

Unitarian Universalist Church of Nashua, NH

Music Program 2016-2017

Jared (Jed) Holland led the adult choir and special event choirs this year. The adult choir sang during Sunday morning services along with one Family Choir event, and the Christmas Choir sang at both of the Christmas Eve evening services. Jed has also been leading our involvement in the Community Interfaith Choir which sang at four Interfaith celebrations this year, and had good participation by members of our choir and congregation.

Our music team has been assisting Jed with the music program. This team (co-chairs Geri Davidson and Kathy Grossman, and members John Burkitt, Ruth Cannava, Kathleen Griffis, Devony Whiting) has been doing a great job. Devony Whiting is graduating high school this year, so she is leaving the team. Devony brought some wonderful music to the church and has always been ready to play or sing when we need her! John Burkitt is also leaving the team this year. John has been on the music team since it started 10 years ago when Jed became our music director! He is the longest continuously serving member of the team, and is always ready to play the bass and help out as needed. John and Devony will be missed on the team.

It's been a pleasure to have Rev. Allison participate in our Music Team meetings. She continues to bring enthusiasm and new ideas to our meetings!

The adult choir has continued to thrive, and involves a large number of church friends and members, currently totaling 51 choir members. The adult choir continues to sing almost every Sunday. The choir sang a total of 50 anthems, and sang at 34 out of 40 services from September through June. The only Sundays the choir did not sing were the music AREA event Sunday, Jed's Music service, the Youth Service, the Jazz service, and two Sundays for which the worship leaders requested other music. Members of the congregation and choir also joined the Christmas Eve service choir for 3 more anthems, for a total of 37 adults, youth, and children, who sang at either one or both of the Christmas Eve services.

Ten new members joined the choir this year. Out of those ten, seven are new to our church this year (names are in bold), and the other three are rejoining choir members. **Nerina Blais, Dave Gero, Sam Harris, Jo Ann Kaplan, Ellen McCahon**, Kate Messner, **Rhonda Moore, Charlie Parker**, Charles Savoie, Bry Thomas.

The concept of a children's choir has been in transition. Last year we stopped weekly rehearsals due to low attendance, and tried having a few performances a year where the youth only rehearsed a couple of times. This still had low attendance, so this year, we decided to try another way of involving children the music program. We had three events this year that were geared toward involving children musically: the Music AREA event, the Christmas Eve Choir, and the Family Choir event. All of those seemed to work well: we had a great turnout at the AREA event, had several youth join the Christmas Eve Choir, and we had enough attendance at the Family Choir to have a good performance. Music team member Kathleen Griffis led the logistics for the children's events this year.

Since Rev Allison uses monthly themes, we continue to ask the choir to provide music suggestions based on the themes. This has yielded a wonderful diversity of anthems and solo songs for our services.

We have requested that the AV Team begin using a music licensing service to include live-streaming, audio recording, and videorecording.

Our goal of more congregation participation

In keeping with our goal of participation by members of the congregation, we continued to solicit soloists, small groups, and large groups of vocalists and musicians.

To help with our goal of engaging children & youth musically, we have included youth vocalists and instrumentalists, organized a Family Choir song event, invited children to participate in our Christmas Eve Choir, and hosted an AREA event which included an instrument petting zoo, a rhythm station, a dancing station, and a musical crafts station. Jed also assisted the youth group with music planning in advance of their service. We also had a youth member on our music team for the first time.

We had great participation by 48 guest musicians to provide special music other than the normal choirs, for a total of 22 musical offerings.

We continue to utilize the childcare offered at 9 am Sunday mornings, which allows choir members who have young children to sing with us. A few choir members have used the childcare this year.

We received a generous donation of more teal Singing the Journey hymnals - enough to double our previous number and have at least two for every pew in the sanctuary! "Thank you" to our donor!

We also received a donation of an additional digital piano. It is located in the auditorium and is used for events that take place in the auditorium and in the dining room.

Our goal of promoting a feeling of community among choir members

We encourage choir members to get to know each other better. We occasionally hold a choir social event, we had a "guess whose baby picture this is" event, and assigned section leaders whom choir members can contact if they want to share information privately or request help.

During Wednesday evening rehearsals, we regularly share joys and concerns. Sometimes everybody there says something about themselves to help us get to know each other better.

Working towards our goal of keeping personally connected to the individuals of our choir so that they feel this church is their family, we continue a program of taking a monthly attendance. When a choir member is absent for an extended period of time, without having notified us of their absence, we reach out to them to ask if everything is alright, and follow-up as needed (including perhaps asking the Pastoral Care Team to make contact).

Church goal of better communication

Kathy continues writing up seasonal updates to send out to the choir, helping them know what the music team and choir are doing.

We assist as needed with efforts to project the words on the wall during the services, such as providing lyrics for the slides.

We continue to utilize electronic methods of communication. We are using Facebook, the UU network, the church website, the choir google group, and YouTube. We continue to post audio recordings of our services on the website.

Church goal of ending hunger and homelessness

We continue to work in support of the church goal of providing community dinners. Bass player John Burkitt and friends provided live music at most of the community dinners this year, and Jed Holland played piano several times as well.

Church goal of year-round church services

This year we continued to provide compensation for musicians who play at our summer services. This past summer Jed Holland played for 9 services, Dan Murphy played for 2 services, and one service leader made arrangements to bring in a musician. Jed volunteered his time to play at the youth-led service.

Printed Music/Folders

We continue to have good participation in our choirs! We are ordering music and folders for 55 choir members. This year, we also purchased several piano/vocal scores for small group and solo performances, which allowed us to have more guest musician presentations.

Guest Musicians

This year's guest musicians include many congregation members and friends. These musicians sang or played solos or in small groups totaling 25 performances.

Vocal soloists this year include Erica Agnew, Ruth Cannava, Kathy Fletcher, Tess George, Sandra Greenfield, Kathleen Griffis, Kathy Grossman, Steve Hedges, Darcy Hinkle, Jed Holland, Rhonda Moore, Dan Murphy, Tina Marshman, Jason Pancoast, Harry Purkhiser, Marty Storer, Nona Storer, Bry Thomas, Mary Ellen Wessels, Devony Whiting, Brenna Woods, and Jim Woolsey, many of whom sang multiple solos.

Instrumentalists this year include pianists Jed Holland, Dan Murphy, Jason Pancoast, Devony Whiting; organists Jed Holland, Dan Murphy, Devony Whiting; bass player John Burkitt; guitarists Kathy Grossman, Steve Hedges, Darcy Hinkle, Dan Murphy, Jason Pancoast, Devony Whiting; percussionists Billy Parker, Kathy Fletcher; dulcimer player Jim Woolsey, trumpet players Bruce Cleaveland, Bruce Dye, Jonathan Orr; trombonists Jon Lasselle, Lindsey Sylvester; baritone player Lindsey Hedrick; E flat horn player Maggie Woolsey; French horn player Erica Agnew; clarinetist Suellen Davidson; flute player Gillian Hinkle; pianist Don

Bernard; sax player Bob Gilliatt; and percussionist Steve Tacopina. Many of these folks played multiple times.

Over the summer, more musicians played and sang, including Dan Murphy, Heather Pierson, Ruth Canava, Jed Holland, Mia Taylor, Darcy Hinkle, Ben Morton, Grace Morton, Kelly Frasca, and Mary Holland, for 11 Sunday services.

Jed's professional development

Jed attended last summer's UU Musicians' Network convention. These conventions offer workshops on all aspects of music, from composition to directing, song selection to accompaniment skills, and many more. They also offer opportunities to see alternative worship possibilities and allow Jed to meet and develop personal relationships with fellow music director professionals. These connections have allowed us to purchase and sing more pieces by current UU composers.

Instrument Repairs/Maintenance

The Sanctuary piano was tuned in the fall and will be tune again after Memorial Day. There was also a visit to have a string tightened. The organ was tuned twice by Andover Organ Company (fall and spring.)

Review of Music Budget 2016-2017

We continue to have a large expense of printed sheet music for the choir, due mostly to the large choir membership. We paid for Julie Oliver as our choir director substitute for 3 rehearsals, John Carey for 1 rehearsal and one Sunday service, and Dan Murphy for one Sunday service. We ordered 8 new pieces for the choir, as well as additional copies of music we already own. We contributed towards a song-leading workshop organized by Rev. Allison and presented by Matt Meyer.

Goals for 2017-2018

To keep personally connected to the individuals in the music program so they feel this church is their family, especially during troubled times.

To integrate new choir members.

To find even more ways for church members and friends to contribute musically to the life of the church.

To find more ways to make services musically engaging for the children.

To encourage teenagers who are interested in running the sound system, running the word projections, performing solos or in small groups, or joining the choir.

To continue to keep our expenses down, but try to purchase one new anthem each month.

To interact with the minister and the new DLRE to continue to bring meaningful music to all ages.