In the Interim -- Annual Report for the UU Church of Nashua, June 4, 2015

"Stand we now upon the threshold, facing futures yet unknown.

Hearth behind us, wayside hostel built by those who knew wild roads.

Guard we e'er their sacred embers carried in our minds and hearts."

These words created by Mark DeWolfe and revised by Joyce Painter Rice for hymn # 295, say so much about our time in Interim Ministry together.

The hymn encourages us to "sing out praises for the journey," a journey of transition that went longer than you anticipated. But you did indeed guard well the sacred embers of your cherished traditions and your hopes for a vital future, and you carried them forward in your minds and hearts. It is clear to me that those embers are lighting the kindling of promise in your congregation.

As I look back on our time together, I must credit the brilliant Interim Ministry of the Reverend Olivia Holmes who guided you along the "wild roads" of your first two years of transition. Without the fine work that you did with her, this bonus year of Interim Ministry would have been more a tedious task than a time of accomplishment.

In addition, I credit the fine Board of Trustees and its officers whom you elected take on policy leadership of the church. As we all learn more about Policy-based Governance, you will find that they continue to reach out to you to get your ideas, always seeking to understand how they can help this congregation be the best it can be. It has been a pleasure for me to work with such a creative, competent, and compassionate group of leaders.

The excellent Search Committee whom you elected from your midst to carry forth the continuing search for a minister for you to call never lost momentum or faith in the process. Despite the need to extend the search longer than anyone expected, the result was their selection of a candidate, the Reverend Allison Palm, whom you recently called with a unanimous vote. They deserve all the credit you can give them. In addition, they treated me as a valued consultant, and I treasured their confidence in me.

I cannot say enough good things about the fine staff whom you employ to carry out the mission of the church. You are truly blessed. Sherri Woolsey, Office Administrator and Membership and Volunteer Coordinator, performs way beyond expectations. She has rescued me from many a situation that I blundered into, and she seems to maintain her equilibrium and creativity no matter how many how many bricks are falling around her. A combination of competence and caring. Thank you, Sherri.

Sandy Martinage keeps the facilities of this large campus well-maintained and spotless. She often works behind the scenes, so frequently we don't recognize the benefits we enjoy because of her conscientious care of our surroundings. Her ideas about the property are creative and insightful. Way to go, Sandy.

You are so blessed to be led in all things music by Jed Holland. As he often tells us in the choir, he is determined to bring about world domination one singer at a time! And given the size and enthusiasm of the present choir, he just might do it. Jed, what a joy it is to experience your musicianship, your leadership, and your friendship.

What a high bar Meredith Olson sets as this year's Interim Director of Lifespan Religious Education! In addition to continuing her ministerial education at United Theological Seminary in the Twin Cities, Meredith plunged right into the leadership of a religious education program for all ages. An emphasis on the need for continuing spiritual and intellectual development throughout the lifespan is one of her signature accomplishments, and I look forward to seeing her thrive in any form of ministry that she chooses. Our weekly mentoring session have meant a lot to me. Many thanks, Meredith.

Elsewhere in this annual report you will read others' accounts of the year that was. I am continually encouraged by your can-do attitude and the actions that you undertake to fulfill that attitude. You who volunteer here find personal satisfaction, and your efforts on behalf of this church and Unitarian Universalism make a big difference in the world.

I am grateful for your patience with me and your encouragement as I continue to learn new things in your midst -- and as I continue to make more mistakes than I can possibly apologize for. All the stumbles were mine, and I appreciate your forbearance. It was a good year in ministry together!

Faithfully, Janet Newman, your Interim Minister, 2014-15