January. Seeking to share information about the responsibilities and activities of the respective sub-councils as well as recruit additional volunteers, the *Archives*, *Building and Grounds* and *Stewardship* sub-councils staffed tables in Fellowship Hall and welcomed interested visitors.
- *Archival* review and classification of an exhaustive amount of donated materials--- Meeting House historical records, books, photos, announcements, and articles--- has finally been completed. Attention is now being given to contemporary gaps in records of congregation birth and death announcements as well as weddings and other commemorative events.
- After years of enduring multiple leaks in the Meeting House roof, this year saw the repair of the roof permanently completed and successfully maintained. Attention of the *Building and Grounds* sub-council turned to the refinement of a plan to improve the lighting of a selected section of Sanctuary pews as an initial phase of an overall plan for improved lighting throughout the Meeting House. Information was presented and feedback sought directly from congregation members who attended a congregation-wide meeting and completed a survey. A centrally-located display of a selected lighting fixture was set up to further encourage congregation input. Also, as more temperate weather arrives, efforts will continue to develop a system to control occasional lower level Meeting House flooding that has resulted from successive, heavy rainstorms and an insufficient drain system.
- The Finance Sub-Council, chaired by the Board Treasurer, afforded efficiency in receiving and providing financial information via monthly detailed revenue-expenditure reports as well as discussion of potential revenue shortfalls and over-expenditures. Early in the year, a FY2020 Budget Process was introduced and accepted. This was followed by a collaboratively developed FY 2020 budget draft that includes 5 priorities contingent, in part, upon meeting the established Annual Pledge Drive goal.
- Communication about staffing needs and staff roles and responsibilities as well as meeting congregation needs and interests continued between and among the *Human Resources* sub-council, Board members and the Co-Ministers. A related survey of the Congregation was proposed to seek feedback on how our established

goals are being met and a general assessment of Meeting House programs and operations.

- For a second year, Stewardship conducted an online Annual Auction involving a generous donation of auction goods and services items from Congregation members. Through a fluke in rental of Meeting House space, the onsite Annual Auction and lunch was located upstairs immediately following Sunday service. The change fortuitously resulted in immediate access to Congregation members departing from Sunday service, a boon in auction item bids and a major increase in receipts. Additionally, last year's Neighborhood Gatherings as the vehicle of approach for the Annual Pledge Drive became this year's Soirees as congregation members once again agreed to open their homes, receive guests and hear about this Annual Pledge Drive amid a variety of themes ranging from classic wine, hor d'oeuvres and cheese, to a rocking dance party.

## **Stewardship Committee**

*Chair: Caron Lanouette*

*Members: Martha Bradley, Tara Cote, Virginia Hedrick, Kim McClain,  
Yakhonda (Edith) Mwenelupembe and Rev. Cathy Rion Starr.*

We take our inspiration from the meaning of the word Stewardship: "the responsible overseeing and protection of something considered worth caring for and preserving."

We worked as an integrated and dynamic team, focusing on each other's strengths and supporting each other through this fascinating and necessary work. The best part of this year's journey was that so many members and friends engaged with this process in so many ways. We are building to include all of us to deepen our relationships with each other and our larger community. Thanks to the steady stewardship of past committees, we built on a strong foundation of engagement, commitment and care. We held a Service Auction on Sunday, October 20th in the Foyer, front Ambulatory and Library just after the Service. Called the Skills & Thrills Auction, the purpose of the Auction was for members and friends to donate their talents and skills to get to know each other better and raise funds for USH. The silent auction was preceded by an online period of bidding. We had 90 skills and thrills donated – from a mushroom-identifying hike to sign language lessons to help with computers and an apartment in Provence! The event itself was a fun afternoon, with MC Rick Tsukada engaging the participants. The Auction raised over \$10,000 and initiated several new friendships. Thanks to the Stewardship Cmte and volunteers Carolyn Carlson, Kate Gervais, Paul Jacob, Carol Lowbeer and Sue Tenorio for making it happen, along with

all the service donors and bidders! Next came the Stewardship Campaign. Following last year's new format the pledge drive encompassed:

- A focused period of time to seek pledges—the month of March, 2019.
- A theme that unifies a series of personal stories about giving and the meaning of USH in our lives—we chose *All Oars In* as the theme continuing the Boat theme of 2018.
- Hosted events at members/friends' homes to share information about the Campaign.
- An expanded service focused on Stewardship at the beginning and end of the Campaign.
- New ways to pledge and pay pledges, including by credit card online, and from gifts of appreciate securities and from disbursements from retirement accounts.
- We held 10 Soirées with hosts and assistant hosts from the membership, including: Marye Gail Harrison, Tara Cote & Paul Jacob, Judy Robbins & Rick Tsukada, Sherry Manetta & Brian Harvey, Phillip & Harriet Gardner, Joe Rubin & Diane Cadrain, Bruce Robbins and Diana Heymann, Don & Susan Hope, Jay DeRonck & Nicole DeRonck, Martha Bradley, Virginia deLima and Judy Sullivan.
- The Stewardship campaign began with a beautiful service led by Rev. Cathy, and pairs of oars representing pledges, that “rowed” across the Chancel as pledges were made. The month included testimonials by Laurie Kelliher, Dawn Greenfield and Larry Lunden. Throughout March and April, the Stewardship committee had a table in Fellowship Hall to provide materials and accept pledges.
- We promoted the *Fair Share Giving Guide* as a way to think about the annual Stewardship pledge.
- The campaign resulted in pledges totaling just over \$301,000 as of 4/15/18. We are moving in the right direction! Overall, we have received 119 pledges and anticipate receiving more than 30 more. If you have not sent in your pledge, please do! Many thanks to all who have participated with Stewardship this year.

## **Building & Grounds Sub-Council**

*Chair: Stu Spence;*

*Members: Paul Cipriano, Laura Cipriano, Toni Gold, Bill Simmons,  
Peter Meny, David Newton, Ron Sexton, Brian Smith, Chair Stu Spence,  
Jim Venneman, Fred Louis, Hugh Schweitzer*

*Friends of B&G: Ed Sax, Janice Newton; Minister Liaison: Rev. Heather Rion Starr*

*Staff: John Bengtson & Kevin Girouard, Briana Bittel, & Jaz Perez-Acevedo*

*Submitted by David Newton, Secretary Pro Tem, Building and Grounds*

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

*We note with appreciation the past work of Bill Westervelt who passed away this year. He was honored by a B and G motion: "William 'Bill' Westervelt 10/16/1932 - 8/2/2018. He will be remembered for his help on many Building and Grounds Workdays, in addition to his expressed interest in trees. We recognize his contributions of a white oak seedling, a descendent of The Charter Oak, and a Heritage Buckeye. Both juvenile trees are currently growing west of the Memorial Garden, a living memorial to Bill. In addition, the congregation honored Crystal Cruz-Acevedo who stepped down from her (mostly) Sunday sexton duties to spend more time with her growing family and full-time employment.*

In June, Eagle Rivet completed the application of a new covering over the existing old roofing materials on the Sanctuary roof section. The material was applied carefully as a fluid quickly hardening into a resilient continuous coating carrying a limited warranty for 20 years. In addition, the project reengineered four roof drains including screens better designed to prevent accumulation of debris sufficient to create a lake on the roof. Several unexpected expenses associated with necessary repairs occurred. They included the replacement of two failing circulators for the boilers, renovations of the boilers themselves, acquisition of a new floor buffing machine as well as a carpet cleaning machine. In addition, equipment associated with Meeting House Presents programming was stored and a suitable cart for some of it constructed.

The city of Hartford suddenly stopped removing our garbage and recycling containers. Under the "new" prevailing policy, it was necessary to hire Paine, a private contractor, for weekly removal of garbage and biweekly collection of recycling items.

Security for the Meeting House was enhanced.

The chair carts were upgraded by installation of more effective chair retainers solving a long-standing annoying chair stacking issue.

During the entire year, meetings were held to refine and move forward on a project to improve lighting in the Sanctuary. The hope is to have a contract before the summer and perhaps have the work completed by September. The unique architecture of the ceiling presents electrical access issues.

The climate last fall and this spring was characterized by greater precipitation than normal. Twice the water descending from the front lawn and adjacent hardtop caused accumulation sufficient to exceed the capacity of the drain at the west door and the water flooded into the lobby. In addition, heavy rain also caused leaking from the library bay into the men's room off Fellowship Hall. A small drain from the library bay to the south was installed to remove ponding water in the area. Efforts to diagnose the situation and design suitable remedy(s) continue.

The current political climate is hostile to certain “immigrants” among us. Currently discussions are ongoing as to the possibility of repurposing various spaces in the Meeting House with construction additions sufficient to meet standards for taking in one or more individuals should that be appropriate and necessary.

Building and Grounds 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 have been particularly blessed with staff workers John Bengtson, Kevin Girouard, Briana Bittel, Jaz Perez-Acevedo and Crystal Cruz-Acevedo.

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

## Archives

*Chairs: Larry Lunden*

*Members: Zac Mirecki, Brian Matzke*

*Submitted by Larry Lunden*

**Our mission–The Archives:** Serves as the institutional memory of USH. Identifies, acquires, and maintains records of enduring value that chronicle the development of the church. 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.

### **Our accomplishments this year:**

- We have completed the work of sorting through the material donated over the years and left on the shelves. It has all been evaluated and filed.
- We received a donation of two rolls of prints for our building. They have been boxed and filed.
- We received an inquiry from a lady from Waterbury about her parents wedding that was held here in 1981. The city Vital Records department could not find any record of the wedding. I found our record of it performed by Nat Lauriat at the Meeting House. Further research revealed the city had filed it under the wrong year. The lady was very pleased with my success.
- Unfortunately we have almost no records of any weddings from 2000 to the present. Since Jon Luopa, no records of child dedications or weddings have been contributed to the archives. We do have some records of memorial services however.

- I participated in the Volunteer Fair in January. People were fascinated by the old ledger books, where records were kept in earlier times.
- We are receiving the E-News and Orders of Service, which I file.

**Our plans for next year:**

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

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 in a fair and equitable manner.

**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.

## Council on Community Within

*Chair: Carolyn Carlson*

The Community Within supports nine sub-councils which provide a variety of programs and services. In addition to normal liaison responsibilities, the priorities included:

1. Supporting Meeting House Presents with obtaining a music license and developing a standard contract for performers. (Completed)
2. Researching established Unitarian adult spirituality programs with the goal of developing a series of spiritual opportunities for new and existing members to use as a part of their individual faith development path. (In process)
3. Support, strengthen and expand the Membership team through recruitment and possible restructuring. (In process)

**Plans for the upcoming year:**

- Continue to support the development and implementation of a formal adult spirituality program with the hope of starting it next fall. This effort is being led by

Tom Gervais and Judy Robbins in coordination with Marye Gail Harrison and the Council on Spirituality.

- Support Membership restructuring, updating of UU and U orientation, identification and implementation of a “pathway forward” for new members and expansion of spiritual engagement opportunities for all.
- Recruit leadership and activity volunteers, especially in following areas:
  1. Adult Programming Coordinator
  2. Circle Dinners Coordinator
  3. Membership Volunteers (welcome, greet, and special projects)
  4. Program Table Volunteers (after service on Sunday’s)

***Ideas welcome, especially if you’ll help make them happen!***

## **20’s and 30’s**

*Coordinator – Chris Wilt*

2018-2019 has been another great year for the growing USH 20's 30's group. The group's core activity are the Friday night gatherings at the Meeting House, and these events continued to be popular throughout the year. At these events we sometimes just relax, color, hula-hoop, and enjoy each other's company, and other times we discuss deep topics like how we approach maintaining the balance between saving for the future and living life in the moment. In addition to that, we once again ran one of the services during the summer worship series, an activity we all look forward to. Last, the group also enjoys the occasional off-site party. In addition to these scheduled activities, the group also enjoyed more impromptu activities like post-church brunches throughout the year. For the 2019-2020 church year we plan on continuing all of these activities. We are always on the lookout for new activities and friends to enjoy these activities with. If you are interested in joining us, please feel free to contact any of us for more information. You can find contact info on the USH online calendar at [www.ushartford/events](http://www.ushartford/events), look for the 20’s 30’s Gatherings, usually on Fridays.

## **Adult Programming**

*Acting Coordinator – Carolyn Carlson, Board Chair Community Within*

More than a dozen spiritual, educational and social programs occurred during the year due to the dedication, initiative and hard work of the coordinators, instructors and USH liaisons to the instructors. Highlights include:

- **Artists Gathering** – Artists of every persuasion met weekly for the first part of the year to help release their creative force. Coordinated by Maggie Greene.
- **The Authentic Connection and Communication Practice Group** offers its members an opportunity to extend their understanding and practice of Nonviolent Communication (NVC). NVC, also known as Compassionate Communication, and

based on the life-long work of Dr. Marshall Rosenberg, is a conscious way of living, relating with self and others, and communicating, with applications to relationships, parenting, education, organizations, and cultural, political and world conflicts. NVC intends to deepen one's connection to what is most important to oneself, to deepen one's understanding of what is most important to others, and to then explore ways to live that meet the needs of all. NVC met weekly most of the year and is coordinated by Mark Friedman.

- **Ballroom Dancing** is in its fifth year and meets weekly all year long. They average 12 – 14 people per session. The dance instructor is Wendy Nielson, who is a respected professional certified dance instructor for Arthur Murray Studios and Fred Astaire Studios. Ron Friedman is the USH Coordinator.
- **Book Club** – Approximately 10 people attended a monthly discussion usually held at the home of member. Coordinated by Richard Groothuis.
- **Book Table** after service serves as a meeting place as well as a book recycling opportunity. Coordinated by Clara Horn.
- **Death Café:** At a Death Cafe people, often strangers, gather to eat cake, drink tea and discuss death. The objective is *“to increase awareness of death with a view to helping people make the most of their (finite) lives”*. More than 20 people attended the first USH Death Café, hosted by USH member Miriam Byroade.
- **Emei Qigong’s** purpose is to bring energetic balance to every part of the body using gentle repetitive movements (the Taiji) followed by connecting with Universal Energy (the Wuji) which allows a person to go where the energy takes them. The Wuji also allows a gradual deepening meditative state to occur over time. Each practitioner (cultivator) achieves balance, healing, and peace which improve with ongoing practice. Classes are taught by Diana Heymann and offered twice a week throughout the year.
- **Dinner and a Movie** occurs monthly on Friday nights and is coordinated by Nita Hansen as a member of the Alliance Ministry to Women.
- **Living Your Faith!** was a six-month program developed and led by Tom Gervais based on *“Building (and Living!) Your Own Theology”*. It was an intensive and interactive 12-session program in which participants from the three area Unitarian congregations defined and discussed their faith and its impact on their lives. They took a very deliberate look at who they are, what they believe, and who they, individually and collectively, can become. The program culminated in the creation of a personal manifesto by each participant which was their personal call to action in a life of faith.
- **Meeting House Sing-along:** Enthusiastic singers meet monthly on Saturday afternoons to enjoy song. Coordinated by Ed Savage.

- ***Spirituality and Aging*** was a six-session workshop developed and led by Judy Robbins during the fall. The focus was a safe environment to explore some of the existential questions that people often feel as they age.
- ***Tai Chi***: Instructor Lucky Luckingham experimented by offering Tai Chi QiGong during the year but has returned to Tai Chi Form for the time being.
- ***Twilight Fire Circle*** provides public sabbat rituals for members of the pagan and wiccan communities, and workshops when the principle members are able. All sabbat celebrations are open to both Pagan, and respectful non-pagans, alike. There are 8 sabbats in the year which correspond to the solstices and equinoxes, and the cross-corner days which fall about half way between the solstices. They meet at USH during winter months and in area parks during the warmer seasons. The USH contact is Dana Donovan.

## **Unitarian Alliance Ministry to Women**

*Contacts: Nita Hansen and Louise Schmoll*

The Women's Alliance has been a part of this Society for well over 100 years working on behalf of women's issues. With the disappearance of available woman-power our activities have been reduced to just a few that seem to resonate as important. Our annual Senexet Retreat provides an event to foster sisterhood and allow personal growth. Our educational grant program, started more than 25 years ago, continues to honor its founder, Ellie Revill. An occasional Sunday program has spotlighted an issue of interest to all. A handful of women have kept these things alive but there are no guarantees for the future.

## **Caring Network Sub-Council**

*Chair: Eve Pech*

Sub-Council Members: JoAnne Bauer, Carolyn Carlson, Nita Hansen, Ginny Hedrick, Valerie Klokow, Deb Meny, Rachel Mintell, Yakhonda Mwenelupembe, David Newton, Janice Newton, Kit Northup, Nancy Reed, Tom Reed, Laurie Rollins, and Marilyn Stockton,

Rev. Heather Rion Starr, Rev. Cathy Rion Starr, and Rev. Erica Richmond, ex-officio members

Supporting Members: Kayla Costenoble, Katie Doyle, Ron Friedman, Lisa Galinski, Diana Heymann, Susan Hope, Joan Kemble, Cat Lanser, Peter Magistri

**Our 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.

### **Our accomplishments this year:**

- We continue to arrange rides to services and activities at the Meeting House, doctor's appointments, and day surgeries. We have helped arrange public transportation as needed. Nita Hansen coordinates this effort.

- We reach out to members and friends who are no longer able to join us at the Meeting House for services and other activities, and have given support through calls, notes, cards and visits.
- We have volunteered to help out at Memorial Receptions at the Meeting House and attend funerals and memorial services at other locations to support members of our community at times of loss.
- We continue to knit Comfort Shawls. Since the inception of the USH Comfort Shawl Ministry in 2002, we have given 297 shawls! The knitters gather Under-the-Stairs on the second Sunday of the month, September-June, to knit. We would love to have you join us!
- We have made good use of the “Take Them a Meal” website. This website has worked out very well and makes it easy for friends and members to participate. Deb Meny coordinates this effort.
- We are grateful to Rev. Cathy and Rev. Heather for many calls and member visits they have made. We also appreciate their monthly visits to Seabury. Edith Savage and Elsie Rickard have agreed to be the Caring Network’s contacts at Seabury.
- We have urged that notification of the deaths of members of our USH community be communicated as soon as possible.
- Two new centers have received our Food and Personal Hygiene collections this year: a neighborhood Homeless Care Center in Hartford's north end and a regional Hartford Food Bank Collection Center in West Hartford's Town Hall. (We also delivered items to our long-term recipients on Albany Avenue in Hartford.) Expanding our outreach may help broaden the Capital Region's awareness of our Society and our commitment to improving the lives of our neighbors. The volume of contributions is beginning to increase and likely will continue to grow as this personal outreach is mentioned occasionally from the pulpit and in periodic articles in the Enews. Rev. Cathy spearheaded this broadening outreach.

### **Our plans for next year:**

- In partnership with the Women’s Alliance, we plan to offer a program called the Conversation Project during the 2019-2020 Church year. This program focuses on end of life planning.
- We are working on drawing up a “First Steps” document that would be a list of community resources for people to consult when they approach us for help.
- The CN seeks to strengthen our ties to the 20-30s group and the youth membership of USH.

We are only able to continue our work through the help and support of those within our community. If you would like to join us on the Caring Network Sub-Council, please let one of our members know. You will 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 to celebrate with you on a joyous occasion! You are not alone.

## **Connection Circles** **(formerly Small Group Ministry)**

*Chair: Martha Bradley*

Small Group Ministry was renamed Connection Circles because it was felt this name better represents the purpose of the group, and would be more attractive to potential participants. Connection Circles remain a program of the Council on Community Within. A summer worship service was held highlighting Connection Circles as a spiritual practice. The planned training for new facilitators took place in July. Five facilitators were trained. Esther McCone decided to step back from the role of Co-chair, leaving Martha Bradley as Chair. Two testimonials were given from the pulpit in the Fall to encourage participation.

Two regular 8 week Connection Circles and one specialized group were held. One new facilitator observed and assisted in a session and then took on her own group which went well. There is still a problem finding enough facilitators, as most of those trained elected not to take on groups this time around for various reasons. We still hope to offer a 4 week session this summer.

## **Festival of the Season**

*Co-Chairs: Diana Heymann and Crystal Kelley*

“I enjoy coming [to FOS] with my grandkids. They love it and get to meet new kids.”

The 2018 FOS was a wonderful event with exciting new activities and traditional favorites. The Gingerbread Houses engaged everyone: those who worked and those who played. The wreath-making was a big hit as always. Puppet making and Puppet Theater made its creative mark and next time we'll find room for it upstairs so there will be the opportunity for greater participation. Ornament making drew in many and Tattoos were a surprising hit with all ages. Matt the Balloon Man charmed everyone first with magic wands, swords, flowers and fanciful hats and then kept everyone spell-bound with magic and comedy. There was music everywhere: upstairs and down and there was even creative dancing in the sanctuary. Our new “12 Days of Xmas” director gathered everyone in the sanctuary at exactly the right moment for the enactment. This was followed by a lovely service. Dinner was yummy and Cookie Decorating for dessert worked remarkably well. Set up and cleaning upstairs and down...before and after crafts and before and after dinner was totally amazing! Thanks to everyone for making this a beautiful afternoon and with some financial help from individuals, we just made ends meet. When will we do this again? Let's gather some youthful energy to make it happen! -Respectfully submitted, Diana Heymann

# Membership Sub-Council (MSC)

## Membership Sub-Council (MSC) Annual Report –

July 2018 – June 2019

*Sub-Council Members: Brian Harvey: Chair, Ginny Allen, Zean Gassmann, Esther McKone, Yakhonda Mwenelupembe, Bruce Robbins, Judy Sullivan  
Council Chair: Carolyn Carlson; Lead Co-Minister: Rev. Heather Rion Starr*

**Mission:** 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, over 40 different USH members have taken part in our Sunday Welcoming effort, serving as ushers, greeters, and hosts at the Welcome and Visitors Tables. We receive many comments from visitors and newcomers regarding how welcome they feel attending our worship services.

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 coordinated with Joanne Orlando who reached out to *The Village for Families and Children* for 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.

We 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 2018 and February-March 2019. 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.

We celebrate new and returning members in a ceremony during worship twice a year. On December 2, 2018 we added 7 new members. On April 28, 2019 we welcomed 6 new members into our congregation.

## **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 Halloween pancake breakfast in October; the Festival of the Season in December; a Stewardship pancake breakfast in March; a Newcomer/New Member Potluck in May; and the annual church picnic in June.

We published the updated color USH Member & Friends Photo Directory in January 2019. 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:**

We will continue to integrate more newcomers, new members and young adults into Membership SC related activities and solicit feedback regarding their experiences in becoming familiar with USH. We look to work more closely with other sub-councils and committees to develop a not only a pathway to membership, but pathways to participation, leadership and continued spiritual growth. We also welcome new participation on the Membership sub-council, as well as encouraging a “refreshing” of volunteer commitments and roles in our congregation.

# Meeting House Presents

*Chair: Paul Cipriano and Laura Cipriano*

*Meeting House Presents is completing a successful second year, with continued strong volunteer support from Brian Harvey, Sarah McKenzie, Carolyn Carlson, Ed Savage, Janice Newton, David Newton, Deb Meny, Peter Meny, Diana Heymann, Fred Lewis, Larry Lunden, Kathy Riley, Nita Hansen, Tina Davies, Helen David, Sherry Manetta, Dana Donovan and Virginia DeLima.*

Paul and Laura Cipriano organized ten shows at USH between September 2018 and May 2019 with \$5000 approved by the USH Board (but unspent) to back guarantees for performers. This report was written after nine shows, with one show left in the season. Projected year end figures are over 600 attendees, and several thousand dollars profit for USH. Production of the series was helped immensely with the anonymous donation of funds to purchase a professional level sound system. We are in negotiations with exciting acts for 2019-20.

Performers in 2018-19 were:

- Sept. 14, 2018 Jill Friedman, Tang, Self-Suffice, David Giardina, and friends
- Sept. 29, 2018 Peter Mayer
- Oct. 26, 2018 Charlie King
- Nov. 30, 2018 Lula Wiles
- Dec. 28, 2018 Sarah Harmon McKenzie and Ellen Iovino
- Jan. 18, 2019 Hubby Jenkins (of the Carolina Chocolate Drops)
- Feb. 22, 2019 Citizen U
- Mar. 22, 2019 Belle of the Fall
- April 5, 2019 Mackie and Me
- May 5, 2019 Pete Seeger Birthday Party & Sing-Along Gathering with Annie Patterson & Peter Blood, Sally Rogers, Magpie, and Charlie King
- Net profit for first nine shows is approximately \$2200. Weather and TV sports games impacted attendance at several concerts.
- Thirteen people supported Meeting House Presents by purchasing season tickets for \$1950.
- Total guaranteed amounts for all eight performers were: \$3500.00, less than the amount authorized by the board.
- Total attendance at the first 9 shows was 520 people.

One show remains in the season, with a guarantee of \$600. This is the May 5, 2019 Pete Seeger 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party & Sing-Along Gathering with Annie Patterson & Peter Blood, Sally Rogers, Magpie, and Charlie King. Fifteen tickets have been sold in advance for \$300 for this show, as of April 10, 2019.

Although we won't have final figures until the first week of May, the 2018-19 season provided positive cash flow and brought new people to the Meeting House.

Performers in the upcoming 2019-20 season include Moonfruits, Annie Sumi, Louise Mosrie, Belle of the Fall, and Scott Cook, a total of nine concerts.

We need help with publicity by posting flyers for the shows. If you would like to help support performing arts at USH, either posting flyers, marketing the series, setting up/cleaning up refreshments, opening/closing, please contact Paul or Laura Cipriano at: MeetingHousePresents@gmail.com - Submitted by Laura and Paul Cipriano

## Council on Social Justice

*Chair: Judy Sullivan*

This year the Social Justice Sub-Councils have met quarterly to share the challenges, goals and successes of each group and consider ways to incorporate common themes. The broader issue of determining the vision of Social Justice at USH is guiding an assessment to answer questions of how to identify the role of Social Justice in the congregation and interaction with the larger community. An analysis of the present sub-council categories more clearly expresses the nature of the work of each group.

- Racial Justice: *Race Matters*
- Disability Justice/Advocacy: *AIM (Accessibility and Inclusion Ministries)*
- Climate/Environmental Justice: *Green Sanctuary*
- Immigrant Justice: *Refugee Resettlement, Sanctuary Discernment*
- Community Outreach: *Knox Community Garden, Noah Webster, Food Pantries, Upper Albany NRZ, The Village*

A goal for 2019/2020 is to ascertain the concerns and priorities of USH in order to determine how and where to direct our resources. The stronger the support and involvement of the congregation, the more powerful the impact of our mission.

### ***Racial Justice***

Social Justice has also taken steps to start the discussion about racism in our own faith community. *Beloved Conversations*, a UU program which considers individual and systemic bias in our organization has been well received and will be repeated in the coming year. The participants include a majority of the USH Board, supporting the commitment to build upon the understanding of systemic bias as we look with new insight into our standard practices.

### ***Immigrant Justice***

In the past few years, USH has repeatedly been asked to offer a safe refuge, or sanctuary, to victims of unjust deportation. The increasing frequency of this request has sparked an interest in how our faith community can enact our commitment to justice. In response, the newly formed Sanctuary Discernment Team is actively assessing the capacity of the resources required in becoming a sanctuary congregation. Consideration of available leadership, congregational volunteers, community partners, and physical and financial resources will determine how we might answer the call for immigration justice in the present political era.

### ***LGBTQ Justice***

*Hartford Pridefest* provided an opportunity to collaborate with our neighboring UU congregations this past September while celebrating our welcoming tradition. USH joined with Unitarian Universalist Society: East (Manchester), Unitarian Universalist Church in Meriden and the Universalist Church of West Hartford for a well-attended day of festivity. The UU booth made available voter registration information and application forms along with some fun activities.

### ***Community Organizing***

USH has also joined over 50 interfaith organizations in the newly formed *Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Alliance (GHIAA)*, which has formed to develop leaders to act collectively for social justice. This faith-based organizing provides a vehicle for religious institutions to have power to make their common values more of a force in society, and its methods strengthen the congregations who engage in it. Training is ongoing and the official kick-off, with the determination of projects, is scheduled for October.

### ***Social Justice at USH***

This brief overview, along with the sub-council reports, gives us a general look at our SJ activities. In keeping with our UU Principles, all promote acceptance, respect and compassion in our world community. The question now is where and how to allocate our available resources. Do we choose charity, advocacy, or social justice actions that achieve a lasting change? How do we nurture a ministry of activism in our congregation?

*“When there is so much to be done, there must be something for me to do.”*

-Dorothea Dix

# Race Matters Update

*Submitted by Gloria Francesca Mengual*

**I. Group Reflections & Discussions** - Race Matters has provided four opportunities for USH attendees to participate in sessions reflecting on the role racism plays within our country, our state, our towns, and within USH. The sessions included:

- **Implicit Bias** - A overview of the disconnect between implicit and explicit bias (cognitive dissonance) and its potentially harmful effects on our decisions and interactions with others.
- **Storytelling** - A frank, honest, and often moving sharing of life experiences that have impacted who each of us is today. Using The Cultural Timeline helped participants move from seeing someone as the 'other' to recognizing our commonalities and shared values.
- **The Case for Reparations** - Discussion of this article by Ta-NeHisi Coates covered various examples of systemic racism in U.S. history, including key federal policies created to benefit solely white residents, along with discriminatory policies that harmed and continue to harm communities of color.
- **Don't be Colorblind; Be Color Brave** - Discussion followed a *TED Talk*, which focused on the harm behind being 'colorblind' and the importance of becoming comfortable with being uncomfortable when we talk about race.

**II. Beloved Conversations** - Approximately 20 members of USH are participating in Beloved Conversations, a series of dialogues and an opportunity to reflect upon and heal the spiritual and organizational wounds that racism causes in our faith community. The program aims to foster cross-cultural relationships within our congregation and the community beyond our walls. Our conversations have been enlightening, sometimes uncomfortable, often rewarding, and opportunities for self-reflection and personal growth, with a congregational focus as well.

*"Not everything that is faced can be changed. But nothing can be changed until it is faced."*  
- James Baldwin

**III. SJ Councils Fair** – Race Matters shared some materials at the Social Justice Councils fair following a Sunday service this winter, providing a poster board highlighting Race Matters activities, the upcoming Beloved Conversations, and an article entitled 'White Fragility.'

# The Village for Families and Children

*Joanne Orlando, Liaison*

The Unitarian Society of Hartford and The Village for Families and Children have been building an increasingly deep relationship over the past six years. USH is committed to helping The Village attain its mission “To build a community of strong healthy families who “protect and nurture children.” The children from The Village have come to USH annually for the Festival of the Season in December and the Picnic in June. The children feel welcomed by this community and enjoy the chance to “just be kids”. During the year there were opportunities for outreach between the church and The Village: in October, Joanne Orlando, Rayla Mattson and Rev. Cathy attended the Annual Meeting of the Village, in January there was a table at the All Councils Fair about The Village and a number of USH members volunteered to help out with future events. There are periodic articles about The Village in the E-News. USH also helps the children served by The Village improve their lives through donations. In the summer of 2018, USH raised \$1,395 for the Uniform Program run by The Village. The Good Neighbor offering in March of 2019 of \$725 was designated for The Village.

Next year’s goals are to continue what we have already developed, to increase the number of people involved in this relationship, and for everyone to think of more opportunities to have the children from The Village interact with children and adults at USH.

## Noah Webster Micromagnet Society School Ministry

*Chair: Diana Heymann; Members: Brian Harvey, Peter Meny, Diana Heymann*

*Submitted by Diana Heymann*

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

**Accomplishments:** We spend at least one hour weekly in classrooms with teachers and students who welcome our assistance. We volunteer in kindergarten, grades 3, 5, and 6 and assist with reading, writing, and math.

**Plans for Next Year:** We will continue to provide our services to teachers and students at NWMSS. Come join us!

## Refugee Resettlement

*Richard Groothuis, Co-Coordinator, Refugee Support Program—Interfaith Refugee Resettlement Committee*

Starting in May 2016, working with individuals from 8 faith groups, Seabury and Duncaster, over 20 members of USH have at times supported a Syrian refugee family consisting of parents and 3 young children. The family spoke no English when they arrived here. The entire family has gained good English speaking skills. We have continued to support the father, Fadi, in his work as a pastry chef at City Steam where he is well regarded and has received several salary increases. He is seeking additional work for his Friday off day.

The mother, Eman, has recently obtained a cleaning job, at Medina Academy, to which she can bring her youngest daughter. She is also working with one of our volunteers to clean homes on Friday.

Time continues to be spent complying with extensive and complex governmental requirements to maintain their economic support. We were successful this year in helping them obtain Green Cards which are the next step to citizenship. Since *Temporary Family Assistance* expired earlier this year, the family has been able to meet its day-to-day financial obligations from its own income.

Eman has a driving permit and is working to obtain a license which will reduce her dependence on volunteers to drive her to work. Extensive time has been spent on medical and ongoing major dental issues (which may require thousands of dollars to address). Other continuing long term expenses include payments on the travel loan which they were required to obtain in order to come to the United States, and a car loan. The 11-year-old son, Hamdi, is well regarded at school but is still several years behind his grade level class despite significant support from the Bloomfield school system, volunteers and neighbors. Four year old Farah has blossomed in nursery school and is quickly acquiring English. Three year old Sham is still at home until she can begin nursery school later this year.

Although many volunteers have dropped away, as the family has gained more independence, others have continued and the family has made their own contacts in the community. When we all committed to work with a refugee family, Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services (IRIS; [www.irisct.org](http://www.irisct.org)), the sponsoring organization, estimated that the family would/should be independent after 6 months. What a dream! Although we are approaching the 3-year mark we really believe that we are getting there. Needless to say we are not done. All of us who have participated in this challenging effort have taken away more than we have given.

## **Accessibility and Inclusion Ministry (AIM)**

*Doris Maldonado, Co-Chair; Susan Hope, Co-Chair, April, 2019*

*Team members: Katharine Ann Anderson;*

*Briana Bittel, leader of the chronic pain and illness group;*

*Paula Bleck, leader of the mobility group; Lisa Campo; Molly Cole;*

*Dennis Gallant, leader of the perceptual group (hearing, sight, sensory);*

*Debi Gosselin, secretary; Flo Grieb; Susan Hope, Co-Chair; Cat Lanser;*

*Bill LaPorte-Bryan, leader of the mental health group;*

*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 improving the way our church welcomes, integrates and supports people with physical or psychological disabilities and their families in our congregation.

**Accomplishments:** We continued our plans for gaining accreditation as a church that's particularly supportive, accessible and inclusive of people with physical and mental disabilities. We continued our partnership with Unified Theater and Connecticut chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Health (NAMI; [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)), and offered voter registration accessibility in partnership with Disability Rights of CT.

**Disability Worship Service:** Rev. Cathy led a disability-themed worship service on November 18th, 2018. The good neighbor offering that day was donated to Parents Available to Help, Family Voices which is a statewide organization assisting families with special needs as well as mentoring youth ages 13-26 via CT KASA (Kids as Self Advocates) with special needs.

**Workshops:** In September, Doris Maldonado offered the *NAMI Basics* training for families and caregivers of children younger than 22. The free-6-week training provides an overview of diagnosis, services and tips on navigating the mental health systems.

Susan Hope hosted a disability-focused Small Group Ministry/Connection Circle, in the fall of 2018.

**Better Lighting in the Sanctuary:** Focusing on the needs of people who have trouble seeing during a worship service or other events in the Sanctuary, we supported B&G as they reviewed alternate designs for improving the lighting. It is likely that we will have enhanced lighting in the Sanctuary in the coming year.

**Plans for next year:** In the fall of 2019, the AIM team should be in a position to submit a congregational request to the UUA to be formally accredited as an AIM church.

We have identified a social justice project involving a theatrical collaboration between USH members (all ages) and The First and Last Players of Middletown, to be focused on stigma related to mental illness. We are in the process of obtaining UUA approval for this effort.

We will also start a new support group for people with mental health issues and their families with NAMI's help, continue to provide monthly access for voter registration in collaboration with Disability Rights Connecticut (DRCT; [www.disrightsct.org](http://www.disrightsct.org)), resurvey the congregation to be sure we have accomplished our goals related to accessibility and inclusion, and receive formal approval from the congregation to make the request on their behalf. -Respectfully submitted, Doris Maldonado

## **Green Sanctuary Sub-Council**

*Co-Chairs: Mary Sherwin and Jeff Howard*

***Members/Followers:** Edith Barrett, JoAnne Bauer, Gary Bent, Craig Best, Virginia DeLima, Lisa Galinski, Marye Gail Harrison, Don Hope, Shari Lanza, Peter Magistri (emeritus), Brian Matzke, Carol Padberg, Bev Prager (emeritus), Kathleen Riley, Ed Savage, Edith Savage, Bill Simmons, Mike Winterfield, Rev. Heather Rion Starr.*

**Our mission:** To help our congregation live in harmony with and create a healthier world environment by spearheading continued 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. In 2017, USH was recertified by UUA's review committee as a Green Sanctuary, one of only a handful of UU congregations that have qualified for this step. Certification (and recertification), revolving in part around a 5-year action plan, is granted to UU congregations actively engaged in environmentally-oriented activities in Worship and Religious Education and in activities focusing on Sustainable Living and Environmental Justice.

### **Our activities in the past year:**

- GSS continued to financially sponsor the climate and environmental affairs work of the Interreligious Ecojustice Network (IREJN; [irejn.org](http://irejn.org)), which has designated USH as Sustainable House of Worship. We hosted and helped IREJN organize a Green Forum on State Environmental Legislation. GSS also continued to support and engage in the renewable-energy work of the CT Roundtable on Climate and Jobs, of

which GSS is an affiliate. And it represented USH as the City of Hartford worked—successfully—to reconstitute the citywide Advisory Council on the Environment.

- Worship and Celebration activities included helping to develop the annual Earth Day service.
- Our Sustainable-Living work has included: a *Solar For All* workshop in conjunction with the Connecticut Green Bank and the solar nonprofit organization Posigen. We also made a presentation to All Souls Church in New London about the financing model that USH members developed to support installation of our solar array. In addition, we are following up on one of the ideas that emerged from a brainstorming session during our group reading and discussion of the *Community Resilience Reader* in 2018: a “repair cafe” – a daylong event in which people bring broken items (e.g., lamps, bikes) and a cadre of volunteers help them bring these items back to useful life. This year we made two visits to a repair cafe held periodically in Willimantic and are investigating the possibility of launching one at USH.
- GSS again carried out the annual Holiday Re-Gifting Sale that netted the Meeting House over \$1,500 and contributed to the Meeting House’s holiday cheer.

**Our plans for next year:** GSS continues conversations with the congregation about how USH can contribute to Community Resilience. It 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 attention to seasonal celebrations such as equinox and solstice events plus the Earth Day service. We hope to collaborate with the Religious Education team to incorporate more nature and environmental content into the RE curriculum.

## **USH Watkinson Community Garden Plot**

*(a Community Partnership with Knox, Inc. of Hartford)*

*Submitted by RevHeather*

After some months of inquiring, in June of 2015 I learned that the Hartford-centered non-profit organization Knox, Inc. had identified a space that our congregation could use and tend in the large Watkinson Community Garden that is located at the base of the Meeting House parking lot (and accessed via our lower parking lot). That first summer we (me and anyone I could corral into helping me!) simply tried to plant some things and get a handle on the weeds. The next summer of 2016 we were a little more prepared and had worked with a local landscaper to lay down landscaping fabric which helped suppress the weeds. There was some interest in the idea of a labyrinth on our large plot there, but not the funds to fully pay for or outsource the project. So I laid out a simple labyrinth path in spray paint and duct tape (DIY!). in the summer of 2017, Knox, Inc. generously coordinated a

Watkinson (High School) Seniors work party and planted many plants to help outline the labyrinth path. Over the fall of 2017 and 2017-18 winter, they (Knox) also woodchipped the path. Late in the summer of 2018 USH members Susan and Don Hope, with planning and creative wisdom from Bill Simmons, had a meditation bell installed in collaboration with Knox gardeners Alvin DeLeon and Guarionex Vargas. Other USH members, including Esther McKone, have donated plants and helped to tend the plot overall. Over the 2018-19 year Knox has planted five fruit trees on the northeast side of our plot—so exciting for our multigenerational community to have the experience of tending these five new fruit trees!

The USH Watkinson Community Garden Plot continues to be a big project--it is a large space and our community is less active here at the Meeting House in the summer months, precisely when plants (of all kinds) are growing. However, more important than how carefully weeded our labyrinth paths are, are the connections we make with the many gardener-farmers who are active in the Garden in the summer months, and also our continually-growing relationship with Knox, Inc. Knox runs all the many community gardens in Hartford, tends the public green spaces, trains formerly-incarcerated Hartford residents in landscaping jobs, plants trees throughout the city, and does more for the City of Hartford than can be enumerated here. If you have any interest or energy in working in our USH Watkinson Community Garden Plot and/or furthering our relationship with Knox, Inc., please speak with RevHeather. Or just head down to the Watkinson Community Garden, smile at a neighboring gardener, and weed a bit—there's always plenty to do. Thanks to all involved!

# Council on Spiritual Life

*Chair: Marye Gail Harrison*

During this one-year-only term to complete a term for Chair of Spiritual Life, I have touched base with the Revs, our DRE, our Music Director, Worship Associates and Chancel Artists. These meetings were to listen and learn what these people and groups do and what help if any, I might provide. That they asked little of me is a tribute to the high quality and dedication of these staff people and the lay Worship Associates and Chancel Artists. My role as Spiritual Life Chair has been more as a Board member and Task Force leader as needed. Activities for all those mentioned above will appear separately in the USH Annual Report. Below is a report on the other activities in which I participated:

- Intern Minister: Convened Task Force to select an Intern Minister and facilitated the recommendation's passage through the Board. Began selection process of an Intern Committee for next year.
- Sabbatical Coverage: Leading the Task Force to guide smooth Sabbatical Coverage during our Revs Sabbatical Oct through Dec 2019. Members include the Revs, Lisa Galinski, Laurie Kelliher and me.
- Ministerial Assessment Process: Leading Task Force to work with Revs to design an appropriate process for annual assessment of ministry at USH – theirs and the Board's. Members are the Revs, Joe Rubin and me.
- Spiritual Development Programs: Participated in cooperation with Carolyn Carson, Chair of Community Within, and program leaders Tom Gervais and Judy Robbins in exploring our congregational needs for more spiritual development programs. Explored Faith Forward and Wellspring. Under Tom's leadership engaged the Revs from Fern St and Manchester UU churches. Currently reps from those churches and Tom and Judy are completing a review of Wellspring with the intent of recommending to the 3 churches to buy, share and teach this program together as a possible outcome.
- E-News Blog: Writing an almost weekly Blog for E-News to offer encouragement and inspiration especially for those who cannot attend services.
- Feedback on Summer Worship series: Facilitated Under the Stairs conversation for feedback on our Summer worship series on Spiritual practices.
- Committee Fair: helped Rayla, DRE, set up a table to invite interest in the RE program for our kids.
- Stewardship: Hosted a Soiree at my home and also was the Board rep at another soiree. Also contributed to the Stewardship Service Auction.
- Board Retreats: Attended Board Retreats.

## **Chancel Arts**

*Chair: Kathie Ferguson*

We had another productive year. We added new members due to the Council Fair. Our members all sign up for time to decorate the chancel which makes the work load much easier for all the members. The hanging for the library is complete and has been hung. We will be scheduling a dedication event for this hanging. Each design on this banner is by individual members of the committee. Paula Bleck completed the design and assembled it.

The committee has had several discussions about the design for a commemorative hanging to recognize the donors for the solar panels. This project should be completed this year and hung on the wall by the side entrance to the church. It will be a sun design and have all the names of the donors on it. Many members of the committee have been part of the design ideas. Paula and Aaron Bleck will be making the hanging.

We look forward to another creative and productive year thanks to our committee members. They are as follows: Diane Cadrain, Martha Bradley, Paula Bleck, Linda Ericson-Ebel, Tina Davies, Debi Gosselin, Maggie Green, Yakhonda Mwenelupembe, Susan Hope; New Members: Evan Williams, Laura Cipriano, Theodora Ruhs.

## **Worship Associates Sub-council 2018-2019**

*Chair: Laurie Kelliher; Lead Minister: Rev Cathy Rion Starr*

*Members: John Brancato, Jake Courser, Lisa Galinski, Laurie Kelliher, Margaret Leicach, Doris Maldonado, Peter Meny, Judy Robbins, Carol Simpson, Sue Smolski, Rick Tsukada*

The heart of the Unitarian Society of Harford lives in the Sunday morning worship service when the congregation gathers for spiritual renewal, reflection, inspiration, challenge, support and a shared mission in the spirit of our Unitarian Universalist tradition and principles. Rich sermons, contemplative moments of prayer and meditation, Time for All Ages and communal benediction are enriched by the artistry of the music and embellished by the beautiful settings of Chancel Arts.

Our co-ministers Revs. Cathy Rion Starr and Heather Rion Starr guide our church year and are supported by the Worship Associates (WAs) who participate in every service and bring their individual voices to the pulpit. Once a month a guest speaker delivers the sermon and the WAs coordinate these Sundays with the speaker, music director, the Director of RE and the office. For many years during the summer when the ministers are not in the pulpit as often a theme has been developed to unify the multiple speakers. The summer of 2018 was based on Spiritual Practice which led to an abundance of excellent services revolving

around creativity in the arts, meditative practices, small group ministry and more. The summer of 2019 promises more months of unique explorations in worship with the theme “Nourish”.

New challenges arrive in the upcoming church year when our ministers are on sabbatical for October, November and December 2019. The WA group is aware that these holiday-laden months rich in celebration can also be a time of tenderness and pensive regard that may be heightened by the absence of our trusted ministers. While it is not known whether a part-time minister will be hired or if Sunday speakers will be drawn from the community and USH members, the WAs will remain a presence of constancy and familiarity in the pulpit during the rituals of our Sunday worship. Stability will also be enhanced by the sabbatical team being made up of members of the WA group and the Council on Spiritual Life chair.

January 2020 will open with the excitement of an additional voice in the pulpit when Dianne Daniels begins her term as a ministerial intern. The WA team welcomes the opportunity to work with Dianne. Coupled with the January return for the Reverends Rion Starr, 2020 will be another rich year for the WA team. Each of us honors our role as a Worship Associate and appreciate the many kind words and support from the congregation and its ministers.

## **Strategic Plan Goals**

*January 2018*

### **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 and sustainable financial model

Goal 4: USH will attract and integrate a healthy stream of visitors

### **Working for Justice**

Goal 5: USH will be committed and spiritually grounded partners in building social, racial and environmental justice in Greater Hartford and beyond

# 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 Meetings with input from some staff and lay leaders.

Would you be interested in:

- Energizing some new Connection Circles?
- Scheduling post-service Reservoir and/or Elizabeth Park Walks & 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 and Staff

## USH Board of Directors 2018-2019



**President**  
Sherry Manetta  
860/674-0105  
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**President Elect**  
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**Secretary**  
Sarah Harmon McKenzie  
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**Treasurer**  
Tom Richardson  
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**Spiritual Life Council Chair**  
Marye Gail Harrison  
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**Administration Council Chair**  
Sue Tenorio  
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**Community Within Council Chair**  
Carolyn Carlson  
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Updated: 7-12-2018



**Social Justice Council Chair**  
Judy Sullivan  
860/719-9886  
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## USH Staff 2018-2019



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Reports to the Board



**Co-Minister**  
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Reports to Rev. Heather



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**RE Assistant**  
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Reports to Rayla Mattson



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**Nursery Staff**  
Dominique Bourgeois  
Reports to Rayla Mattson



**Assistant Sexton**  
Kevin Girouard  
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Reports to Rev. Heather & John Bengtson



**Summer Accompanist**  
Pi-Hsun Shih



**Nursery Staff**  
Yamel Fernandez  
Reports to Rayla Mattson



**Fellowship Sexton**  
Crystal Acevedo-Cruz  
Reports to Rev. Heather



**Nursery Staff**  
Afrah Khalil  
Reports to Rayla Mattson



**Nursery Staff**  
Rae Bittel  
Reports to Rayla Mattson



**Fellowship Sexton Alternate**  
Jazaira Perez-Acevedo  
Reports to Rev. Heather



**Nursery Staff**  
Gianna Poggie  
Reports to Rayla Mattson



**Nursery Staff**  
Jazaira Perez-Acevedo  
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**Custodian**  
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Reports to Rev. Heather



**Nursery Staff**  
Tylina Jackson  
Reports to Rayla Mattson



**Nursery Staff**  
Sol Arvisu  
Reports to Rayla Mattson

# USH Council Personnel

## Unitarian Society of Hartford - Council Personnel

*Nourishing spirit, building community, working for justice*

Updated: 05/08/2018 and ever changing

### LEGEND

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

### Board of Directors (Elected)

**President** - Sherry Manetta  
**President-elect** - Joe Rubin  
**Treasurer** - Phil Gardner  
**Secretary** - Sarah Harmon McKenzie  
**Administration** - Hank Murray  
**Spiritual Life** - Open  
**Community Within** - Chris Wilt  
**Social Justice** - Judy Sullivan

Mtgs: Monthly Tuesdays 6:30-8:30 PM

**Endowment Committee** -  
Chair: Jean Groothuis (2015-18),  
Tom Richardson (2015-18),  
Steve Noble (2016-19),  
Steve Basche (2017-20),  
Derek Slap (2018-21)

**Planned Giving** - Open

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

**Nominating Committee** - Chair: John  
Brancato; Diana Heymann, Judy Sullivan,  
Will Anderson, Bill LaPorte-Bryan

**Audit Committee** - (year-to-year term)  
Tom Richardson, Sue Tenorio, Lisa Galinski

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

### Council on Administration - Chair: Hank Murray

**Building & Grounds** - Co-Chairs: Stuart Spence & Ed Sax;  
Paul Cipriano, Vincent Hall, Fred Louis, 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** - Deb Hagen

**Art** - Chair: Sara Sturges; Peter Upton

**Stewardship** - Chair: Kate Gervais; Ginny Hedrick, Caron  
Lanouette, Carolyn Carlson, Kim McClain, Tara Cote, Brian  
Mullen (staff)

**Finance** - Chair: Phil Gardner (Treasurer); Peter Meny (Building  
& Grounds), Hank Murray (Administration), Kate Gervais  
(Stewardship), Brian Mullen (Bookkeeper), Rev. Cathy

**Human Resources**: Chair: Greg Nickett; Ron Sexton

### Council on Spiritual Life - Chair: Open

**Worship Associates** - Coordinator: Sue Smolski

**Music Ministries** - Sam Moffett (staff liaison)

**Chancel Art** - Chair: Kathie Ferguson

**Religious Education** - Rayla D. Mattson (staff liaison)

### Council on Community Within - Chair: Chris Wilt

**Membership** - Chair: Brian Harvey

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

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

**Seabury** - Contact: Marye Gail Harrison

**Comfort Shaw Knitters** - Contact: Janice Newton

**Programs for Adults & Families** - Open

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

**Festival of the Season** -  
Coordinators: Kathie Ferguson & Crystal Kelley

**20s & 30s** - Contact: Chris Wilt

**Meeting House Presents** -  
Chairs: Paul Cipriano & Laura Stewart Cipriano

### Council on Social Justice - Chair: Judy Sullivan

**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

**Knox, Inc.** - Contact: Rev. Heather

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

**Equal Access/ AIM (Accessibility & Inclusion Ministry)** -  
Chair: Deb Hagen

Community Partners

UJA



<http://historicbuildingsct.com>



USH Commemorative Quilt



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