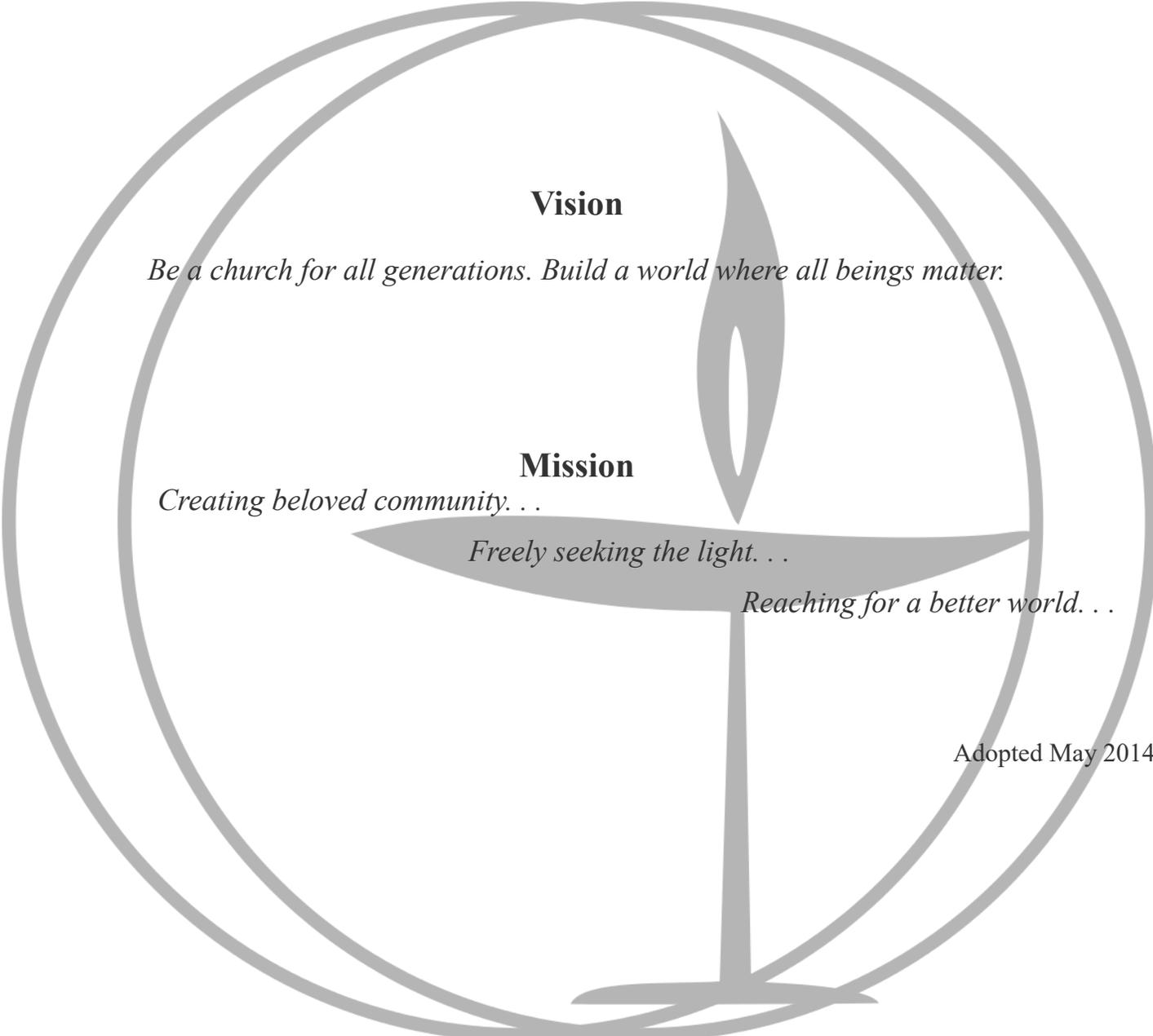




# 2017-2018

## Year in Review

# Unitarian Universalist Society of Oneonta



## Vision

*Be a church for all generations. Build a world where all beings matter.*

## Mission

*Creating beloved community. . .*

*Freely seeking the light. . .*

*Reaching for a better world. . .*

Adopted May 2014

**Our Staff Team:** *The Reverend Craig Schwalenberg, Tim Horne, Music Director; Susan Ryder, Director of Religious Education; Evelyn Warren, Office Administrator; Susan Gates, Bookkeeper; David Ray, Custodian; Michael Frye Hunt, Worship Musician*

**Board of Trustees:** *Karen Palmer, President; Amy Forster-Rothbart, Vice President; John Bagby, Clerk; Jeane Bennett-O'Dea, Treasurer; Mary Ruhoff, Moderator; Keith Willcox, Nathan Elsener, Adrienne Martini, Bob Brzozowski, Adina Johnson*

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This is not a complete report of all activities the congregation engaged in this year. If/when more reports are submitted, there will be an addendum published.

## Minister's Report to the Congregation

### Reverend Craig Schwalenberg

The 2017/2018 church year at UUSO included a focus on growth and change, with the congregation seeking new ways to best accomplish our mission and continue our shared ministry.

#### Worship & Preaching

Worship and religious services remain my primary focus. Feedback on the worship services this year were overwhelmingly positive. All of the regular worship services were also made available on the web or as downloadable podcasts. (A summary of worship services presented through the year is included in the Worship Committee report with detailed descriptions available in the quarterly calendars.)

#### Rites of Passage

I conducted three memorial services and one interment ceremony in the past year.

Ilene B. Arlet (former member) on 7/7/2017 [6/1/1956 - 9/4/2017]

Margaret "Peggy" K. Fowler (non-member) on 9/17/2017 [7/8/1940 - 8/9/2017]

Arlene B. Peabody Ehlers (former member) on 9/28/2017 [6/26/1931 - 3/28/2017]

David "Dave" C. Lincoln Sr. (non-member) on 12/9/2017 [5/7/1946 - 11/25/2017]

For the first time I can remember, I conducted no weddings this past year-- though I was contacted by several couples looking for an officiant. There were no children dedicated in the past church year.

#### Staff, Committee, and Team Support

This year, after several years of consideration and planning, the Board decided to experiment with a new organizational model of governance based on the book Governance and Ministry by Dan Hotchkiss. In the model, the Board creates and oversees committees that work on the ongoing needs of the congregation while the minister creates and works with teams that relate to the various ministries of the congregation. As part of the experiment with this model, the Worship Committee, Social Action Committee, Membership Committee, and the Music Committees were recreated as ministry teams. In consultation with the members of the former committees, the Music Team was disbanded and a Music Guest Coordinator was added to the Worship Team. The Membership Team was renamed the Connections Team (but is still struggling to find members and support.) The Social Action Team has been adjusting to the new model. The experiment was reviewed in January by the Board. While there a couple of members who feel strongly opposed to the new model, the majority of those involved have found the new structure to be more responsive and supportive to their mission and work. There are plans to continue the experiment and possibly expand it next year.

In February, our Bookkeeper/Treasurer, Lynn Beken, left that position. The Finance Committee with assistance from the newly appointed Treasurer, Jeane Bennet-O'Dea, and our Office Administrator, Evelyn Warren, covered the duties of the Bookkeeper while a Search Committee sought a person to fill the position. In early February, the Board hired Susan "Sue" Gates as our new Bookkeeper. I am working closely with the staff, Treasurer, and the Finance Committee to help train and acclimate our new staff member. I have every confidence that Sue will prove to be a valuable asset to UUSO and will help support our active congregation.

## **Congregational Covenant**

In September, the Rev. Evin Carvill Ziemer, our primary contact with our UUA Central East Regional staff, visited the congregation and conducted a workshop to begin the process of creating the congregational covenant. Many good ideas were generated by those in attendance. The Board created a committee to work with the results of the workshop with the goal of crafting a covenant for the congregation's approval at the May meeting. This goal was postponed to the fall congregational meeting as the committee felt they needed more time to get more feedback from the congregation before presenting a final draft of the covenant.

## **Stewardship and Gratitude**

In November, Liz Coit of Stewardship For Us, visited UUSO and conducted a weekend assessment of our stewardship practices and operations. At the conclusion of the weekend, she presented a preliminary report with a longer written report to follow. She was impressed with how healthy and active the congregation was, but had some suggestions about how we might improve our stewardship and pledge campaign. One of the chief recommendations was to actively foster a spiritual practice of gratitude throughout the congregation. The Board, Stewardship Committee, and UUSO staff have all worked to incorporate and encourage practices of gratitude throughout the year. The successful results of the pledge campaign were a testament to how effective these recommendations were. We will continue to consider other recommendations from Liz in the coming year. And, of course, we are thankful for her assistance.

## **Beyond the Congregation**

I continue to serve the following groups and institutions outside of UUSO:

- Unitarian Universalist Trauma Response Ministry Team – Responder
- Unitarian Universalist Ministers' Association – Hospitality
- Animal Care Committee, Hartwick College – Community Member

## **Challenges**

The congregation continues to struggle with a need for volunteers and committee/team support in various areas. Our social activities, while increasing this past year, are not at the level we have seen or we would like. We continue to work on creating an organized system for providing pastoral care and direct assistance.

## **Looking Forward**

I will be starting my 10th year of ministry with UUSO this August. I will be taking a 4 month sabbatical from August through the beginning of December. It is my hope that the congregation will take this time to continue the work they have started on their covenant, the safe congregation work, and the year-long focus on stewardship and gratitude.

Cooperatively,  
Rev. Craig Schwalenberg



## Board of Trustees

|                | <u>Assignments</u>   | <u>Trustees</u> | <u>Term Ends</u>                   | <u>Liaison</u> |
|----------------|----------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|----------------|
| President      | Karen Palmer         | 2018            | Green Sanctuary                    |                |
| Vice President | Amy Forster Rothbart | 2020            | RE, Small Group Ministry           |                |
| Clerk          | John Bagby           | 2018            | Properties, Design, Safety         |                |
| Treasurer      | Jeane Bennett-O'Dea  | 2020            | Finance                            |                |
|                | Nathan Elsener       | 2018            | Stewardship, Covenant              |                |
|                | Keith Willcox        | 2019            | Endowment, Personnel               |                |
|                | Adrienne Martini     | 2020            | Sounding Board, Fundraising, Sound |                |
|                | Bob Brzozowski       | 2019            | Appointed until 6/18, Memorial     |                |
|                | Adina Johnson        | 2019            | Appointed until 6/18               |                |

Our thanks Suzy Beddoe and Stan Maricle who served as Trustees for a portion of this past church year.

### **Mission:**

Our Board's Mission is to facilitate the spiritual and financial growth and sustainability of the Society.

### **Primary Goals/Accomplishments this year**

1. *Congregational Covenant of Right Relations:* We invited Rev. Evin Carvill Ziemer to facilitate a covenant workshop with members and friends of UUSO. We shared with each other our wishes for how we want to treat each other in our beloved community of faith. By all accounts, this was a meaningful experience for all who attended. A task force chaired by Nathan Elsener has developed a draft covenant that has been published in the newsletter and has also been posted in the sanctuary for comments from members and friends for several months. Ultimately, the congregation will vote on approving the final draft of our covenant. This will be our reference for holding each other accountable to right relationships with each other. At the same time, we know that none of us is perfect and we can forgive each other and get back into covenant when aware of the need.
2. *Stewardship Consultation:* The Board sought the consultation of Liz Coit from Stewardship for Us to seek a better understanding of how to create a culture of stewardship in our congregation. A superb stewardship committee chaired by Judy Tator skillfully implemented Liz' recommendations. Our generous congregation rose to the occasion and this year's pledge numbers regarding participation and amount were worthy of celebration! There are additional recommendations to be implemented from Liz' consultation toward a year-long effort to continuously nurture stewardship and gratitude.
3. *Exploration of the Mission Governance Model:* The Board is grateful to Social Action, Connections, Worship, Pastoral Care, and Fun teams for experimenting with a new governance model this year. Feedback has generally been positive. The model is based on the book by Dan Hotchkiss, Ministry and Governance, and seeks to clarify roles between Board, staff, and the congregation so that we can more effectively achieve our Mission and Ministry together.
4. *Creation of a Safety Committee:* We are taking a proactive approach and utilizing the resources at our disposal to maintain a safe environment during our services, programs, and events. We are also preparing to respond effectively if our safety is

threatened. To this end, the Board has formed a new Safety Committee chaired by John Bagby. It is well underway with plans for fire drills, use of walkie talkies, training for ushers, and other important safety measures.

5. *Fair Employee Compensation:* Our Personnel Committee chaired by Ben Friedell has provided invaluable support to guide the Board’s decisions toward being in right relations with our staff concerning fair compensation based on UUA guidelines. The committee provided a well thought out three year plan starting with recommendations for this year’s budget.

6. *Hiring a new Bookkeeper:* The Board is pleased to have hired Sue Gates as our new Bookkeeper. She is diving right in and has already impressed us with her expertise and cooperative spirit.

7. *Appointing a new Treasurer:* Jeane Bennett-O’Dea has graciously agreed to act as Treasurer for a 6 month transitional period.

8. *Establishment of a Sabbatical Task Force:* Chaired by John Bagby (yes, him again!), this task force is already active and is charged by the Board to help facilitate sabbatical coverage and maintain good communication with the congregation through the sabbatical period.

9. *Continuing Policy Development:* Our Policy Committee chaired by Mary Ruhoff continues to support the Board as we review and develop additional policies and publish them on our website.

10. *Congregational Budget Session:* In an effort to increase transparency and congregational investment in stewardship and funding our mission, we invited the congregation to attend the initial budget discussion to have an opportunity to ask questions and provide input. Those who attended stated that it was quite worthwhile and contributed helpful ideas.

Overall, this has been a busy and productive year for the Board of Trustees. We are grateful for the ongoing support and input we receive from the congregation through our Sounding Board and other avenues of communication. We are also indebted to our staff and Rev. Craig who have shared their wisdom and expertise generously and have pitched in to perform extra duties when needed.

**Looking Ahead**

We look forward to another exciting year ahead at UUSO. One big goal will be supporting a smooth sabbatical period. We will also continue to insure the UUSO Long Range Plan is implemented. We are fortunate to currently have such a healthy and active congregation to move us forward with our Mission and Vision!

Respectfully Submitted,  
 Karen Palmer  
 UUSO President



## Religious Education

Director of Religious Education Susan Ryder

Chair: Deb Bruce

Board Liaison: Amy Forster Rothbart,

Liz Jacob Carter, Adrienne Martini, Laura Reyda, Justine Roefs, Anthony Roefs, Amy Forster Rothbart

Teachers:

Explorers Class: Barbara Agolia, Amy Forster Rothbart, Sallie Han, and Adina Johnson

Seekers Class: Rhiannon Hamm, Laura Reyda, Anthony Roefs, and Kevin Schultz

Mid-Teens/COAST: Coordinator Elayne Mosher Campoli, Carolyn Cooper, and Nathan Elsener

YRUU: Justine Roefs, Deb Bruce

### Mission Statement:

“We are here for the Spiritual Growth of our Society’s youngest and most vulnerable members, guests and friends. We are also here for our own Spiritual Growth and Enlightenment. We will share our opinions, ideas, suggestions and criticisms in the most respectful manner we can. This respect will be manifested towards ourselves, each other, the children of the UUSO and the congregation. “ - Jon Powers

**RE Attendance and Participation:** Approximately 25 children and 9 youth attended program events with 15 volunteer teachers and 3 regular paid Nursery child-care providers. I increased the number of teachers and organized them into “teaching teams” to enable each to have more Sundays “off”.

**RE Greeter:** This year we had a designated RE Greeter, Chava Grannett, who helped families know where their children would be starting their day. This made it less confusing as sometimes they begin in the sanctuary for “Time for All Ages” and sometimes they begin in their classrooms at 10:30.

**The RE Kick-Off Event** was called *RE Fun Day* and took place on Sept. 17, 2017. We participated in the Kindness Rocks Project. We plan to make kindness rocks again at our annual ice cream party and last gathering of the year on June 17.

**The Explorers (preK through 3rd grade)** theme for this year was *The Interconnected Web of All Life*. They worked with the curriculum Experiences with the Web of Life. The goals of this class are: a) To develop an awareness of each individual’s involvement in the web of life. b) To nurture a sense of wonder and awe through nature. c) To gain an awareness and comfort with ideas of growth, change, and death by observing nature. d) To nurture a respect for the web of all life and find ways to help a threatened planet.

**The Seekers (4th through 5th grade)** worked with Michelle Richards’ Popcorn Theology curriculum. Participants watched brief clips from movies as a way to explore their own beliefs, beliefs and practices of Unitarian Universalism and other religions, UU history, the natural world, ethical living, and the gifts and responsibilities of belonging to a supportive community.

**The Mid-Teens Group/COAST (6th - 8th grade)** was coordinated by Elayne Mosher Campoli. “COAST” stands for “Coming of Age Spiritual Trek” and is open

to UUSO 6-9th Graders and friends. Elayne updated the curriculum for us and it has been very well received. COAST is a coming-of-age program to address a youth's passage from childhood to adolescence/adulthood with the support of other youth, an adult mentor, adult advisors, and our congregation. It includes a lively curriculum, retreats, service projects, meetings with UUSO members, mentors, retreats, meetings with Rev. Craig, a pilgrimage to Boston, and other activities. They will write faith statements to read during a service they are planning for the congregation on May 20<sup>th</sup>.

**The YRUU (9-12<sup>th</sup> grade)** scheduled their own classes approximately two times each month. They also attended UUSO church services and UU District Youth Conferences in Binghamton, Schenectady, and Rochester. They plan to visit other faith worship services in our area.

**The Nursery:** A dedicated team of 3 sitters provided care for our youngest UUs during every church service. I supervise these three as well as six other youth who are authorized to do childcare for events at our church. They keep the Nursery a vibrant, happy, and safe space for our youngest UU's.

**Children's Worship** was held approximately once every two months. The service offers elements of adult services with a theme, chalice lighting, joys and sorrows, and songs. There are activities that relate to the service theme. I prepare and lead the service with the help of volunteer adults. Highlights this year included Day of the Dead, Celebrating Youchaou's School in Mali, and Celebrating our Earth in Spring.

**The January Session:** Each January the RE Committee creates Sunday workshops for all RE participants around a theme. This year the theme was *Origins*. The first session was led by Mary Ruhoff along with Justine Roefs and Deb Bruce. They explored biblical creation stories and a story called Gaia Creating Herself and Everything. The second session the group learned about The Big Bang and Evolution with Kevin Schultz and Florian Reyda. The third session was about our own church history. Bob Brzozowski helped us as well as John Bagby who visited the class as the esteemed Rev. Chapin. RE presented an Intergenerational Sunday Service called *Origins: Our Children's Perspectives* on January 28, 2018.

**Other Intergenerational Services and Events:** I worked with Rev. Craig to present the Christmas Eve Family Service. Religious Education participants and I will present a "Life is Teaching and Learning" Intergenerational Service on April 29<sup>th</sup>. The COAST Group will present the Intergenerational Service, "We Believe," on May 20<sup>th</sup>. We have the Annual Youth Canoe trip planned for June 10<sup>th</sup>, and the All-RE End of Year Ice Cream Party on June 17.

**Additional DRE Activities:** I maintained and created new materials for the Chalice Bags that are available in the entryway of the church. These are meant to be used by those who are better able to participate in a worship services while keeping their hands busy. I became a member of the new Safety Committee, met with the Database Committee and the UUSO Worship Planning group. I met regularly with Rev. Craig, church staff members, parents, teachers and child care workers. I created monthly reports for and attended monthly meetings of the UUSO Board of Trustees and the RE Committee. I wrote newsletter articles twice a month.

**Social Justice Projects:** I worked with the Social Action Committee to promote the "Guest at Your Table" program of the UUSC. A large basket of hats, scarves, mittens and gloves was collected by RE throughout the winter holidays. We collected 97 cans of food to donate to St. Mary's Food Bank of Oneonta during the annual Easter Can Hunt on April 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Professional Development:** I maintained membership in LREDA, the professional organization for UU DRE's. I attended the April 11-13<sup>th</sup> Retreat for Ministers and the LREDA chapter of our region with Rev. Craig. It was held at the White Eagle Conference Center in Hamilton NY. I am grateful to Rev. Craig Schwalenberg, the RE Committee, RE Teachers, Class Members, the RE Greeter, Guests, Staff Members, Board of Trustees, Parents, Members, and Friends of UUSO for their continued support of our RE program. The children and youth in our care are blessed to enjoy such enthusiastic support from our congregation.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Susan Ryder  
UUSO Director of Religious Education

## Connections Team

Chair: Kim Yousey-Elsener

Ex-Officio: Reverend Craig Schwalenberg, Evelyn Warren

**Mission:** The mission of the membership committee is to welcome new members, maintain current members and usher members out of the congregation as needed.

### Accomplishments:

- The membership committee was transformed into the Connections Team in the fall as part of a phased in process of re-organizing the committees.
- The team puts together information folders for visitors and sends cards welcoming each visitor who fill out a registration form.
- A draft of a new welcome packet is being worked on with the goal of finishing this year.
- A list of visitors is retained and all are invited to the Getting to Know UU classes. Getting to Know UU classes ran in May of 2017 and are planned for May of 2018.
- We continue to be challenged by the number of members on the team and continue to search for more volunteers who may want to join our efforts.

### Looking Ahead/Goals:

- Recruit 1-2 more members who are willing to help with writing welcome notes, “exit” interviews and/or attend the Getting to Know UU classes.
- Finalize new welcome packet and begin to develop a more comprehensive plan for recruiting/welcoming new members.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Kim Yousey-Elsener

## Cookies and Crafts

Co-Chairs: Jenny Bagby and Liz Jacob-Carter.  
Board Liaison: Jeane Bennett-O'Dea

Brian Bendlin  
Jennifer Kemper  
Pam Strother  
Alice Siegfried  
Jane Bachman  
Elayne Mosher-Campoli  
Jeane Bennett-O'Dea  
Vicki Andritz  
Molly Swain  
Martha Robinson  
Prue Stelling  
Deb Bruce  
Lynn Beken

**Mission:** The Cookies and Crafts committee is devoted to earning funds for the church and providing community outreach. We also like to think we add warm tidings to the season.

### **Accomplishments and Looking Ahead:**

This year, we added a new option to the menu-vegetarian chili. This was very well received and will be offered again next year. We also created a new poster, including classic traditions along with more modern design. We provided flyers to hand out at the parade, which was the same morning. This seemed to increase our numbers. The fact that we scheduled on the same day was a happy accident but will now purposefully schedule our event on the day of the parade (people are already downtown and are in the spirit).

The event made \$3761.00 for the church in 2017, which is an increase of \$325 from the previous year. This was the most successful year in the history of the event (again!). We have earned more every year for the past 8 years.

The date for the 2018 event will be Saturday, December 1st. It will be the 31<sup>st</sup> year for C & C!

**The new co-chairs for 2018 will be Pam Strother and Rhiannon Hamm.**

New member: Cathi Wiltsey

Respectfully Submitted,  
Liz Jacob-Carter

COOKIES & CRAFTS

## Design and Furnishings Committee

Chair: Anne Ray  
Board Liaison: John Bagby

Arleen Benedict  
Sue Hutchison  
Mary Krupp

Consultant:  
Diana Friedell

**Mission Statement:** Our mission is to enhance the appearance of our facilities with the décor and furnishings we select, within the context of preserving the historical style.

This committee was established to consult and advise on matters referred by the board pertaining to the appearance of our facilities and to select furnishings and décor.

We have not been active so far this year, since no projects requiring our action or input were referred to us.

**Looking Ahead:** In the coming months, we expect to be involved with the selection of new carpeting for the Sanctuary.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Anne Ray

## Endowment Committee

Chair: Margaret Davis

Board Liaison: Keith Willcox

Larry Armstrong, Financial Secretary  
Robert Rothenberg, Recording Secretary  
Donna Behrendt, Bill Benedict, Carol Malz

### **Mission:**

The mission of UUSO's Endowment Committee is to raise, invest, manage and disburse gifts to fund both activities in the Society that are not normally part of the operating budget and activities in the Community that are consistent with the principles of Unitarian Universalism.

The formula the Endowment Committee uses to determine the amount of funds available for grants was modified in 2015 and appears in the Policies and Procedure Manual. Using this formula the Fund provided \$5,200 for grants. Thirteen applications were submitted and the following projects received funds:

|                              |                       |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| UUSO Social Action Committee | Anne Feeney concert   |
| Catholic Charities           | Supplies for homeless |
| Literacy Volunteers          | Recruitment           |
| People Not Pipelines         | Outreach              |
| Acupuncture Clinic           | Furnishings           |
| Otsego Pride                 | Outreach              |
| UUSO                         | Defibrillator         |
| UUSO Gathering Room          | TV                    |
| Delaware Opportunities       | Big Buddy Program     |
| Gender Wellness Center       | Counseling            |
| Oneonta World of Learning    | Winter equipment      |
| Crossroads Inn               | Recreational programs |

The value of the Fund as of July 1, 2017 was \$130,664.05. We receive donations principally through the annual year-end appeal and the growing CLYNK program. All redeemable container fees are matched by two donors. There were no changes in our investment policy this year.

### **Looking Ahead:**

The Committee looks forward to plans for a new Endowment Fund and a planned giving campaign next year.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Margaret Davis

ENDOWMENT

## Finance Committee

Chair: Kay Stuligross  
Board Liaison: Jeane Bennett-O'Dea

Jeane Bennett-O'Dea, Treasurer  
Tom O'Brien, Assistant Treasurer  
Ex-Officio: Sue Gates, Bookkeeper  
Brigitte Beehler, Jenny Bagby, Margaret Davis, Julia Gregory, Arlana Young, Alan Zimmerman

### **Purpose:**

The Finance Committee monitors financial transactions and prepares a monthly report for the UUSO Board of Trustees. Internal controls for all financial transactions are in place and all disbursements are reviewed and reconciled each monthly.

Cindy Squires counts and deposits the weekly Change for Change. At the end of each month she requests a check be sent appropriately. Committee members count, record and deposit the Sunday collection each Sunday.

Working with the treasurer and the bookkeeper, the committee drafts a tentative budget for approval at the May Congregational meeting. Upon completion of the stewardship campaign and receipt of updated information, the committee modifies the draft budget if necessary and presents it at the October Congregational Meeting for final approval.

The Finance Committee meets the Sunday prior to the Board meeting at noon at Olympia Brown House, and all are invited to attend our meetings. (The Board meets the third Wednesday of the month.)

### **Primary Goals/Accomplishments this year**

- This year we welcomed Brigitte Beehler and Alan Zimmerman to the committee and bookkeeper, Susan Gates. Sue is currently training and will soon perform all the tasks required and will coordinate her work with the committee and other UUSO staff. She can be reached at [bookkeeper@uuso.org](mailto:bookkeeper@uuso.org). Questions for the committee can be sent to: [finance@uuso.org](mailto:finance@uuso.org).
- This year we successfully submitted two applications to NYSCU: a \$5000 loan to supplement the donations for the sanctuary floor repair and new rug purchase, and a \$2,450 grant for leadership development.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Kay Stuligross

## Historian

Chair: Bob Brozowski  
Board Liaison: Bob Brozowski

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of the position of Historian is to remind the congregation and the larger community of the rich history of the congregation and to preserve the relevant archives and artifacts related to that history.

### **Accomplishments:**

In September I spoke about the congregation's history to the Elayne Mosher Campoli's COAST class.

Among the items added to the archives in 2017 was a collection of photos of the Universalists' first church building after it was moved to Hunt Street. The 1879 wood building retained the look of a church despite its use for decades for the storage of hops. I wrote an article about the building for the December 2017 newsletter of the Greater Oneonta Historical Society. A revised article was submitted for the UUSO newsletter and posted by Evelyn Warren on UUSO Chat later in the month.

Thanks to Cynthia Squires for continuing to collect newspaper clippings about the UUSO for the archives.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Brzozowski  
Historian



*The accompanying photo, circa 1928, shows Joseph Angellotti, Jr., known as Juny, and the family dog Teddie, with the former UU church building in the background.*

HISTORIAN

## Mali Education Project

Chair: Annemarie Hosnedl  
 Board Liaison: Jeane Bennett-O'Dea  
 Sponsorship Coordinator: Shirley Ferguson

Susan Ryder  
 Dottie Hudson  
 Zanna McKay  
 Barbara Meeks  
 Suzanne Miller  
 Jeanette Grimes  
 Sue Hutchison  
 Pat Donnelly  
 Prue Stelling  
 Carolyn Wolf-Gould  
 Ellen Phillips

### Purpose:

To make a positive difference in the lives of the children in the Kalabankoro district of Bamako, Mali by sponsoring 55 children to attend Youchaou's Private School and to help support the school itself in its mission to educate students who would not otherwise be able to receive this educational support, especially the girls who are not always encouraged by their families to attend school.

### Goals:

- Run a yearly sponsorship drive to pay tuition for 55 elementary school children to attend Ecole Privee Youchaou.
- Support Youchaou's School through fundraising and education.
- Encourage cultural exchange between our two communities
- Provide cultural awareness and educational opportunities about social justice issues in Africa
- Provide opportunities for connection with our local Muslim community.

### Activities:

- Collecting sponsorship funds at \$266 per student from our ongoing sponsors and maintaining the level of 55 sponsorships, whether shared or full sponsorships, and replacing sponsors if individuals need to drop out of the program.
- Muffins for Mali fundraiser during the Christmas season. We raised around \$800 selling muffins and Mali related gift items which has been sent to Youchaou's School for books for the library.
- Maintaining correspondence with Youchaou to keep abreast of the situation at the school and in the country. We are always concerned about the potential for terrorism and thus have not planned any trips to visit to see the growth of the school into a full K through high school program, along with a vocational school that has been instituted. The reputation of the school has grown to the point where the President of Mali has enrolled his children there. We are very proud of Youchaou's accomplishments.

- Planning for our Benefit banquet and bazaar which has not taken place yet this year. We set the date later than usual to accommodate the performance by the African Drumming class at SUCO as our entertainment this time. We will serve Egyptian cuisine as our African cultural dishes for this year. We are being helped with this project by a local Egyptian couple who have opened a Mediterranean restaurant recently in Oneonta. We are enjoying that local connection. We also will be attending a performance by the drummers at a SUNY Oneonta student led event called World Expo to sample the entertainment for our fundraiser.

- Each summer we have a pot luck picnic to sample dishes and a new cuisine for the following years banquet. This year we will also preview a movie set in Mali about their local music scene. This event helps us keep our tight knit group together and gives us momentum during the downtime of the summer vacation.

-Sending one lump sum money transfer to Youchaou for the sponsored students and the extra amount from fundraising to support the school's current projects. This year we were able to send \$22,889.27 which included an amount that we had been holding for Judy Quarles' estate until her previously sponsored child went to university. That money had been held in CDs until this year when that money was sent for her student. Youchaou had a small ceremony related to the giving of this money with local officials and the student and her parents. We recognize Judy's generosity in planning for this memorable and meaningful occasion. Her student has plans of becoming a doctor. Wow.

School news is that Youchaou is constantly trying innovative approaches to improve his programs. Each year he tries to hold parent staff events to encourage parents to participate in their children's progress. He is sometimes discouraged that they do not attend, so we try to encourage him to continue because he is trying something new and it is breaking new ground for families that have previously been illiterate. It will take time to change the culture of learning and invite everyone in. Other reports include students' field trips to the zoo and the nearby international airport to see the operations there. By the way, it is this airport where our group flew into when we made our first visit to Mali over a decade ago. What a lot has been accomplished and strong ties made since then.

Respectfully submitted,  
Annemarie Hosnedl

## Memorial Committee

Chair: Arleen Benedict  
Board Liaison: Robert Brzozowski

Mary Ambrose  
William Benedict  
Julia Gregory  
Linda Wilcox

### **Mission Statement:**

The Memorial Committee has a threefold purpose:

- 1) To maintain the Memorial Plaque in the sanctuary and to record on the plaque the names and dates of deceased members and friends of UUSO.
- 2) To maintain permanent records which will contain the information on the Memorial Plaque and standard biographical data (when found and provided) for historical and family use.
- 3) To monitor the maintenance of the Ruth Achenbach Memorial Garden so that it endures as a place for quiet reflection, remembrance and the internment or scattering of cremains.

### **Accomplishments:**

The names and dates of birth and death of the members and friends who passed away during the last year have been obtained from their families. Obituaries, photographs, mementoes and Orders of Memorial Services have been adhered to The Book of Records. These names and dates have been engraved and oxidized on brass name plates and added to the Memorial Plaque at the back of the sanctuary. The names added were Ilene B. Arlet, Arlene Peabody Ehlers, and Roop Verma.

The names and birth dates have continued to be collected of those members who wish their names to be put on the Memorial Plaque after they have passed.

The Committee decorated the chancel table and displayed The Book of Records for the service near Memorial Day. The Books of Records was also made available for viewing during coffee hour at the Days of Awe service, on January 14th, and Easter Sunday.

## Properties Committee

Chair: Duncan Smith  
Board Liaison: John Bagby

Tom O'Brien  
Spike Paranya, Chapin Garden  
Alice Blue, OBH Garden  
Mark VanLaeys  
Paul Agoglia  
David Ray Custodian

### **Mission Statement:**

Oversee integrity, safety, and appearance of church buildings and grounds.

### **Goals and Accomplishments:**

#### **Grounds:**

##### **Chapin**

Spike continues to maintain, Dave to mow  
Paul Agoglia built a new trash container for the backyard placed on a newly cleared and stone covered pad  
Old trash container removed  
New bushes planted in front  
Rotten tree in front removed

##### **To Do**

Clear and cover with stones the area under the back stairs  
Treat front lawn for grubs

##### **OBH**

Alice Blu continues to maintain, Dave to mow  
Bushes removed from front

##### **To Do**

Replace bush eaten by deer  
Dress area by back stairs  
Clear weeds between office walk and neighbors

#### **Building Exteriors:**

##### **Chapin**

Front steps repaired and carpet replaced  
Railings painted  
Arch keystone repointed

##### **OBH**

Chimney repaired  
Front step reset  
Rails repainted

PROPERTIES

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**Building Interiors**

**Chapin**

Kitchen sink faucet and drain lines replaced and floor of cabinet rebuilt

Sanctuary carpet lifted and damage to floor assessed

Sliding door at pass through replaced on its track

Furnace control failure corrected (Freeze warning system activated. Tom responded and avoided damage. Recommend we continue to subscribe to the service)

New outlet installed in front hall and space heater installed

Fire extinguishers serviced

Crash bar on back basement exit door repaired

**To Do**

Repair Sanctuary floor in coordination with carpet replacement

Finish repairs on boiler control

Replace Gathering Room dehumidifier and service others

**OBH**

**To Do**

Evaluate paint touch ups

Mark VanLaeys has agreed to shadow Tom to learn more about the physical plant in anticipation of being added to the freeze warning call list.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Duncan Smith

## Safety Committee

Chair: John Bagby  
Board Liaison: John Bagby

Reverend Craig Schwalenberg  
Susan Ryder, Director of Religious Education  
Evelyn Warren, Office Administrator

### **Mission Statement:**

Review and Establish programs and policies and to ensure we are as ready as we can be in the event of an emergency.

### **Summary of Goals:**

- Conduct Fire drills annually in April or May.
- Inspect the Physical Plant Annually
- Establish a *Safety Responders Team*
- Create a communication system between Chapin and OBH during services through a walkie talkie system for emergency notifications between buildings.
- Bi-Annual CPR training for all who are interested.
- Create an Emergency Action Plan (E.P.A.)
- Coordinate trainings for Fire, Active Shooter and Medical Emergencies.
- Adherence to the *Sexually Safe Congregations* recommendations from the UUA.

### **Summary of Accomplishments:**

- Formation of the committee
- Creation of the committee mission
- Plans and goals for the next year and beyond

Respectfully submitted,  
John Bagby

SAFETY

## Social Action Team

Chair: Suzanne Miller

Board Liaison: Rev. Craig Schwalenberg

Lisa Barr  
 Rhiannon Ham  
 Chuck Hudson  
 Dorothy Hudson  
 Dawn Kilts  
 Carol Malz  
 Grace Malz  
 Kari Reynolds  
 Kathy Shimberg  
 Alice Siegfried  
 Janet Sutta  
 Arlana Young

### Mission:

Our mission is to provide information regarding social-justice issues, with opportunities to work on these issues through financial contributions and gifts of personal time and effort. We aim to connect, communicate with, and support social, economic and environmental justice groups. Our mission is exemplified by the events on which we have worked as a committee and/or as a congregation.

The Social Action Team meets on the first Tuesday of each month with a shared dinner after each meeting. All are welcome to attend to learn about our work and participate.

### Looking Back:

- **Change for Change:** The Social Action Committee is responsible for selecting the monthly Change for Change recipients for the year and informing the congregation of their work. For 2017-2018, they were Habitat for Humanity of Otsego County, Literacy Volunteers Otsego and Delaware Counties, Family Service Association, ARC Otsego, UU Trauma Response, NAACP Oneonta Branch, Oneonta Community Health Center, Heart of the Catskills Humane Society, NAMI Otsego County, Opportunities for Otsego Violence Intervention Program, Family Planning of South Central New York, OWL—Oneonta World of Learning, and if there is a fifth Sunday of the month the Change for Change is given to Caring Connections.
- **Habitat for Humanity:** Lunch was provided for workers on Saturday, November 11th.
- **Family Service Adopt a Family Holiday Project** supported four families with children with gifts of clothing, toys, grocery cards, gas cards and fuel cards. Every wish was fulfilled.
- **Last Wednesday of the Month Film Series on Peace and Justice for All (September to June):** Films are shown each month, public invited, with a vegetarian meal served at 6:00 followed by the film and discussion at no cost. Child care is offered. Films in this series: *Do Not Resist*; *An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to*

*Power; The Economics of Happiness; Where to Invade Next; I Am Not Your Negro; The Times of Harvey Milk; My Country—My Country; William Kunstler: Disturbing the Universe; Control Room; and The Unknown Known.* Publicity included articles in the Oneonta Daily Star, listing on the Sweet Home Oneonta calendar and other news outlets, and posters displayed in Oneonta and other communities. Attendance reached 50 with the showing of *I Am Not Your Negro*, with Job Corps students and members of NAACP attending. Some of the DVDs are available to borrow at the Social Action table.

- Backpack Buddies continues with a monthly UUSO collection of personal hygiene products, food for backpacks of children in need, and monetary donations to the Regional Food Bank of Northeastern NY.
- Guest at Your Table: a campaign to raise money for UUSC/ Unitarian Universalist Service Committee to support projects around the world and in the US was held from November to January. Donations were received from 20 UUSO households.
- A document to provide information to youth about becoming a conscientious objector was developed, which will be circulated among our UUSO youth and later to the wider community.
- Food for Thought on “Relocalizing: What It Is and Why We Need It” with Gene Marner as guest speaker was held on Sunday, Feb. 11, 2018, with an audience of about 30. A *Daily Star* reporter covered the event and a large article and photo were in the paper the following day. An interview with Kathy Shimberg was aired on WIOX Roxbury’s community NPR station prior to the event, and Gene Marner’s talk was videotaped by Wilton Vought, who posted it the next day on his Youtube channel, “Other Voices, Other Choices.”
- Rev. Chris Antal, UU Military Chaplain who resigned in protest over drone warfare was guest preacher on Sunday, March 11, 2018, and gave the sermon on “Peace and Pain.” After a Food for Thought lunch, Rev. Antal led a workshop entitled “Drone Warfare: Awareness and Action.” The film *Unmanned: America’s Drone Wars* was shown. A *Daily Star* reporter covered the event and an extensive article with a photo was published the following day. There were two actions items that came out of the workshop: Support for the faith-based statement “Drone Warfare: A Religious and Moral Perspective” opposing drone warfare signed by leaders of 21 denominations; and the drone victims’ names quilt project. UUSO End of Year Appeal provided funding for his visit. Deb Bruce made available books on related topics from the UUSO library.
- Concert by folk singer Anne Feeney to raise money for UUSC in support of Syrian refugees is scheduled for Saturday, May 19, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. at the church. An Endowment Grant was received to support this project. In May. Suzanne Miller, chair of Social Action team, will be participating in a Unitarian Universalist Service Committee trip to Hungary, Serbia and Croatia to learn about six UUSC projects in those countries that support refugees in various ways.
- Social Action Table is set up after each Sunday service to provide information, letters and petitions on a variety of social justice issues. Contents have included: All Are Welcome Here flyers to post referring to Muslim acceptance; replace NAFTA and ISDS info; climate justice info; bumper stickers on environmental issues; Black history flash cards; contact info for lawmakers and postcards to send about concerns. Books on social justice issues and DVDs from the film series are also available to borrow. New books have been purchased through the UUSO library.

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- Petitions and letters: Petitions and letters are available on the Social Action table throughout the year and sent on to appropriate lawmakers. They have been signed by many people attending service as well as those attending other events. Petitions this year include:

Petition by UUSC to Trump after Charlottesville to repudiate racism—27 signatures  
Letter re. DACA in support of Dreamers as part of UU Love Resist campaign—32 signatures  
Petition re. Burma and persecution of Muslim minority—30 signatures  
Petition re. support for Puerto Rico after devastation— 41 signatures  
Petition re. Medicare for All—33 signatures  
Petition re. withdrawal from Paris Climate Accord—27 signatures  
Thank you to Cuomo and Schneiderman for support of Dreamers—23 signatures  
Thank you to Cuomo for LGBTQ support—69 signatures  
Petition in support of gun legislation (to be completed)  
Letter writing table with Molly Swain in response to gun violence

### Looking ahead:

At the yearly retreat that takes place each summer, the Social Action Team reflects on the past year and makes preliminary plans for the year ahead. This year's retreat is scheduled for June 9, 2018, and what social justice issues, actions, and projects the group may focus on in the year to come will be explored at that time as well as throughout the year.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Suzanne Miller



Food-for-Thought with Gene Marner



Rev. Chris Antal,  
UU Military Chaplain

## Stewardship Committee

Chair: Judy Tator  
Board Liaison: Nathan Elsener

Pam Strother  
Paul Robinson  
Kari Reynolds, Recording Secretary



The committee would like to extend our deep appreciation to:

- Evelyn Warren for many hours of office services and record keeping support
- Deb Bruce for assisting with the mailing and pledge packet handout
- Doug Hallberg for creating the percentage tracking poster
- All those who helped with the potluck on Pledge Celebration Sunday

**Mission Statement:** *To develop financial and spiritual resources for the current and future needs of the UUSO with integrity and with an awareness of the joy inherent in cultivating generosity as a spiritual virtue.*

### Summary of Goals and Accomplishments:

We had a productive meeting with UUA Consultant Liz Coit, who helped us refine our goals and suggested trying an incentive/matching gift opportunity as part of the pledge campaign.

Our key campaign goal was to have a strong emphasis on defining and building Stewardship -- generosity and gratitude as a UUSO wide culture. We wanted to stress that everyone should make a pledge (financial commitment) to the UUSO, at a level they found comfortable, and in doing so they would benefit from spiritual growth through generosity. Our aim was for members and friends to stop thinking that because they are unable to give a large amount, that their pledge is insignificant. By increasing pledge participation, we believed that pledging will become an annual habit for all and increase income for future campaigns. By setting a goal of 100% pledge participation, (with the 95% incentive of an additional total of \$2,000 from two anonymous donors) we hoped to persuade all to pledge. At this writing, we achieved 98% participation among members and friends.

We created the theme, *Sharing Our Faith ~ Shaping Our Dreams*, to celebrate our spiritual community's internal and external ministries and emphasize that our goals and dreams can only be achieved if everyone pitches in to the best of their ability.

Our promotional efforts included a brochure detailing our approach to Stewardship and testimonials from members in print and made from the pulpit. The sanctuary was also decorated with hangings of paper clouds, each printed with a dream from the list created by the congregation in 2016. Many members and friends said the highlight of each Sunday service was the musical interlude about pledging created and sung by Judy Tator.

The distribution of pledge packets during coffee hour on February 11 was followed the next Sunday with the event, *Pledge Celebration Sunday*—a special service which included a pledge processional, a potluck lunch and the launch of the new UUSO video. The event created a wonderful feeling of community.

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STEWARDSHIP

*(Continued from page 22)*

**Looking Ahead — Preliminary Goals and Issues for Next Year:**

At this writing we have not finalized goals for next year. Having dramatically increased participation in pledging by members and friends, we hope to steer everyone to take further steps in cultivating generosity as a spiritual virtue by considering their level of financial commitment to the UUSO as well as their service activities.

We hope to set a financial goal and obtain an incentive donation by a pool of members who are able to make an additional donation if the goal set is achieved.

Engaging the Religious Education Program in next year's campaign to cultivate generosity in our children may be an additional goal.

We could have used a few more members to help this year and hope to add more people to the committee next year to help train the next generation of leaders.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kari Reynolds

## Worship Team

### Team Members:

Rev. Craig Schwalenberg - Minister, Team Leader  
Tim Horne - Music Director  
Michael Frye-Hunt - Worship Musician  
Pam Strother - Pulpit Guest Coordinator  
Scott Segar - Sound Tech Coordinator  
Susan Ryder - Director of Religious Education  
Cathi Wiltsey - Worship Associate Coordinator  
Kathy Shimberg - Music Guest Coordinator

### Mission:

To assist the minister in planning and coordinating UUSO worship services with the goal of providing consistent, quality worship services.

### Looking Back:

The Worship Associates for the 2017/2018 church year were Cathi Wiltsey (coordinator), Keith Wilcox, and Rich Stelling, Alex Schultz, and Caroline Bagby.

Sound Techs for the year were Scott Segar (coordinator), Paul Carter, Lisa Barr, Julian Pecenco, and Patrick Rost.

Worship sermons/reflections were delivered by Sam Goodyear, Arlana Young, Brian Bendlin, Florian Reyda, Pam Strother, Elayne Mosher-Campoli, Suzanne Miller, Cheryl Petersen, Mark Van Laeys, Susan Ryder, our Religious Education program participants, Tim Horne and the UUSO Choir, Duncan Smith, the Rev. LaDana Clark, Ginny Scheer, the COAST students & mentors, Nettie Jean Scarzafava, the Rev. Kimberly Debus, and the Rev. Craig Schwalenberg.

Music for our worship services were provided by Tim Horne, Michael & Dorothy Frye-Hunt, the UUSO Choir, Caroline Bagby, friction farm (Aidan Quinn & Christine Stay), the UU Instrument Ensemble, the SUNY Oneonta Brass Ensemble (Ben Aldridge, dir.), Leah Bridgers, Paul Carter, Mark VanLaeys, Kathy Shimberg, Yolanda Bush, and many others.

Rev. Craig visited and offered a service at the UU Society of Binghamton, NY to help cover for their minister's sabbatical.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Rev. Craig Schwalenberg

WORSHIP

