

Unitarian-Universalist Church of Nashua
Lifespan Faith Formation
Annual Report: 2016-2017

Introduction

This report covers the third year of interim work for the lifespan faith formation program at UUCN and the current staff person's second and final year serving as the Interim Director of Faith Formation (IDFF).

Thank you for your continued support for and dedication to the program and its participants. The many ways that the congregation actively promoted lifelong learning and UU identity formation has been a reflection of the core values and beliefs we hold close.

This report covers goals, staffing, administration, and programming details.

Strategic Goals for 2016-2017

1. Evaluate and implement team structures for lifespan faith formation (e.g., two teams with collaboration or one lifespan council). *Status: in progress*
2. Create a plan for a fully developed faith formation program for adults (ages 18+), including the Young Adult Group. *Status: in progress*
3. Create a plan for a fully development faith formation program for children through ROPEs. *Status: in progress*
4. Create a plan for a fully developed senior youth group program (including active outreach and service trips). *Status: in progress*
5. Assess the training and support needs of volunteer staffing for children and youth. *Status: in progress*
6. Establish collaboration for AREA events with at least two other teams. *Status: complete*
7. Hire a permanent Director of Faith Formation. *Status: complete*

Staff

Sandra Greenfield remained for a second year as Interim Director of Faith Formation (formerly Interim Director of Lifespan Religious Education; title change as of May 22, 2016). Sandra's last day with UUCN is July 31, 2017. Sandra's professional development/denomination activities included the LREDA Fall Conference in San Diego, CA; Cluster meetings in NH and MA; co-leading the training of trainers for Our Whole Lives, and Regional Assembly in April. The Pastoral Care Certificate anticipated last year was unable to be realized as the program was canceled.

Lisa Morel continued as the Lead Child Care Provider. Lisa successfully completed a renewal of CPR/First Aid training in March.

Child Care Providers included: *Erica Agnew, Alec Bonvouloir, Seth Bonvouloir, Lilly Grodt, Max Shepherd, and Nicole Straussberg.*

Administration

Program support included financial resources, facilities, communication, policies, as well as volunteer staffing and training,

Budget: The program operated with the following budget, exclusive of staffing expenses:

Children & Youth FF: \$5350

Adult FF: \$1000

Total FF Budget: \$6350

Registration/Attendance: Average Sunday attendance for the year was 40 children/youth and 19 adults. There was a total of 75 children and youth registered. This year registration was done online with an option to complete a paper form. This process will continue.

There were a total of 31 program Sundays for children and ROPEs teens and 29 for senior high youth.

Facilities: Three classrooms were updated before the opening of the church year (Room 6, 7 & 8). That included the removal of the cork and chalk boards, walls painted in bright colors, and the installation of white boards. Several rooms added a worship table. The Resource Room was completed with new cabinets and storage for most of the materials needed for the lifespan program along with a small kitchenette. The DFF's office was finished with new furniture and bookcases (given to us from the District Office in Concord). The library books and floor shelves for the School were removed from the Chapel. Of special note is the creation of a "Family Corner" in the Sanctuary. Thanks to *Dick Widhu* for designing the special sign.

Communication: Deepest and heart-felt thanks to *Brenna Woods* and *Lindsey Hedrick* for their fantastic job on a monthly bulletin board in the Faith Formation wing based on the monthly themes. They have been so fun!

We have continued to keep the congregation informed through the Sunday printed Announcements, the Facebook Group pages, UUCN's Group Email and even postcard mailings (which have been very popular). Teams have begun using the tools in Google to create a shared calendar and important documents. We are grateful to *Tina Marshman* for the production of pamphlets for the Children & Youth program as well as the Adult program. A guide to worshiping with all ages was put into the pews along with cards explaining Covenant Groups.

Safe Congregation Policies and Procedures: The review of the current policy is an explicit part of the interim work. A task force was formed and policies approved by the Board. See the Minister's Annual Report for details. A new group of volunteers is now a part of Sunday mornings - Rovers. Rovers support the classrooms and child care as well as ensure the general

safety in the Faith Formation Wing.

Training: The DFF either led or co-led the following trainings: Safe Congregation (policy and procedures), Child Care/Coffee Crew, Teacher Training, Covenant Group Facilitators and Worship Associates. Four people attended a workshop sponsored by the UUA on UU Identity in May: *Roy Goodman, Jamie Hinkle, Harry Purkhiser, and Monica Staples.*

Faith Formation Programs and Leadership

Children and Youth

The FF Team is responsible for select events, volunteer staffing appreciation, volunteer staff recruitment and liaison to other teams. The church year started off with a special version of the beloved, annual “Ice Cream Social” when the FF team opened the treat-making to the entire congregation! The team has shown their appreciation through coordinating events and offering gifts; examples include pizza and games night, teacher gifts, flowers for flower service, and sending holiday cards. This year’s team consisted of:

Chairperson – Jamie Hinkle

Peggy Cardone, Laurie Conrad, Ginger Hedges, Cindy Hudson, Rhonda Moore, Kim Steele, Maggie Woolsey. Asher Thomas and Jason O’Neil-Willoughby served and stepped down.

Jamie Hinkle has decided to remain chairperson until January of 2018. He hopes to pass the baton to a new chairperson at that time.

As a result of the restructuring of the team and having been springboarded by feedback from the leadership summit in the spring of 2016, the Children and Youth FF Team established liaisons into various teams and committees throughout the congregation. The idea was to partner with the other teams to provide justice making, outreach and faith formation experiences. The goal was to help create a fully lifespan, multigenerational ministry that is collaborative, effective and lots of fun.

C&YFF Team Member	Liaison To
Jamie Hinkle	Stewardship
Kim Steele	Music
Asher Thomas	Social Justice
Peggy Cardone	Community Dinner
Rhonda Moore	Pastoral Care
Maggie Woolsey	Property

The 2016-17 Church School C&Y Programs and Adult Leaders are shown below:

Age Group	First Semester	Second Semester
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Preschool – Kindergarten - 1st	<i>Picturebook UU</i> Ellen Fisher Jamie Hinkle Dick Widhu	<i>Picturebook UU</i> Victoria Agnew Jamie Hinkle Dick Widhu
2 nd - 3 rd Grade	<i>Faithful Journeys</i> Jodie Holway Bill Earley Garvin Warner	<i>Moral Tales</i> Siobhan Rogers Jodie Holway Kate O'Shea
4 th - 5 th Grade	<i>Spirit of Adventure</i> Donna Larue Bryce Stack Mary Merkel	<i>Bibleodeon</i> Donna Larue Chip McGee Jason O'Neil
6 th - 7 th Grade	<i>Many Journeys, One Path</i> John McCannon Gillian Hinkle Kim Steele Karen Murray	<i>Many Journeys, One Path</i> John McCannon Gillian Hinkle Kim Steele Charles Savoie
8 th - 9 th Grades	<i>ROPES*</i> Dan Earley Krista Earley Ginger Hedges (Mentors) Geoff Skelton Andy Straussberg	<i>ROPES*</i> Dan Earley Krista Earley Ginger Hedges (Mentors) Geoff Skelton Andy Straussberg
Sr High	Roy Goodman Monica Staples Jim Woolsey	Roy Goodman Monica Staples Jim Woolsey

(*)ROPEs Mentors: Additionally, each of the teens had the loving guidance of a mentor. Mentors that made themselves available to the teens are as follows: Gary Lerude, Pat Ladew, Cindy Hudson, Kathy Fletcher, Gail McMorrow Donahue, Elizabeth Clark, Geoff Skelton, Sharon Machado, Dave Hudson, Monica Staples, John Burkitt, Andy Straussberg, Billy Parker, Krista Earley, Stephanie Ballentine, Jim Woolsey, Donna Larue, Mandy Eberle, Jamie Hinkle, Dick Widhu, and Mickey Shepherd.

ROPES Highlights:

This year we had a very large group of 8th and 9th graders taking ROPEs, UUCN's coming of age program. There were 20 teens (one teen dropped out in March; another teen joined in February)! Thanks to these very patience and dedicated leaders: *Geoff Skelton, Andy Straussberg, Dan Early and Krista Early* with *Ginger Hedges* acting as our Mentor Coordinator, Art Director, Caterer, and Spiritual Advisor.

The ROPES teens engaged in 4 events outside of their consistent time together; two overnights

(on campus) and two outings (off campus).

The first overnight was an opportunity for the youth to begin exploring their Faith Statements. Early in the evening, the teens and mentors were able to share a meal together. That fellowship was followed up by a exploratory meditation. The mentors and teens then had breakout sessions to start to explore what the teens had in mind for their statement of faith.

A UUCN tradition is for our ROPEs youth to create physical masks of their face out of plaster infused gauze and later decorated them. This exercise serves a number of purposes. First, the mask is laid out by the mentor. This helps create a bond between the mentor and the teen. Importantly, it allows the teen to display an artistic rendition of themselves to the greater UUCN community. The second of the two overnights was the mask making activity as well as some practice time with the microphone in the sanctuary for their faith statements.

All overnights were compliant with our new safety policy; there were two awake adults at all time throughout the night.

The first outing was on October 16 to the corn mazes Coppal Farms. This was a wonderful exercise for the mentors and the teens to help kick off, or strengthen their relationship with one another through a series of decisions in the maze. This was preceded by a meal that was prepared and orchestrated by Ginger Hedges. A huge thank you to her for that.

The second outing was a Boston UU History event. We went to the Arlington St Church for a service. We were then treated to an “all access” tour of the church. We finished the day with a walking tour of prominent UU sites around Boston led by our own Rev. Allison Palm.

The vast majority of the transportation coordination was done by Sandra Greenfield. Importantly, there were always 2 adults in vehicles that included teens. Teens and their mentors were teamed up in cars whenever possible.

ROPES graduates: *Samuel Agnew, Layne Bonvouloir, Amanda Bozzi, Michelle Bozzi, Gwen Davis, Douglas Eberle, Andrew Fletcher, Keith Fletcher, Darcy Hinkle, Jackson Hinkle, Avery Hudson, Anthony Iovino, Levity LeBow, Maggie Paratore, Vinny Paratore, Claire Seddon, Corwin Stauff, Nathan Straussberg, Mia Taylor, Asher Thomas.*

Senior High Youth Group:

There were 10 active youth group members, 6 of whom also served on the Child Care and/or Coffee Crew staff. The group’s Advisors were: *Roy Goodman, Monica Staples* and *Jim Woolsey*. Last year’s decision to attend the 2017 General Assembly in New Orleans was a large focus of the year. Fund raising included monthly Pancake Breakfasts, Holiday Concert in December and the Holiday Gift Sale in December.

The teens participated in the national voting for a youth representative on the UUA board in April. They conducted a worship service on March 19th, a treasured tradition at UUCN. There

were two overnights to prepare for the service entitled “Worship is Risky.” They also participated in a national webinar with other youth groups to learn more about General Assembly.

Seven teens (both ROPEs and high school) attended a social justice youth conference hosted by the Harvard UU congregation in February.

The Youth Group offered an item for this Year’s Auction: a yard cleanup! That item brought in \$400!

THANK YOU for making the Youth Group the recipient of the the outreach offering in January. The total collected towards GA was \$4,357.00. The youth savings account totals \$9,560.91 as of this report.

General Assembly: There are 9 teens attending our denomination’s annual meeting: *Erica Agnew, Alec Bonvouloir, Seth Bonvouloir, Bridget Foner, Lilly Grodt, Siobhan Rogers, Max Shepherd, Bryce Stack and Eric Stack.* Seth is going as a delegate as well! The teens, three advisors, two staff and four delegates will have dinner together while there - a group photo will be sent out! Some teens will co-lead the July 16th worship service that will focus on GA experiences and issues.

Advisors: The advisors met monthly with the DFF for program planning, GA details, and continuing education on youth ministry. The DFF attended most of the youth group gatherings and overnights. Two advisors attended a recent workshop on UU Identity Formation: *Roy Goodman and Monica Staples.* In May *Ginger Hedges* joined as an advisor, a helpful transition for the ROPEs teens. The goal is to include one more advisor to the team.

Graduating seniors: Congratulations to *Laura Cannava, Joe Earley, Sabra George, Rebecca Holland, Siobhan Rogers, Bryce Stack, Chloe Storer, Devony Whiting!*

Justice Making:

Justice and outreach are a foundational aspect of the faith formation program for all ages. This year’s multigenerational involvement with the RE Team’s AREA event was especially effective both for us and for the groups we served! As alluded to earlier, there was an effort to team up with other teams/committees to help with these efforts. As seen above, members of the C&YFF Team were teamed up with these other groups.

AREA - This program that began in 2014 through the leadership of Kim Steele and Jamie Hinkle, offering outreach projects for children in the church school one Sunday a month, providing teachers time to attend worship, has quickly become an integral part of the faith formation program for children. This year there were four projects including: Intro to the Music Committee, Care Packs for Community Dinner, Intro to Pastoral Care/Chalice Decorating (with a Chapel the following week), Black Lives Matter. The Stewardship Team participated in a chapel as well.

Once again, each of these were a result of a partnership with other teams throughout UUCN. The expectation is to continue this practice in the 2017-18 timeframe.

Adults:

This year an Adult Faith Formation Team was formed. The Team's members include:

Jeff Beland

Roy Goodman (joined in April)

Ginger Hedges

Allyson Jutras

Gary Lerude

Harry Purkhiser

Thanks to *Kathy Fletcher* and *Ian Atwell* for helping the Team get launched last summer.

The Team focused on three areas for the year: the year's programming (mostly the TUUSDays at UUCN), creating a Road Map, and developing a Program Road Map. In addition the Team surveyed the congregation to assess the past year and learn more about desired experiences and scheduling. Thank you to all of you who responded; your responses were very helpful.

Year's Programming: Including programs offered through the M-N-M Cluster (see below), there were a total of 47 program events (one shared with Social Justice Team), and a total of 11 groups.

Team Road Map: The Team has a draft of a Road Map, based on the framework offered through the Leadership Development Team. That Team description includes purpose (mission), responsibilities, and membership details.

Program Road Map: The Team spent time learning more about adult faith formation and the developmental ages and stages of adults. *Gary* and *Sandra* drafted a "road map" which is projected to be finished in July.

M-N-M Cluster/Collaboration

We launched a cluster approach to adult faith formation experiences, opening our doors in Manchester, Milford and Nashua for a shared time together. There was one exclusion in this exchange-Small Group Ministry/Covenant Groups. Rev. Allison and Rev. Barbara shared monthly group session creations; the groups stayed within their own congregation. There was a monthly meeting to coordinate and plan that included: *Rev. Patrick McLaughlin* (Manchester), *Rev. Barbara McKusick Liscord* (Milford), *Kali Frye* (ministerial intern at Milford), *Rev. Allison Palm* and *Sandra Greenfield*.

Nashua members and friends participated in the End-of-Life planning in January and February at Milford, memoir writing in Milford as well as the UU Heritage Tour in Boston in April led by

Rev. Barbara McKusick Liscord.

We are committed to deepening this Cluster's scope and impact. Plans are to convene in August to work on programs and administration.

Young Adult Group

Brenna Woods and *Lindsey Hedrick* co-led the Group this year, which met on the first and third Sunday of each month in the evening. There was a total of ten people who participated throughout the year:

Brenna Woods

Lindsey Hedrick

Tim Cleveland

Matt Girouard

Maggie Woolsey

Alli Introcaso

Lindsey Sylvester

Emily Smith

Bry Thomas

Sean Chadwick

A Covenant Group session was offered during one of those gatherings. Brenna and Lindsey attended the CG Facilitators' training in August. The Group will be following tradition and giving the graduating seniors a special gift; part of the Bridging Ceremony on June 4th.

Covenant Groups

There were two new groups this year: the Young Adults which started in September and a monthly daytime group that began in January, bringing the total to 7 active groups. One long-time off-site group is disbanding at the time of this report. There is a new group being developed by *Kate O'Shea* involving the Hikers Group. The CG facilitators met monthly to check in and to participate in a CG session, led by Sandra Greenfield. Thank you to the following facilitators: *Roy Goodman, Gail McMorrow-Donahue, Bob Keating, Hilary Keating, Lois Taylor, Karen Thomas*. Special thanks to *Lois* for serving as the coordinator for the facilitators and for making cards to put into the pews to advertise the Groups.

Rowley Discussion Group

The monthly discussion group on the third Tuesday of each month ran throughout the year: This shared-facilitation group met to discuss especially provocative and meaningful lectures from UUCN's former minister, Don Rowley. *Chuck Rehberg* served as the coordinator and sermon librarian. They are working on selecting ten sermons to post on the UUCN website under the History section.

Adult Coloring Group

Elizabeth Lewis coordinated this group that met monthly. Attendance declined towards the end of the year and a feasibility review is underway for next year. Thank you to this fabulous group

of color experts for coloring postcards that were used to send notes to people in the congregation. They are so fun!

Buddhist Meditation Group

Coordinated by *Sylvie Stewart*, this long-standing, year-round group met every Wednesday night and was open to UUCN and non-UUCN participants. Donations were voluntary.

TUUSDays at UUCN

The weekly programs began at the end of September and will end June 13th. Based on the theme of the month, the weeks focused on Unitarian Universalism, Spiritual Practices, Life Issues, and Beloved Community. Programs included: “TEDTalks: Ideas To Deepen Your Faith,” “Spirited TUUSDays: spirituality through the arts,” “Soul Matters In The World: World Religions,” and “Life Issues Through Great Literature.” Our deepest gratitude to this group of skilled and caring facilitators:

Stephanie Ballentine

Jeff Beland

Heather Bucknam (from Nashua area)

Nancy Cegalis

Joan Connacher

Kevin Emery

Kali Frye (intern at Milford)

Nan Klarman

Pat Ladew

Gail McMorrow-Donahue

Jim McCormick

Mary Merkel

Rev. Allison Palm

Harry Purkhiser

Rick Spitz

Sarah-Elizabeth Whitcomb (from Concord UU)

A special TUUSDays at UUCN treat was Spiritual Date Night held on February 14th and coordinated by *Sherri Woolsey*. A group of us gathered to make Valentine’s Day Cards for everyone in the congregation. The cards were beautiful and Sherri did a superb job of putting all the supplies and instructions together. Thanks to *Lori Lerude* and *Cindy Hudson* for helping with the special treats.

Minns Lecture Series

Friday, March 31st and Saturday April 1. Thanks to *Craig Thomas* for coordinating the car pooling to First Church in Boston and First Parish in Cambridge for the annual lecture series.

Cakes For The Queen of Heaven

This long-desired program began on May 11th, being co-led by *Loretta Hubley-Taylor* and *Gail McMorrow-Donahue*. Part one of this two-part program will finish in June and part two will

begin in the fall. There are 10 participants.

Adult OWL

This program was offered to adults who were at least 18 years old. It was a diverse group of six who participated in 8 sessions that ran every other week. The program was led by *Billy Parker* and *Sandra Greenfield*.

A Seminar On Science and Religion

Thanks to *Doug Watt* for launching a new program this year that looked past the historically adversarial relationship between science and virtually all forms of religion. Doug and the six participants shared their own learning and understanding. The group initially struggled with finding a mutual schedule and its small size eventually led to its ending in March.

Deeper Than Coffee

A grateful appreciation to *Lori Lerude* for facilitating this monthly program held after the worship service. This program offered a time of facilitated reflection on the morning while helping to make new connections and friendships. Participants shared their reactions and responses while practicing deep listening as they listened to the experiences of others. Plans have been made to continue the program for the 2017-18 church year.

Worship:

Multigenerational Worship Services - There were 7 services provided this year:

September 11th: Ingathering Water Communion Service
November 20th: "The Stories We Tell"
December 24th: Christmas Eve, 5:30p with Pagaent
February 20th: "Unfinished Tapestry"
April 16th: Easter
May 28th: "Everybody Needs A Rock" outdoor service
June 11th: Flower Communion

These services and the Story For All Ages were successful in large part to the skill and dedication of the A/V Team. Thank you!

Children's Chapel- These monthly services held on the first Sunday for preschool through seventh grade began in October and ended in April. The Worship Associates joined us again this year. Thanks to *Nancy Klarman, Elizabeth Lewis, Laurie Goodman, Jess Woods, Ellen McCahon, and Eileen Herring*. The services were based on the theme of the month and included chalice lighting, ingathering hymn, candle lighting for each of our seven UU Principles, joys and sorrows, special hymn/song for the year, story and parting hymn. We experimented with musical support from the Music Team and Jed.

Senior High Youth Service – This year's group led a worship service on March 19th entitled, "Worship is Risky."

Worship Kits: We launched these Kits last year. They continue to be helpful to people of all ages! Special thanks to *Cindy Hudson* for managing their upkeep all year!

Interim Tasks:

This year's interim tasks included:

1. Attendance at New Hampshire and Massachusetts Cluster meetings
2. Attendance at the Nashua Area Inter-faith Council
3. Completion of a Safe Congregation Policy
4. Support for the permanent staffing hire
5. Work on the Strategic Goals
6. Attendance at the Regional Assembly in April
7. Organizing the first-ever youth trip to General Assembly

As your interim, it has been my honor and joy to partner with you in a deepening of your understanding of faith formation. I have witnessed a growing awareness of the need for a change in direction and in the ways in which “the church is the curriculum.” Thank you for these two years of support, engagement and curiosity (and sense of humor). I have been blessed.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie Hinkle
Chair, Children & Youth Team

Sandra Greenfield
Interim Director of Faith Formation

29 May 2017

