

Unitarian Universalist Church of Nashua, NH

Music Program 2015-2016

Jared (Jed) Holland led two choirs this year.

Our music committee has been assisting Jed with the music program. This committee (members Geri Davidson, Kathy Grossman, John Burkitt, Ruth Cannava, Kathleen Griffis) has been doing a great job. Geri and Kathy are co-chairs this year.

It's been a pleasure to have Rev. Allison participate in our Music Team meetings during this first year of her ministry at our church. She has brought 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 55 choir members. The adult choir continues to sing almost every Sunday. The choir sang a total of 63 anthems, and sang at 36 out of 40 services. The only Sundays the choir did not sing were the Youth Service and three Sundays for which the worship leaders requested other music. Some members of the congregation and choir also joined the early Christmas Eve service choir for 3 more anthems.

Sixteen new members joined the choir this year. Out of those sixteen, nine are new (names are in bold) to our church this year. **Allison Palm, Andrea Rebeck**, Nancy Bell, Patti Shannon, Elizabeth Clark, Mandy Eberle, **Courtney Tanzi**, Devony Whiting, MaryEllen Wessels, Peggy Cardone, **River Waters, Becky Green, Bryanne Thomas, Tina Blais**, Fred Shirley, **Winter-Rylee Blais**.

The children's choir has gone through some transition this year. We were getting very low and sporadic attendance at the weekly rehearsals, so we decided to try something new. We started inviting all children and youth to sing a song on a specific date, and only have rehearsals for a few weeks ahead of that date, rather than every week year-round. This is still an experimentation in progress. The children's choir sang four times this year, once with the adult choir. Music team member Kathleen Griffis has assisted with directing and logistics for the children's choir this year.

Rev. Allison brought the concept of using monthly themes to plan services. Although it can be a challenge to select a month's worth of anthems that relate to a single theme, knowing the themes ahead of time has allowed us to do some advanced planning. Asking the choir to provide music

suggestions based on the themes has yielded a wonderful diversity of anthems and solo songs for our services.

We have also begun to examine our practices with recordings. We had the choir answer a survey about their feelings on videotaping and audiotaping services and passed that on to the A/V Team. We also have been having discussions and coordinating with the A/V Team about licensing for the work being done with audio 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 musically, we have included youth vocalists and instrumentalists.

We had great participation by over 50 guest musicians to provide special music other than the normal choirs, for a total of 21 musical offerings. John Burkitt has continued coordinating with the large number of special musicians.

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 couple of choir members have used the childcare this year.

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, and sent an email listing all the new members and encouraging established choir members to introduce themselves to somebody new.

During Wednesday 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 have implemented 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

This year, after an error in emailing sent out the meeting minutes to the choir members, we realized that the choir was interested in hearing more about what we do. Kathy started writing up a seasonal update to send out to the choir, which has been well-received, and we will continue this communication.

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 have been working toward the church goal of providing community dinners. Bass player John Burkitt provided live music at five 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 implemented a program to provide compensation for musicians who play at our summer services. This past summer Jed Holland played for 4 services, Dan Murphy played for 4 services, two service leaders made arrangements to bring in musicians, and one service leader hired a youth to play a hymn.

Printed Music/Folders

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

Guest Musicians

This year's guest musicians include many congregation members and friends.

Vocal soloists this year include Ruth Cannava, Jed Holland, Ben Morton, Brenna Woods, Steve Hedges, Geri Davidson, Jess Woods, Jenny Grossman, Courtney Tanzi, Devony Whiting, Kathy Grossman, Mandy Eberle, Martha Holland, Moe Daniels, Sue Chadwick, Dan Murphy, Harry Purkhiser, Kathleen Griffis, Ellen McCormick, Kim Steele, Karen Leonard, Tina Marshman, Linda Lewis, Jim Woolsey, John Burkitt, Kathy Fletcher, John Sanders, Erica Agnew, Charlotte

Cardone, Nicholas Griffis, Andrew Griffis, Winter Blais, and Suellen Davidson, many of whom sang multiple solos.

Instrumentalists this year include pianists Jed Holland, Devony Whiting, Dan Murphy, Jason Pancoast, Nicole Straussberg; organists Jed Holland and Dan Murphy; vocal percussionist Brenna Woods; bass player John Burkitt; guitarists Dan Murphy, Jason Pancoast; percussionists Billy Parker, Ben Morton; and flute player Linda Lewis, many of whom played many times.

Jed's professional development

Jed and Kathy Grossman attended last summer's UU Musician's Network convention in Boston. The conventions offer workshops on all aspects of music, from composition to directing, song selection to accompaniment skills, and many more. They also offer many chances to see alternative worship possibilities and for Jed to meet with fellow music director professionals.

Instrument Repairs/Maintenance

The organ had 2 tunings, and the sanctuary piano had 2 tunings.

Review of Music Budget 2015-2016

We continue to have a large expense of printed sheet music for the choir, due mostly to the large choir membership. We have paid for Julie Oliver as our choir director substitute for 2 rehearsals and plan to have Dan Murphy substitute for Jed for one service in June. We ordered 7 new pieces for the choir, as well as more copies as needed for the larger choir for music we already owned.

With Allison's approval, remaining funds from the Summer Musicians budget were reallocated towards the purchase of two file cabinets for the music office, and 70 teal hymnals for the Sanctuary. This number of hymnals allowed one teal hymnal to be placed in each pew section, but we have found that this number is not sufficient to allow convenient access to a hymnal for congregation members who wish to use one.

Goals for 2016-2017

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 buy more teal Singing the Journey hymnals for the sanctuary.

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

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