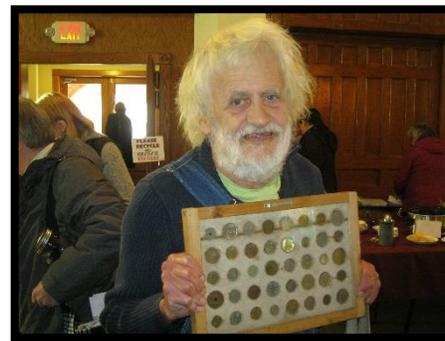


UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY OF NEONTA

Creating beloved community... Freely seeking the light... Reaching for a better world...

2019-2020 Annual Congregational Report



2019-20 Board of Trustees

Adrienne Martini, *President*; Amy Forster-Rothbart, *Vice President*;
Karen Palmer, *Clerk*; Karl Seeley, *Moderator*;

Keith Willcox, Elayne Mosher-Campoli, Benjamin Friedell, Rosemary Summers,
Jennifer Hyypio, Arlana Young, *General Trustees*

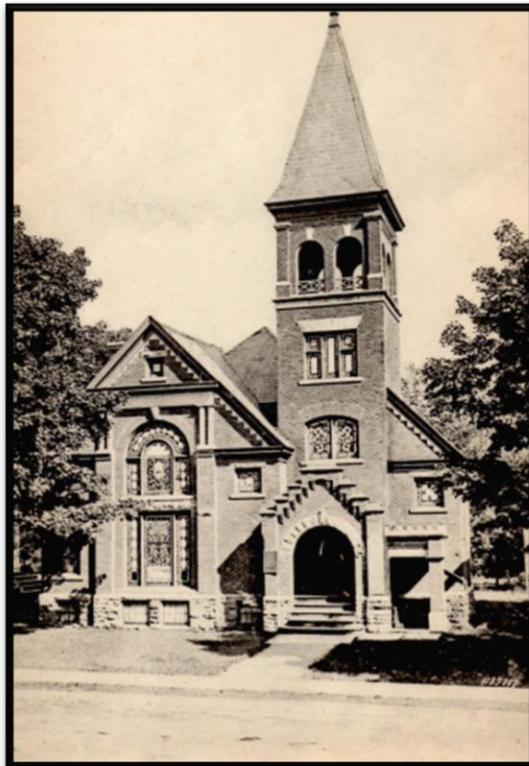


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Board of Trustees

Submitted by Ben Friedell

Trustees (Term Ends)

President Adrienne Martini (2020)
Vice President Amy Forster Rothbart (2020)
Clerk Elayne Mosher-Campoli (2022)
Karen Palmer (stepped down in Feb. 2020)
Keith Willcox (2022)
Rosemary Summers (2021)
Ben Friedell (2020)
Arlana Young (2021)
Jennifer Hyppio (2022)

Karl Seeley was the moderator.

At the end of this fiscal year, Adrienne, Amy, and Jennifer stepped off of the board. Donna Behrendt (2023), Alex Schultz (2023), and Cathi Wiltseu (2023) joined the board.

Mission

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

Primary Goals/Accomplishments this year

Our goals at the beginning of the fiscal year (July 2019) were dramatically changed by the end of the fiscal year (June 2020) because of two factors: Rev. Craig Schwalenberg's decision to step down and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. With those two points in mind, we accomplished quite a bit — but not what we had initially outlined for ourselves in June 2019.

- ❖ Rev. Craig's transitioned out of UUSO in June 2020. The Interim Minister Committee (Ben Friedell, Keith Willcox, and Adrienne Martini) completed the process set up by the UUA and hired as interim Rev. Rachel Baker, who joined us from a Developmental Ministry in Las Vegas in August 2020.
- ❖ Because of COVID, the Board (along with most of the church's activities) moved in a virtual space. All board meetings were held via ZOOM starting in April 2020. Amy Forster-Rothbart held "Chalice Chats" in lieu of small group meetings.
- ❖ During the winter 2019, a new minister's agreement was developed by Rosemary Summers and Rev. Craig. The congregation was given opportunities to provide input. The agreement was signed at the end of 2019.

- ❖ In the spring and because of the transition to virtual worship, the procedure for the Sounding Board, which is the best way for members to convey their thoughts to the board, changed. Rather than hold it after the service once per month, the Sounding Board is an ongoing process where a board member is available for phone calls and email exchanges.
- ❖ In Fall 2019, members of the board attended a workshop with Barbara De Leeuw that was also facilitated by Mark Bernstein where we worked on what the purpose of the UUSO board is and what it could be in the future. Unfortunately, our plans to investigate the church's bylaws and our own structure were waylaid by the current situation.

Committee Reports

Aesthetics Committee

Submitted by Katherine Paranya

Mission

The Aesthetics Committee makes recommendations to the Board related to the furnishings and décor that consider the nature of each space such as historical context and function. The committee collaborates with affected and interested parties.

Members of the Committee during the 2019-20 fiscal year:

Kathy Paranya – Chair
Jennifer Hyypio – Board Liaison
Anne Ray
Arleen Benedict
Grace Smith
Liz Jacob-Carter
Rich Stelling
Zanna McKay
Rev. Craig Schwalenberg

We received a grant from the Endowment Committee and purchased two 8-foot long black folding tables that are now stored behind the usher's chairs in the Chapin sanctuary. These have replaced similar sized old tables that were extremely heavy and difficult to carry and set up. The new tables will be used for Cookies and Crafts, potluck suppers, and other events held in the Chapin building.

In addition to the two long tables, we also received a grant from the Endowment Committee to purchase a carpet cleaning machine so that we can spot clean the carpet in the sanctuary which from time to time has spills during coffee hour or other events held in that room. We purchased a cleaner that has a wand with a hose and nozzle that can clean upholstery too. This will be helpful in keeping the upholstered chairs in the sanctuary clean.

Rich Stelling built two nice looking wooden boxes for the front porches of Chapin and OBH. These are being used to store the winter walkway salt at each building.

We cleaned out the "Rummage Sale" room in Chapin and the garage at OBH and sold, gave away, or discarded items that we no longer use.

The Aesthetics Committee also researched replacing the old Wayside Pulpit sign in front of the Chapin building. This old wooden sign was built by Rich Stelling long ago and has provided us with many years of good service. However, it has worn out, is leaking when rained on, and has become difficult to open to change the signs. We would like to have a new sign built that would complement the new church marquee that was purchased a few years ago. We hope to raise the money needed and replace the old sign during the 2020-21 fiscal year.

Endowment

Margaret Davis, Committee Chair

Mission

The Endowment Committee is charged with the stewardship of all endowed Funds of the Unitarian Universalist Society of Oneonta, Inc. This stewardship shall include: the raising, administration, and the disbursement of the income from those funds.

Accomplishments

The committee held a listening session regarding the new Legacy Fund.
Bank accounts were opened at Sidney Federal Credit Union for the three endowed funds.
Deb Bruce designed a fillable form to enable electronic submission of grant applications.
Terms of Acceptance were drafted for the Mara Kern Library Fund. The document will serve as a template for the other funds.

The Community Fund Mission

At UUSO we are all different, yet we share common goals and interests. To encourage this sense of fellowship, the Fund will support projects that benefit individuals and the community. This year we had \$6,100 for grants. The following projects were supported:

Catholic Charities	Supplies for local homeless
Opportunities for Otsego	Winter coat program
Oneonta Concert Association	Children's program
UUSO Aesthetics Committee	Tables, carpet cleaner
Family Services	Clothing Room
Valleyview School	Drums
Otsego Pride	Outreach

The Community Fund receives donations principally through the annual year-end appeal and the growing CLYNK program. All redeemable container fees are matched by two donors.

Completion of Terms of acceptance for the three funds
Annual review and revision of Policies and Procedures
Post-Covid (or as soon as possible) Information session on planned giving: Ask our In-house Experts
Planned Giving Campaign
Rededication of Mara Kern Library

Committee Members

Larry Armstrong: Financial Secretary
Deb Bruce: Mara Kern Librarian and Colonel CLYNK, RE program, and children's issues
Keith Willcox, Board Designee

Donna Behrendt: archivist and contact with local anti-poverty programs

Alan Zimmerman: liaison to the Finance Committee

Paul Agoglia: Filling out the remainder of Bob Rothenberg's term and contributing his expertise from the Properties Committee.

We accepted, with regret, the resignation of Bob Rothenberg, and extend our love and best wishes to him and Monet.

Finance Committee

Alan Zimmerman, Treasurer

Mission

The Finance Committee oversees all UUSO financial management and assures best practices are followed. In coordination with the bookkeeper, the monthly financial reports are prepared for the Board of Trustees. In cooperation with the staff and committee leadership, the annual budget is prepared by the committee for review by the Board of Trustees and approval of the congregation at the annual meeting.

During the 2019-2020 year, the Committee:

- ❖ met monthly and reviewed monthly financial reports, which the Treasurer presented to the Board of Trustees at its regular monthly meetings.
- ❖ modified and simplified financial and budget reports to make them easier to understand.
- ❖ proposed and received board approval for appointment of an Assistant Treasurer, and welcomed Tracy Verma to that position.
- ❖ prepared the final 2019-2020 budget to present at the Fall Congregational meeting, distributed the proposed budget, conducted an open meeting for discussion of the budget prior to the meeting, and presented the budget for approval at the meeting.
- ❖ completed a comprehensive internal review of current UUSO financial policies and procedures and examination of the financial records for presentation and accuracy; and presented a report and recommendations to the board and at the 2018-19 annual meeting in October 2019.
- ❖ updated procedures involving the income from the collection and fundraising events and the process of requesting checks by staff and committees.
- ❖ in coordination with other committees, proposed a shift in collections during services from our Change for Change procedure to a Share the Plate procedure, which was approved by the Board.
- ❖ initiated and implemented some fiscal saving through investing some funds in CDs, starting the process of getting a new credit card, shifting to a new payroll service, and others.
- ❖ purchased a new safe and installed it in OBH.
- ❖ through a subset of individuals including the treasurer and committee chair, with help from others, gathered all required information, worked with bank officials, and submitted

a successful application for funding under the Federal PPPCovid-19 funding program for small businesses.

- ❖ wrote a letter to the Board of Trustees describing urgent immediate and long-term fiscal concerns that need to be addressed.
- ❖ along with the Stewardship and Fundraising Committee and the Personnel Committee, jointly proposed a revised annual budget process so that a single annual budget for the coming fiscal year would be developed for approval at a congregational meeting each June. Following approval of this proposal by the Board of Trustees, the Bylaws Committee was asked to draft appropriate changes in the UUSO bylaws to be brought to the full congregation for approval in fall 2020.
- ❖ prepared the preliminary 2020-2021 budget, distributed it, arranged and conducted an open meeting for discussion of the preliminary budget, revised the proposed budget based on input from the BOT, and presented the preliminary budget to the congregation at the spring annual meeting. With the help of accurate projections from the Stewardship Committee, we were able to come up with a workable deficit budget.
- ❖ following the emergence of Covid-19 in spring 2020, successfully transitioned to meeting via Zoom instead of in person. The committee also voted to allow guests to make brief comments at the end of its Zoom meetings.
- ❖ The Finance Committee wishes to assure the congregation that we continue to improve our financial reporting and transparency. We are also very fortunate to have Taylor Czyzewski continue as our bookkeeper - she has been key factor in the improvements and is a pleasure to work with. The accurate, reliable, and timely reports that we can now depend on has made it easier to have the information necessary to get through the decrease in pledge revenue, the transition to the interim minister, and COVID 19, including getting the PPP loan as quickly as we did.

Plans going forward—goals, expected events, etc.

- ❖ At the end of the 2019-2020 fiscal year, the committee chair Kari Reynolds announced her resignation from the committee in order to devote her attention to her work as chair of the Stewardship and Fundraising Committee. A process was initiated to find and appoint several new committee members. The committee welcomed with enthusiasm three new members, Laura Reyda, Mary Ruhoff, and Linda Wilcox,
- ❖ The committee will continue to carry out its primary function of providing the BOT and the congregation with financial reports and other financial information necessary to assure fiscal responsibility and necessary to allow the Board and the congregation to make financial decisions that reflect UUSO values and priorities.

Cookies and Crafts Fundraiser

Justine Roefs, Committee Co-Chair

Mission

To raise funds for UUSO and bring cheer to the UUSO and Oneonta Community around the holidays.

Cookies and Crafts 2019

- ❖ Overall Sales: \$10,252
- ❖ Vendor Sales (UUSO keeps a percentage): \$6,500
- ❖ Cookies, Gourmet Table, Kitchen and Raffle Sales (100% UUSO Profit) \$3,700
- ❖ Total Profits to UUSO \$4,719 (highest year ever!)

Plans going forward

- ❖ Typically, this is an annual event. This year, due to the pandemic, we will do an online order-form type sale with just gourmet items, Betty Bryden's calendars, and sugar cookies sold by the dozen. Prices have not been decided.
- ❖ We very much hope to continue our in-person event in 2021

Rhiannon Ham and Justine Roefs, Co-Chairs

Committee Members:

Jenny Bagby
Jane Bachman
Brian Bendlin
Jeane Bennet O'Dea
Deb Bruce
Vickie Andritz
Liz Jacob-Carter
Jennifer Kemper
Alice Siegfried
Prue Stelling
Pam Strother
Martha Robinson
Cathi Wiltsey



Fundraising and Stewardship

Kari Reynolds, Committee Chair

Mission Statement

To develop financial 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.

STEWARDSHIP

Accomplishments during 2019-2020 fiscal year: The committee would like to extend our deep appreciation to:

- Pam Strother, who has retired from the committee after many years of service. We will miss her commitment and drive.
- Karen Palmer for helping with follow up calls and emails
- Evelyn Warren and Taylor Czyzewski for their office support
- Margaret Davis and Ben Friedell for their efforts on the Budget Gap Fund and to all those who made special donations to fill the gap in our budget due to the pledge shortfall.

As is a normal occurrence, not all members and friends were able to fulfil their pledge, but others stepped up to fill in the loss by contributing more than their pledged amount. We deeply appreciate their generosity, particularly in a challenging financial year with over \$17,000 in pledges unpaid.

PLEDGE DRIVE

With Rev. Craig's departure announced in the early new year, our plans, even our theme for the year, had to be revised.

Most of our planned small gatherings of dinners and brunches to discuss stewardship were cancelled, although a few dinners were hosted with positive feedback.

The morale of the congregation was deeply impacted by regret over Rev. Craig's departure announcement, many were terribly upset that the actions of a minority of members and friends would have such a great effect on the entire congregation. Some members were so distressed that they questioned if they would remain with UUSO and/or refused to pledge. The loss of these pledges greatly impacted the pledge drive.

In the previous two years we had proudly built up the percentage of pledging households to 98-99%. This year only 82% of households pledged.

Economic insecurity due to the pandemic also had a great effect on the pledge drive.

The following two charts show the pledge drive results for the most recent campaigns. The charts incorporate the UUA suggested method of taking the total income and dividing it into 4 sections (quartiles) to show the breakdown of pledges by range.

FISCAL YEAR	2020-2021	7/1/2019-6/30/2020		
TOTAL PLEDGE \$\$	\$167,715			
AVERAGE PLEDGE	\$1,458			
TOTAL # OF PLEDGES	115			
1 QUARTILE =	\$41,928			
ACTUAL QUARTILES	QUARTILE \$ AMOUNT	# OF PLEDGES IN QUARTILE	% OF PLEDGES IN QUARTILE	AVERAGE QUARTILE PLEDGE
QUARTILE # 1	\$41,160	4	3%	\$10,229
QUARTILE # 2	\$43,200	10	8%	\$4,320
QUARTILE # 3	\$41,871	20	17%	\$2,094
QUARTILE # 4	\$41,484	81	70%	\$512
TOTALS	\$167,715	115		
	HOUSEHOLDS	% OF TOTAL		
NON-PLEDGERS: 27	140	82%		
FISCAL YEAR	2018-2019	7/1/2018- 6/30/2019		
TOTAL PLEDGE \$\$	\$175,165			
AVERAGE PLEDGE	\$1,225			
TOTAL # OF PLEDGES	143			
1 QUARTILE =	\$43,791			
ACTUAL QUARTILES	QUARTILE \$ AMOUNT	# OF PLEDGES IN QUARTILE	% OF PLEDGES IN QUARTILE	AVERAGE QUARTILE PLEDGE
QUARTILE # 1	\$45,750	5	5%	\$9,150
QUARTILE # 2	\$43,858	13	9%	\$3,346
QUARTILE # 3	\$43,740	25	17%	\$1,716
QUARTILE # 4	\$41,817	100	69%	\$418
TOTALS	\$175,165	143		
	HOUSEHOLDS	% OF TOTAL		
NON-PLEDGERS: 2	145	98%		

Stewardship plans going forward: The Spring Pledge Campaign for 2021-2022 will emphasize our need for your support at a level that is a reasonable amount for your household. We will discuss how the UUA suggested giving guide helps calculate a meaningful pledge amount.

We hope to create dialogs about supporting the UUSO through your time and treasure in intimate but socially distant conversations among small groups and individually. In our talks we will continue to share our hopes and goals for our beloved community.

FUNDRAISING

The service and contributions of all members and friends who serve as event chairs, volunteer at events, donate goods and services to events and support the UUSO by shopping at our events are deeply appreciated. Beyond raising money to support our operating costs, these events bring us closer together as a community with the *joy inherent in cultivating generosity as a spiritual virtue*.

In 2020 the pandemic had a drastic impact on UUSO fundraising, making in-person events unsafe.

Year-end Appeal — Stewardship and Fundraising Committee

Our congregation stepped up this year with our annual year-end appeal. Together we raised \$12,552. We replenished the Preservation Fund so that we can steward our beautiful historic buildings responsibly.

Online Auction — Auction Committee

As a public event, our annual silent and live auction was not possible. The committee used an online auction service and nearly \$5,000 was raised to benefit our UUSO. Many thanks to all who contributed items to the auction and participated in bidding online.

Fundraising plans going forward: With the challenge of not being able to have in person events, we will need to be creative with virtual fundraising events. Beyond pledges, fundraising events are the UUSO's second largest source of income. The support of members and friends of all fundraising efforts is vital.

Stewardship and Fundraising Committee

Committee Officers:

Kari Reynolds, Chair

Committee Members:

Pam Strother

Karl Seely

Linda Parmalee

No Board Liaison

Historian

Bob Brzozowski, UUSO Historian

As UUSO historian, I collect and preserve archives and artifacts reflecting the congregation's history over the almost 170 years that Universalists and Unitarian Universalists have met in Oneonta.

As in the past many years, Cynthia Squires has been a tremendous help clipping newspaper articles related to the UUSO. In the past, others have helped me in organizing the materials in the UUSO collections. Understandably, access to the collections in Olympia Brown House has not been possible for several months because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The planned chancel table with a historic theme in April did not happen, again because of the pandemic. Several folks, including Jendy Murphy and Alice Siegfried, did donate historic photos and documents, which will eventually join the rest of the collections at OBH.

I hope that in the coming year our congregation's history can again be preserved and celebrated and that we will meet again in the sanctuary at Chapin Memorial, a building on the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

Mali Education Project

Annmarie Hosnedl, Team Leader

Mission Statement

Our mission is to sponsor the education of 55 children attending Youchaou's School in Mali. In addition, we sometimes support worthwhile programs and projects at the school to enrich the experiences of all the student body and foster greater cross-cultural understanding between our two communities.

Accomplishments

- ❖ Supported 55 children's education through sponsorships of \$266 per student totaling \$14,630. In addition, we were able to add an additional amount to total \$18,318 from last year's fundraising efforts. However, due to a mix up in the process of transferring that amount, \$20,432 was actually sent. That brought our reserve account down to \$0 and we also owe the general coffers of UUSO around \$500 to \$600. Youchaou is aware of this over payment and it will be subtracted from the next transfer.

- ❖ Revised the Policies and Procedures document for the Mali Team, aka the Mali Education Project to include what would happen to any money in our account should the Youchaou School close for any reason. Scholarship money would be returned to the sponsors if not already sent to Mali and any extra amount would be sent to the UUSC since their mission most closely aligns to ours.

- ❖ Held Muffins for Mali and Mali Market as usual for the four weeks before Christmas, earning around \$500 to add to the yearly transfer.
- ❖ Planned for our popular April Mali benefit dinner and program offering Madagascar cuisine and a program with a video provided by Youchaou. We tested our recipes and found them to all be quite tasty. Unfortunately, due to the corona virus shut down we had to cancel it and will not be able to fund raise this year. We were also coordinating plans for some of us to attend General Assembly this year, but were unable to attend in person due to covid. Some of us did attend sessions virtually and one of our members, Suzanne Miller was one of our UUSO delegates.

We have been in continuous contact with Youchaou to know how the situation was unfolding in Mali. They prepared for a COVID outbreak amidst civil unrest in their area. Youchaou was worried about holding classes in person, so he prepared with hand sanitizers, bleach, and gloves for staff and students and planned to require masks for the students. When we heard that our sponsored students' parents would likely not be able to provide them for their children we Mali "Dozen" pooled some funds to send to Youchaou to have them sewn by local tailors for our students. Luckily Western Union could easily handle the \$225 transfer of this smaller amount of money which was greatly appreciated.

- ❖ While socially distancing, we have been conducting business and communicating by zoom and group emails. We have been providing emotional support to each other during this challenging time. We conducted a Book Club type reading and discussion of Women Rowing North and did a soul collage project which was well received by all who were able to attend the session.
- ❖ We processed the leaving of Rev. Craig and facilitated his contact with Youchaou to say goodbye. The two had formed a bond over the years as Craig was a strong supporter of the Mali Project. We heard that the new interim Minister might be interested in our activities, so we were eager to meet her when we heard who that would be.

Going Forward

We will connect with our new interim minister and invite her to join us in our meetings and activities. We hope to do another soul collage activity when the logistics make it once again possible. We are brainstorming ways to do small fundraising in the midst of the corona virus shutdown. We will pick up our usual activities when it is acceptable to do so, i.e. the Mali dinner and Christmas season market. We tend to respond to situations that arise both here and in Mali as necessary. The sponsorship program proceeds as usual. We want to add that even with the chaos and uncertainty surrounding Youchaou, there has been a strong showing of support among our sponsors to continue to support our program. We plan to continue to do so until something unforeseeable stops us.

Annemarie Hosnedl, team chair; Susan Ryder, co-chair; Shirley Ferguson, sponsorship coordinator.

Members - Susan Ryder, Suzanne Miller, Shirley Ferguson, Zanna McKay (Board Liason), Ellen Phillips, Dottie Hudson, Karen Palmer, Jenny Grimes, Prue Stelling, Carolyn Wolf-Gould, Pat Donnelly, and Annemarie Hosnedl.

Memorial Committee

Arleen Benedict, Committee Chair

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 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 of scattering of cremains.

Accomplishments

The name and birth and death date of UUSO members Barbara H. Meeks and Howard Murphy were added to the Memorial Plaque at the back of the sanctuary. The names and dates of Rev. Andrew "Andy" Backus, Marshall "Swamp" Webster, Sarah E. Cooper, Marjorie Jeanne DeFazio, and Alice Differt Siegfried will be added to the plaque. Letters have been sent to the families of the deceased informing them we wished to honor and remember their family member by adding their name to the Memorial Plaque. Engraved brass name plates were ordered and families have or will be informed when the name plates have been added to the plaque.

Obituaries, photographs, mementoes, and Orders of Memorial Services, if found, have been supplied by families and gathered by committee members. These items were put in The Book of Records with at least a page dedicated to each person.

The Book of Records was made available for the congregation to view after The Days of Awe service on October 6th. The Book was not able to be displayed on another day and near Memorial Day as usual because of the Covid-19 closing of the church.

Forms for the names and birth dates for those members who wish their names be put on the Memorial Plaque after they have passed have been made available.

Committee Members

Arleen Benedict, Chair Person

Mary Ambrose, Book of Records

William Benedict, Plaque Manager

Julia Gregory, Garden Placement

Linda Wilcox, Former Chair Person

Personnel Committee

Rosemary Summers, Committee Chair

Mission Statement

(excerpted from the charter dated July 2, 2017)

The Personnel Committee exists to monitor and maintain the personnel policies and procedures of the congregation. The committee provides administrative accountability for the minister in his/her role as staff supervisor and works to ensure compliance with all relevant employment laws and guidelines.

Challenges

- ❖ A proposal for extensive changes to staffing levels and compensation was submitted in May to the Board of Trustees by Rev. Craig, bypassing the Personnel Committee completely. Resulting ill feeling resulted in the resignation of one of the three members. Replacing that member was difficult.
- ❖ Another committee member had expressed a desire to leave the Personnel Committee to serve in another capacity, but a suitable replacement was not found. That member has since agreed to continue with Personnel.
- ❖ Confusion about various committees' responsibilities and limitations continues since the shift to the teams model of governance of several years ago. This has impacted the work of the Personnel Committee.

Accomplishments

- ❖ The Personnel Committee worked with the Finance Committee on proposed amendments to bylaws regarding budget approval process.
- ❖ Recommendations were submitted to the Finance Committee for staffing levels and compensation in preparation for the 2020-2021 budget.
- ❖ Work was begun in earnest on the composition of a UUSO Employee Manual.

Plans Going Forward

- ❖ Work with the Board of Trustees to update the Personnel Committee Charter of 2017
- ❖ Work with Rev. Rachel to develop accurate job descriptions for each employee
- ❖ Complete the Employee Manual, hopefully by January 2021
- ❖ Evaluate changes in employee responsibilities during the previous year; consider adjustments to compensation as indicated
- ❖ Prepare compensation recommendations to submit to the Finance Committee for the 2021-2022 budget

Rosemary Summers, Chair
Amy Forster Rothbart
Kathy Shimberg

Properties Committee

Karen Palmer, Board Liaison

Chair: Duncan Smith (partial year)
Board Liaison: Karen Palmer (partial year)
Congregational Members: Spike Paranya, Paul Agoglia
Staff member: Dave Ray

Mission

To steward the maintenance and improvements of UUSO's historic buildings and grounds.

Accomplishments

- ❖ Arranged for contractors to care for the grounds and snow removal. Dave Ray deserves credit for doing the mowing of the grounds and volunteers have helped with stick pick up, bush trimming and other grounds care.
- ❖ Arranged for 3 bids and final contract to repair gutters for Chapin Memorial and add gutters to Olympia Brown House.
- ❖ Surveyed buildings and grounds to develop an inventory of needs.
- ❖ Added attractive wooden boxes for the front porches of both buildings (courtesy of Rich Stelling) to contain salt buckets.

Future Plans

Many thanks to Rosemary Summers and Bob Baker for taking over the Board liaison and chair positions for the Properties Committee for 2020-21.

Religious Education Team

Susan Ryder, Director of Religious Education

RE Team Mission Statement (written by Jon Powers):

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.

Accomplishments

- ❖ 9/15/2019 RE Kick-Off Event with a "Blast-Off" Theme
- ❖ 9/22/2018 Tree of Life Children's Worship
- ❖ 10/20/2019 Sukkot Children's Celebration
- ❖ 11/03/2019 Day of the Dead Children's Worship
- ❖ 1/5/2020-1/19/2020 January Intersession with a STEM theme.
- ❖ 1/26/2020 RE Hosts Worship Service, "You Can't Taste a Pickle with Your Ear".
- ❖ 2/09/2020 Chinese New Year Parade around the Chapin Memorial Church
- ❖ A New Library Program began in the fall and continued throughout in-person RE. Suzanne Miller, Chava Grannet, and Prue Stelling organized this with Mara Kern Librarian Deb Bruce. They presented Mara Kern Library Books near the classroom doors before and after the Children's classes in order to make the books more accessible. Many books were checked out, read, and returned.



In-person UUSO Activities were cancelled as of 3/14/2020. Rev. Craig met with RE participants via Zoom for lunch each Wednesday and Justine met with them via Zoom on Tuesdays and Fridays. I met with them via Zoom once I returned from my leave of absence for Tuesdays and Fridays and then just Fridays for the month of June 2020 and the beginning of July 2020. I stopped these meetings as they were lightly or not attended.

The yearly theme for Children's RE was World Religions. Children were divided into two classes by age and each used the *Holidays and Holydays* Curriculum. Teachers were Megan Brennan, Carolyn Cooper, Dorothy Frye-Hunt, Sallie Han, Adina Johnson, Laura Reyda, Amy Forster Rothbart, Kevin Schultz, and Cathi Wiltsey.

Youth planned their time together with their Advisors. Activities included check-ins, art projects, baking, games, and discussions. Youth Advisors were Deb Bruce, Rhiannon Hamm, and Elayne Mosher-Campoli.

The January Session focused on STEM and our five senses. Presenters were Adam and Paul Agoglia, Michael and Dorothy Frye-Hunt, and Cathi Wiltsey.

There were 21 Families included in our program and 35 RE Participants. There were occasional visitors. We also provided Nursery Care for our youngest UU's. This was staffed by consistent and paid childcare workers hired from outside our congregation. They were supervised by Susan Ryder. We are very grateful to our UUSO Youth who stepped in as substitutes.

I took a medical leave of absence from 10/30/2019 to 05/05/2020. Justine Roefs was hired as RE Coordinator with Barbara Agoglia as the RE Assistant. Both were wise, gracious, hard-working and did a great job running the RE program.



Our future plans include maintaining connections with RE families and participants through events, the RE Facebook Group, mailings, Zoom meetings and by suggesting family RE activities. We will continue to register participants to our RE program so that we will be prepared to meet once it is safe to gather.

The RE Team consisted of Chair Deb Bruce; Board of Trustees Liaison Amy Forster Rothbart; DRE Assistant Barbara Agoglia; and members Liz Jacob-Carter, Laura Reyda, Anthony Roefs, and Justine Roefs, Cathi Wiltsey and myself, Susan Ryder.

Social Action Team

Carol Malz, Team Leader

Members:

Carol Malz, Team Leader
Dorothy Hudson, Secretary
Kari Reynolds, Treasurer
Kathy Shimberg, Communications Coordinator
Rev. Craig Schwalenberg (resigned 7/2020)
Alice Siegfried (deceased 7/2020)
Chuck Hudson
Dawn Kilts
Emily Phillips
Rhiannon Ham
Janet Sutta
Sandra Brooks
Carrie Schmidt

Additional on email list:

Frankie Graham
Karen Palmer
Rina Riba
Suzanne Miller

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. Prior to COVID-19 and once it is safe to again resume meetings in person, a shared dinner follows each meeting. All are welcome to attend to learn about our work and participate.

Looking Back:

- ❖ •The Team was a member of [Interfaith Impact of New York State](#).
- ❖ [Change for Change](#): The Team was responsible for selecting the monthly Change for Change recipients for the year and informing the congregation of their work. For 2019-2020, they were Caring Connections, South Central NY Chapter of American Foundation



Social Action Team's Food for Thought event, "Decreasing Plastics in Our Lives," Nov. 10, 2019

for Suicide Prevention, Habitat for Humanity of Otsego County, Saturday's Bread, Oneonta Community Health Center, NAACP Oneonta Branch, Super Heroes in Ripped Jeans, Opportunities for Otsego Violence Intervention Program, Otsego County Conservation Association, OWL -- Oneonta World of Learning, Family Planning of South Central New York, and Helios Care.

- ❖ Change for Change has now been transitioned to Share Our Plate, a different form of sharing the weekly offertory plate with designated recipients. UUSO will receive 50% of the collection plate and the designated charity of the month will receive the other 50%.
- ❖ Habitat for Humanity: Rev. Craig emphasized at a SAT meeting that the covenant with H4H is one with the congregation. Coordinating the provision of lunch is a sufficient activity for SAT.
- ❖ •Family Service Adopt a Family Holiday Project supported three families with children with gifts of clothing, toys, grocery cards, gas cards and fuel cards. Every wish was fulfilled.
- ❖ •Backpack Buddies and Personal Care Items Collection continued 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.
- ❖ Food for Thought: a luncheon on November 10, 2019 was held on “Decreasing Plastics in Our Lives.” An article informing the public of the event was published in the Daily Star. Approximately 50 people attended. Jeff O’Handley, Otsego County Conservation Association (OCCA) Program Director was the guest speaker, followed by a question and answer session. Volunteers gave demonstrations and samples of alternatives to plastic.
- ❖ A Fascism Discussion Panel proposed by Carrie and planned for March 2020 was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which had just started.
- ❖ 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 included a “gun sanctuary” petition (78 signatures), which made its way to other churches.

Due to the pandemic, there was not an advocacy day in Albany this year.

- ❖ The Social Action Team hosted a Days for Girls Sewing Event on November 16, 2019. *Days for Girls* is a nonprofit global movement that prepares and distributes sustainable

menstrual health solutions to girls who would otherwise miss school during their monthly periods.

- ❖ Social Action Table is set up after each in-person 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; climate justice info; bumper stickers on environmental issues; Black history flash cards; contact information for lawmakers and postcards to send about concerns; Guest at Your Table, and Prison Pen Pals. Books on social justice issues and DVDs from the film series are also available to borrow.

Looking ahead

Traditionally, the Social Action Team holds an annual retreat in the summer to reflect on the past year and make preliminary plans for the year ahead. Because of the pandemic, and also being able to cover the topics at the July 2020 Zoom meeting, a retreat was not held this year. The Team will be continuing all of the events/programs listed above, as best they can with the UUSO sanctuary being closed and the pandemic limiting events and contact.

The Green Sanctuary Team will be part of SAT with Karen Palmer coordinating the program.

In addition:

Members of the Team are involved in getting out the vote.

The Team plans to hold an event honoring their late friend and fellow team member, Alice Siegfried.

Worship Team

Pam Strother

Mission Statement

To produce quality Sunday morning and Christmas Eve services.

Team members:

Rev. Craig Schwalenberg, Minister and Chair

Susan Ryder, DRE

Tim Horne, Music Director

Michael Frye-Hunt, Music Associate

Kathy Shimberg, Music Guest Coordinator

Pam Strother, Pulpit Guest Coordinator

Scott Segar, A-V Tech Coordinator/Podcast Producer

Kevin Schultz, Worship Associate Coordinator

Che Baysinger, Usher Coordinator

While not part of the Worship Team, two other important aspects of Sunday mornings should be acknowledged in this report—chancel table decorations, coordinated by Alice Siegfried, and

coffee hour hosts, coordinated by Pam Strother. Both of these amplify the Sunday morning experience for members of the congregation.

The Worship Team wishes to express appreciation to all the volunteers who are Worship Associates, A-V techs, ushers, chancel table decorators, and coffee hour hosts. They are usually working behind the scenes to help make each Sunday morning a spiritual and enjoyable interlude in our week.

Accomplishments

Despite having to end in-person services in our sanctuary and rely on Zoom services beginning in March, there was a meaningful service and every Sunday throughout the year. Eighteen of those services were given by pulpit guests and a number of them featured guest musicians. The Worship Team is also responsible for decorating the church for the winter holiday season.

Going Forward

To seek innovative ways to use remote technology to maintain the quality of Sunday services until such time as we can resume in-person services in our sanctuary.

Audio Team

Scott Segar, Team Chair

Chair	Scott Segar
Board liaison	Adrienne Martini
Members	Paul Carter, Julian Pecenco, Elizabeth Small, Patrick Rost (1/2 year)

Mission/Purpose of Committee

The Audio Committee is responsible for set up and operation of the sound system for Sunday services. The committee also records services for archival purposes and the production of podcasts. On occasion, the members of the committee are called upon to provide technical support for other events sponsored by UUSO. As services moved to an online format due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the team has provided technical support for Zoom services.

Annual Report

The general operation of the sound system has been fairly smooth this year with only a couple instances of recordings being paused or interrupted. Complaints about volume or clarity have been minor.

In March the team transitioned to being technical support and video management for online services. With the assistance of Evelyn Warren, we all learned the basics of screen sharing and video playback in Zoon.

No major upgrades or replacements were made to the system this past year, due mostly to budget shortfalls and the lack of in-person services. Some upgrade plans for the year will be moved to this year.

As of March, Patrick Rost has left the team for the foreseeable future.

Due to budget constraints, plans for the upcoming year will be more modest. They include:

- ❖ Expanding hearing loop to the choir loft
- ❖ Adding speakers for the choir loft and choir seating area next to stage. (equipment already purchased)
- ❖ Possibly replacing A/V computer

An issue that came up in the winter pointed to a need to separate the booth electrical service from circuit breakers servicing the kitchen. This project would need to involve the properties committee.

