

Unitarian Universalist Church of Nashua
Religious Education and Adult Spiritual Development Programs
Annual Report: 2015-2016

Introduction

This report covers the second year of interim work for the lifespan religious education programs at UUCN and the current staff person's first year serving as the Interim Director of Lifespan Religious Education (IDLRE).

During August and September, 2015, the IDLRE traveled back and forth between New Hampshire and Delaware, with the final move to New Hampshire taking place the first weekend in October. Deepest thanks to RE leaders and staff for all their work and attention to detail as well as providing the children, teachers and families with a steady presence during this transition time.

The RE Team (note the transition from Committee to Team) met monthly to manage the program for children and youth. The Team used to meet on Sunday mornings and moved their meeting time to 11:45 once a month. This was a BIG change!

This change was related to, among other things, the IDLRE's focus on Sunday morning on worship and active participation in the Story For All Ages and multigenerational worship. It also allowed the Team and the staff to focus on the teachers and the classrooms and gave more time for the reflection needed for the interim work.

That reflection manifested in an intentional shift away from traditional "education" and towards a deeper understanding of Unitarian Universalist identity formation. The program has been renamed to Faith Formation and the staff person's title changed to Interim Director of Faith Formation as of May 22nd.

Thank you all for your strong and unwavering belief in the transformative power of Unitarian Universalism and in providing direct and indirect support to the lifespan faith formation program! The program has become deeply integrated into the life of the congregation. The children and youth are visible and connected to not only their church but to those who are a part of it.

Staff

Sandra Greenfield, Interim Director of Faith Formation (formerly Interim Director of Lifespan Religious Education; title change as of May 22, 2016).

IDLRE Professional Activities: Nashua Area Interfaith Council, Facilitator for the Our Whole Lives training of trainers, District Assembly Workshop Leader, Participant in the RE Start! Workshop with members of the RE Team and minister.

Plans for the fall include a Pastoral Care Certificate Program through the New England Pastoral Institute and attending the LREDA Fall Conference in San Diego in October.

Leadership: RE and Adult Spiritual Development Teams

We owe so much to this visionary, dedicated and loving group. Being in RE leadership during interim times requires extra time and patience. Deepest thanks to this year's RE Team:

Chairperson – *Kim Steele*

Peggy Cardone, Jamie Hinkle, Cindy Hudson, Pam Jordan, Donna Lerue, Charles Savoie, Mickey Shepherd, Asher Thomas. Special projects: *Nona Storer and Sarah Widhu.*

Pam Jordan stepped down in March.

Jamie Hinkle is the incoming Chairperson. We are all glad for Jamie's Stewardship remarks during worship in March that highlighted how the congregation's pledges contribute to an active, vital faith formation program.

The RE Team (now FF Team) co-led the spring Leadership Summit on April 2nd, providing representatives of various teams and committees with an AREA experience and an overview of the program for children and youth. The RE Team left with ideas from these teams on ways they could partner with the RE Team to provide justice making and outreach experiences.

Next year's Faith Formation Team for Children and Youth will begin to re-structure itself to include designated liaisons to other Teams in an effort to create a fully lifespan, multigenerational ministry that is collaborative, effective and lots of fun.

There was no ASD Team for this church year. Rev. Allison and I administered the various offerings in an effort to gain clarity on the congregation's level of participation and commitment to adult learning. A group will be meeting in June to look at the faith formation needs of adults and the infrastructure required for successful, sustainable program administration.

Leadership: Children and Youth Advisors and Teachers

Our teens have enjoyed the guidance and good humor of three great youth leaders! With gratitude and sadness we are saying goodbye to *Lynn Coakley* who is a member of the Milford congregation and is their incoming Board President. Thank you Lynn!

We met monthly as a team to review the program and make scheduling plans. The IDLRE attended the Youth Group at least 3 Sundays a month.

Senior High Youth Group Advisors

Lynn Coakley, Roy Goodman and Monica Staples

Our Whole Lives Facilitators: This year we had a very large group of 7th and 8th graders taking Our Whole Lives, our sexual health and justice program. There were 23 teens! Thanks to these very patience and dedicated leaders: *Ginger Hedges, Geoff Skelton, Andy Straussberg and Monica Staples*. Special thanks to our Parent Snack Coordinator: *Marie Bozzi*.

Children's Teachers: See the chart below with class groups, curriculum and teachers' names.

Administration:

Thank you for your continued support and dedication for the lifespan program. The program operated with the following budgets:

RE Team: \$4200

Adult Spiritual Development: \$500

Basketball: \$600

Young Adults: \$500

Average Sunday attendance for the year was 58 children/youth and 16 adults.

Communication – Thanks to *Tina Marshman* for making brochures/pamphlets for the children/youth program and for AREA.

Facilities – Thanks to the Property Committee for allocating \$1000 for the IDLRE office. As of this report there is \$397.75 remaining which will be used to purchase bookshelves. And special thanks to *Penny Guild* and *Muriel Credle* for the work they did to construct the desk and install wall shelves!

The Resource Room was completed in February and now holds many of the supplies that were in the former DRE's office or in the storage area between the administrator's and DRE's office. Much of the old curriculum remains and will be moved to storage next to the stage. Books are now in the Resource Room with some remaining in the former DRE's office (now the Membership Coordinator and bookkeeper's office).

Classroom 6, 7 and 8 were cleaned out including the removal of office equipment and an old television. New flip chart stands were purchased.

Safe Congregation Policies and Procedures – The review of the current policy is an explicit part of the interim work. In consultation with the minister, it was decided to focus on this review and resultant recommendations during the summer. A task force has been formed to assist in risk assessment for the entire congregation and to make recommendations.

Some changes were implemented as a result of observations about risk on Sunday mornings. The door by the Chapel is now locked at 10:00 to reduce access and there is an adult who "roams" in White Wing during young church time.

The IDLRE and the Membership Coordinator attended “Civilian Response to Active Shooter and Emergency Casualty Care” provided by the Nashua Police Department on April 14.

A fire drill was run on Sunday, May 1. This provided staff with an orientation to building evacuation and safety as well as helped key volunteers in being trained.

Programs Highlights:

The 2015-16 Church School Curricula and Adult Leaders are shown below:

Age Group	First Semester	Second Semester
Preschool – Kindergarten	<i>Celebrating Me And My World</i> Cindy Hudson Hal Holway Dick Widhu	<i>Celebrating Me And My World</i> Cindy Hudson Mary Beth Restivo Dick Widhu
1 st – 2 nd Grade	<i>Love Surrounds Us</i> Bill Earley Dan Earley Jodi Holway Siobhan Rogers	<i>Love Will Guide Us</i> Bill Earley Dan Earley Jodi Holway Siobhan Rogers
3 rd – 4 th Grade	<i>Toolbox of Faith</i> Kathleen Griffis Bob Keating Lance Pratt	<i>Heart Talk</i> Rob Bate Jamie Hinkle Bob Keating
5 th – 6 th Grade	<i>Neighboring Faiths</i> John McCannon Karen Murray Charles Savoie	<i>Neighboring Faiths</i> John McCannon Karen Murray Charles Savoie
7 th – 8 th Grade	<i>Our Whole Lives</i> Ginger Hedges Geoff Skelton Andy Straussberg Monica Staples	<i>Our Whole Lives</i> Ginger Hedges Geoff Skelton Andy Straussberg Monica Staples

Senior High Youth Group: The group has made the decision to attend General Assembly in 2017 in New Orleans which resulted in a concentrated effort to fund raise. A special concentration on Sunday mornings resulted with monthly pancake breakfasts starting in January and a holiday concert in December. The group attended the Black Lives Matters vespers which impacted their decision for more worship in youth group. The teens participated in the national voting for a youth representative on the UUA board. They conducted a worship service on March 20th, a treasured tradition at UUCN. We are very proud of *Seth Bonvouloir* who will be attending GA this year in Ohio, participating in the Restorative Circles workshop with Lori Lerude and Sarah-Elizabeth Whitcomb from the Concord congregation.

A youth group savings account was started in order to more effectively manage the fund raising proceeds. The balance of that account as of this report is \$1741.65.

Graduating seniors: Congratulations *Maggie Woolsey!*

Our Whole Lives graduates: Our Whole Lives graduates are: *Samuel Agnew, Layne Bonvouloir, Amanda Bozzi, Michelle Bozzi, Gwen Davis, Douglas Eberle, Andrew Fletcher, Keith Fletcher, Isaac George, Darcy Hinkle, Jackson Hinkle, Avery Hudson, Anthony Iovino, Maggie Paratore, Vinny Paratore, Corwin Stauff, Chloe Stone, Nathan Straussberg, Mia Taylor, Asher Thomas, Tate Van Loon and Spencer Whiting.*

Thanks to Lori Lerude for coordinating a parent gathering each Sunday morning at 9:30!

Young Adult Group: Rev. Allison led a visioning program on March 22. The group has been meeting monthly and will be making some changes starting in September, including two meetings per month! There currently are six active members of the Group. The IDLRE will be attending future gatherings to support their mission.

Adults: The long-running Small Group Ministry program (returning to the name Covenant Groups) is now being administered through IDLRE with programming support by minister. There are five active groups; next year's goal is 8.

In collaboration with the Stewardship Team we offered The Wi\$dom Path, co-led by *Moe Daniels* and *Steve Ladew*. It ran during February, March and April on Sundays after the church service. We will be offering it again in the fall.

An evening program was launched in January, called "TUUSDays at UUCN." It consisted of weekly offerings in UU History (Faith Like a River) facilitated by Sandra Greenfield, UU Theology (going deeper with the monthly theme) led by Rev. Allison, Spirit in Practice (Reflective Listening) co-led by *Ginger Hedges, Allison Annand, Lori Lerude and Seth Bonvouloir*, and book discussions (led by *Roy Goodman, Chuck Rehberg, Harry Purkhiser, Tom Woolsey, and Pat Ladew*). The two fifth Tuesdays were led by Lori Lerude (Sunday morning: "Stirrings of Compassion vs. Beyond your comfort zone" and Rev. Allison and Sandra Greenfield (online UU Parenting).

Rev. Allison and the IDLRE began working with the participants in the Fall Restorative Circles training led by Sarah-Elizabeth Whitcomb from the Concord congregation. This is what sparked the Reflective Listening monthly program on TUUSDays.

The monthly discussion group on the third Tuesday of each month ran throughout the year: The Rowley Discussion Group. This shared-facilitation group met to discuss especially provocative and meaningful lectures from UUCN's former minister, Don Rowley.

On Wednesday May 4th, ten people attended the 2nd in a series of three lectures at First Church in Boston known as The Minns Lecture.

Emma Sousa began an Adult Coloring Group that ran monthly on Thursday nights. The Buddhist Meditation group ran weekly each Wednesday night.

In late May, Rev. Allison and the IDFF met with the ministers of the Milford and Manchester congregations to explore a possible collaboration with UUCN on adult faith formation programs. This is an exciting exploration! Discussions are in their very early stages.

Worship:

Multigenerational Worship Services - There were 8 services provided this year:

Ingathering Water Communion Service
All Saints/All Souls
Christmas Eve, 7p
Dreams For Our Future, February 21st
Easter
The Greatest Power, April 24th
Memorial Day – Blessing of the Animals
Flower Communion – June 19th

Special thanks to the A/V Team for their work in providing the visuals for many of these services as well as for Story For All Ages!

Children's Chapel- Monthly services for preschool through sixth grade began in January. The Worship Associates and the minister joined me in leading them. Thank you to *Sharon Machado, Rev. Allison, Laurie Goodman, Burns Fisher and Roy Goodman!* 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, hymn, story and parting hymn.

Senior High Youth Service – This year's group led a worship service on March 20th entitled, "Facing Your Fears."

Worship Kits: We launched these Kits in November thanks to the help of *Ginger Hedges and Peggy, Charlotte and Paul Cardone!* A few months ago, *Nona Storer* took over the responsibility for managing these Kits. Thanks Nona for offering your time and talent in keeping the Worship Kits well stocked with a variety of interesting and informative treasures.

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!

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 five projects including: Sweet Cases, Dining In The Dark, Similarity Awareness, Let's Put People on Bikes, Nutrition and Gardening. Deepest and loving thanks to *Eileen Herring* and *John Burkitt* for their coordination and administration of Sweet Cases and Let's Put People on Bikes!

The RE Team has reached out to other Teams to collaborate in offering AREA events this coming church year. It is the hope of the Team that other Teams can lead AREA events, allowing a rich diversity of experiences along with deeper multigenerational connections.

Senior Youth Fundraiser: This Group's annual holiday gift sale netted \$219.50. The proceeds from the Gift Sale will be sent to the UUSC Refugee Relief Fund.

Basketball Team - The recently rekindled basketball team that UUCN sponsors through the YMCA of Greater Nashua's Church Basketball League was coached this year by Mike Super with the assistance of Cecile Bonvouloir. The five UUCN youth who participated were: Ben Super, Alec Bonvouloir, Seth Bonvouloir, Max Shepherd and Jake Fitzpatrick. In consultation with Mike and his son Ben it was decided to withdraw sponsorship of this team next year due to the lack of participation by UUCN teens and Mike's decision to withdraw from coaching so that he could focus on his family.

Special Events:

The church year started off with a special version of the beloved, annual "Ice Cream Social" when the RE Team opened the treat making to the entire congregation! Thanks to *Jamie Hinkle* for his hard work in coordinating the treats and getting all that ice cream!

Interim Tasks:

This year's interim tasks included:

1. Adult RE visioning workshop on January 23rd.
2. RE Team visioning on April 16th
3. Board reporting on January 11.
4. Attendance at the District's workshop: RE Start! on January 30th
5. Participation in the Strategic Planning process
6. Membership on the Pastoral Care Team
7. Interviews with current and former RE lay leaders throughout the year.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sandra Greenfield

Interim Director of Faith Formation
1 June 2016