

DRAFT

Unitarian-Universalist Church of Nashua, NH (UUCN)

Meeting of the Board of Trustees

October 11, 2016

Present: Members: David Hudson, Mary Licking, Carol Wagner, Rick Spitz, Ellen McCormick, Steve Hedges, Brenna Woods, and The Reverend Allison Palm. Guest: Sandra Greenfield

Rick performed the chalice lighting. A check-in was performed. Timekeeper was Carol.

A motion carried made by Carol and seconded by Brenna to approve the consent agenda, which included the minutes for the September 13th BoT meeting.

David led a discussion on some housekeeping items. There are blanks in the Congregational Service welcoming schedule for Nov 13 & 27 and volunteers responded to his call (see below). The April 11 minutes that were thought to have issues are correct as initially presented and approved. The Bylaws Review Committee of the BoT now has a new member, Carol Houde, and a Chair has been named, John Sanders. The Board Covenant needs to be reaffirmed, and with that in mind, the BoT went around the room, each reading a different part of the document out loud until the whole document was read. The part in brown type (see attached) was added to provide a confidentiality clause. A motion carried made by Rick and seconded by Ellen that the BoT Covenant as amended be approved. Two volunteers for the planning and visioning process that is the work of the new BoT Planning Committee are required and Ellen and Carol volunteered. The BoT consented to November 8<sup>th</sup> regularly scheduled date for the next BoT meeting, mindful that is Election Day.

The Reverend Palm gave the Minister's Report (see attached), including the Budget versus Actual Financial statement for October 2016.

Ellen led the discussion for the Safe Congregations Task Force's submission of the Approved Safe Congregations Policy (see attached that was approved by the Task Force for submission to the BoT). A motion carried made by Steve and seconded by Brenna to approve a revision of Policy IV B (see attached). Policy IV is entitled, Executive Limitations and B is entitled, Treatment of Church Members, Visitors, and Groups. This Policy IV B links the UUCN policies to the Safe Congregations Policy document. The Approved Safe Congregations Policy was approved by consensus of the BoT. It was also the consensus of the BoT that the Safe Congregations Policy document undergo further revisions before resubmission.

Carol and Brenna have collated the comments submitted by BoT members for the Ministerial Evaluation the BoT must generate. There is reason to believe the UUA puts weight to evaluations submitted by church boards and the BoT must strive for a robust document to ensure Reverend Palm gets a fair hearing. Steve, Rick, and Brenna have offered to continue work on this evaluation and BoT members will hear from the BoT on their recommendations prior to the end of October submission deadline. Attached are the Ministerial Self Evaluation by the Reverend Palm and the Committee on Ministry's Evaluation of the Minister for the First year of ministry.

Sandra Greenfield of the Safe Congregations Task Force appeared briefly at this point, having been occupied previously with an Adult Faith Formation meeting, and offered to take questions on the Safe Congregations Task Force submission (there were none; Ellen is a member of the Safe Congregations Task Force and answered the BoT's questions during the time that agenda item was discussed).

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Members were asked about New Business, but none was raised.

A Covenantal Check Out was performed. Discussed was what worked well at the meeting, what did not work, whether there are lingering questions or concerns, and how are we working as a group.

Carol gave the Timekeeper' Report.

The Reverend Palm gave Closing Words.

A motion passed made by Rick and seconded by Ellen to adjourn.

Upcoming issues: 1) required 501c3 revisions that have been approved but not submitted (but is expected to be submitted in September 2016, this month) and 2) IFC policy review that is expected to occur in early Fall 2016.

In the "Parking Lot" (issues for which consideration is to occur at a date yet to be determined): 1) BoT job descriptions & the assessment of the presidential funnel (the pipeline and related issues), and 2) Donation Policy, the discussion of which began in May 2015 but remains unresolved.

Volunteers slated for BoT tasks are named in Lists #1 and #2 below. List #3 below includes upcoming dates of events and List #4 describes attachments to these minutes. Lists #1 through #4:

List #1 Words of Welcome & Church Service Announcements: November 13 Lance, November 20 Brenna, November 27 Rick, December 4 Ellen, December 11 Mary, December 18 David, December 25 Steve, January 1 Mary, January 8 Carol, January 15 Steve, January 22 David, January 29 Ellen, month of February and March 5 & 12 are blank, March 19 Mary.

List #2 Chalice lighting: November 8<sup>th</sup> – Mary, December 13<sup>th</sup> – Carol, January 10<sup>th</sup> - Brenna; Timekeeper schedule: November 8<sup>th</sup> – Lance, December 13<sup>th</sup> – Brenna, January 10<sup>th</sup> – blank, February 14<sup>th</sup> – blank, March 14<sup>th</sup> – Mary.

List #3 Upcoming Dates: Event Dates Listing:

Tuesday, December 13<sup>th</sup>, Next BoT meeting, 7:00 pm, Youth Room

Wednesday, October 19<sup>th</sup>, Noon, Investment Review Committee, first meeting of the 2016 -2017 Church year

Saturday, October 29<sup>th</sup>, Leadership Development Summit, 8 am Dining Room

Saturday, March 18, 2017, Policy Governance Summit (Leadership Development)

List #4 Attachments to these minutes: 1) BoT Covenant as amended [2016'10 Policy III.G Draft], 2) Minister's Report for October 11, 2016, including the October 2016 Budget versus Actual Financial statement, 3) Approved Safe Congregation Policy, 4) 2016'10 Policy IV B Revision DRAFT, 5) Minister's Self Evaluation, 6) Committee on Ministry Evaluation – First year evaluation of the minister

Minutes submitted by,

Mary Licking, Clerk,

Unitarian-Universalist Church of Nashua, NH

## Policy G: Board Members' Code of Conduct

The Board commits itself and its members to ethical, businesslike, and lawful conduct, including proper use of authority and appropriate decorum when acting as Board members. Accordingly, Board members subscribe to the following *Board Covenant*.

### Unitarian Universalist Church of Nashua Board of Trustees Covenant

The members of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Nashua, New Hampshire, acting in the tradition of the Free Church, have entrusted us with the responsible governance of our congregation. To help us honor that trust we promise the following to one another. As fellow members of the Board of Trustees of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Nashua, we will:

**Show respect for one another.** We will honor the dignity of our fellow Board members and respect their opinions. We will strive to assure that everyone's voice is heard and refrain from interrupting each other. We will assume the best intentions of our fellow Board members, remembering that we are working toward common goals.

**Take responsibility to express our opinions on the issues before us.** We recognize that we each have an obligation to express our views on the important matters that come to the Board. We will keep an open mind when listening to the viewpoints of others, and express our disagreements respectfully.

**Respect the dignity of Board decisions.** We may offer varying opinions in our discussions, but we will stand behind the decisions the Board has made once the decision making process has been fairly completed.

**Maintain the highest levels of confidentiality.** We realize that in the course of our service on the Board we will be presented or become aware of confidential information pertaining to the activities, operations and the business of UUCN and/or financial and personal information of UUCN's members. We will treat this information with care and take every reasonable measure to guard against its disclosure.

**Make efficient use of time.** We will focus on the issue on the table with minimum distractions and complete our work in a timely manner. Making efficient use of time includes timely dissemination of meeting materials; taking time to read through materials and prepare for meeting discussions, respecting established time limitations; and keeping comments pertinent and succinct.

**Respect the value of face-to-face interaction, but allow the use of alternative communication technologies when necessary.** Whenever possible, we will conduct our discussions and deliberations in person. When we cannot meet in person we will value real-time, interactive communication technologies (e.g. Skype) over alternatives, resorting to email only as a last resort when expediency demands it. To that end, any member(s) participating remotely who can both hear our discussion and speak will count towards a quorum and be allowed to vote.

**Maintain a sense of the sacred.** Even as we attend to matters of business, we will remember that we are a religious community, and our purpose is to advance the mission and covenant of this Church.

**Inject fun in our work.** Though our work together is serious, we shall not take ourselves too seriously.

**Make our activities transparent to the Congregation.** We are mindful that we have been entrusted by the members of this Church to carry out the business of governance. Therefore it is our duty and obligation to participate in and encourage open, two-way communication regarding our work on their behalf.

**Keep mindful that we are part of a greater community.** We shall remember that in our deliberations we must consider the needs of our larger community and the impact of our decisions on the world outside our doors.

**When we fall short of this covenant,** we will make amends, forgive ourselves and each other, and, if necessary, seek help to restore covenant between us.

**This is a living document.** As such, it can be reviewed and revised by consensus at any time.

*Covenant last affirmed by the Board of Trustees, December 14, 2015*

## IV: Executive Limitations

### Policy B: Treatment of Church Members, Visitors, and Groups

The Executive shall not cause or allow conditions or procedures that are unsafe, disrespectful, or unnecessarily intrusive to members, friends, or visitors, including children. Accordingly, the Executive shall develop and maintain a *Safe Congregation Policy* that formalizes and details the necessary systems, policies, and procedures to support this goal. The Board of Trustees will approve this policy and any changes, but implementation will be the responsibility of the Executive, except when issues arise that require Board involvement as noted in the policy itself.

The Executive shall not allow members of the congregation to be disconnected from the life and care of the Church.

The Executive shall not allow Church groups (committees, task forces, and other groups) to operate without his or her authorization and supervision.

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NOTE, text in black is the current language in Policy B. Orange text is the proposed addition.

**Minister's Report to the Board of Trustees**  
**Rev. Allison Palm**  
**UU Church of Nashua, NH**  
**October 11, 2016**

**1. WITHIN**

*The Unitarian-Universalist Church of Nashua is a spiritual home where members and friends experience personal transformation by: Participating in varied and meaningful common worship that nurtures, challenges, and inspires; Exploring religious values and discovering individual truths; Joining in fellowship with other members and friends.*

- Average Sunday attendance this year: 192
- We held our second Body and Soul Service on October 9, with approximately 20 in attendance.
- The AV Team has installed the new screen in the sanctuary. I have asked folks to try out the screen for 6 months before offering feedback.
- Registration for Children and Youth Faith Formation is currently at 61.
- Sandra and Ginger Hedges held a very well-received Mentor Training for ROPEs Mentors on September 25.
- Covenant Groups and our TUUsdays Adult Faith Formation programs have begun, and will continue throughout the year.
- The Young Adult Group is now meeting twice a month and had 7 YAs at their last meeting.
- Our DFF Search Team had a day-long retreat on September 17 and met in early October as well. They are already working hard, and will be soliciting input from the congregation over the next couple of month.
- I met with the Children and Youth Faith Formation Team on October 9 to discuss their impressions of the Interim period. They have a lot of gratitude for the work done during the interim and feel like CYFF is on the right track. There is some anxiety about getting a settled DFF.

**2. AMONG**

*The Unitarian-Universalist Church of Nashua is a welcoming religious community for all ages where we live our mission by: Creating a beloved community where we minister to one another; Supporting and respecting one another in our daily lives and our religious journeys; Generously giving of our time, talents, and money; Being good stewards of our church resources in pursuit of our mission.*

- The Safe Congregations Task Force has submitted their proposed policy for the Board to review at this meeting. They will be meeting monthly throughout the year to finish up the “pending” pieces of the policy.
- The Stewardship Team has settled on a theme of “Building Together” for this year’s Stewardship Campaign. They will be having their first “Town Hall” type event on

October 16 after the service. They are also planning a series of cottage meetings this winter, likely focused on the Strategic Plan.

- Sherri, Dave and I now have official signature authority from our bank, subject to the policies the Board put in place at your last meeting.
- We had an excellent conversation on September 25 about our Evolving Covenant of Right Relationship, with 20 people in attendance. It is clear to me that we need to have further conversations about this as a congregation, particularly as it relates to conflict. I plan to use the remainder of the PercUulate sessions planned for this year to focus on the Covenant (6 sessions total).
- The staff approved a new “Emergency Responder Policy” on September 27. The full text is attached to this report.
- The Pastoral Care Team have begun a system of “buddies” for folks who are aging and/or homebound, or have an ongoing pastoral need. Our hope is that this will help us keep these folks connected to and supported by the congregation.

### **3. BEYOND**

*The Unitarian-Universalist Church of Nashua is a beacon of liberal religious thought and action, making a positive impact in our neighborhood and in the world by: Promoting our values and programs so that others will hear our voice and have the opportunity to join us; Welcoming people who are seeking a spiritual home and personal transformation; Partnering with other congregations and institutions in advocating for and promoting social justice; Actively participating in regional (Northern New England District) and national (Unitarian Universalist Association) Unitarian Universalist programs and activities.*

- The Social Justice Team met on Oct. 5 to begin planning for the year. They are looking at two initiatives for this year. One is a focus on Black Lives Matter; the other is a comprehensive assessment of our Social Justice programming (as called for in the Strategic Plan).
- The Youth Group is beginning to lay the ground work for a possible trip to General Assembly in June. Sandra and the Youth Advisors held a meeting with Youth Group parents on October 2 to talk about the possibilities and the commitment needed.
- Our collaboration with the congregations in Milford and Manchester continues, though no one has yet taken advantage of programs at other congregations to our knowledge. The Team planning the collaboration will meet again on October 11.
- We have several folks already signed up for the October 30 CROP Walk, which is a Nashua Area Interfaith Council annual event. We hope to exceed last year’s turnout of 39 UUCN walkers.
- Our September 18 call for folks to commit to vote resulted in nearly 80 commitments that we will pass on to GSOP

### **4. CHILDREN’S WINTER GARDEN WITH WHITE WING SCHOOL**

- Current enrollment is at 60
- A new sign has been installed with the name and logo of the combined school.

- The School Board had decreased their meetings from twice a month to once a month now that the transition work is winding down. The Board will be meeting on the second Wednesday of each month.
- The budget continues to look favorable, though as of the last meeting, a final budget for the year had not yet been fully developed. Jim Bonvouloir, the School Board treasurer is working on one this month.
- Carol Blodgett, who has taught music for many years at White Wing, will not be returning this year. The Board is working on finding a suitable replacement.

## 5. FINANCES

As I would continue to expect at this point in the year, expenses are outpacing budget. We have lower income in the summer and pay some big expenses (facilities improvements, denominational contribution) over the summer.

	Actual	Budget
<b>INCOME</b>		
Endowment	\$33,037.06	\$133,946.00
Fundraisers	\$0	\$11,800.00
Outreach Collections	\$6,314.22	\$35,000.00
Pledges	\$61,109.13	\$310,000.00
User Fees	\$1055.08	\$6,000.00
CWG-WWS Contribution	\$0	\$28,000.00
Other Income	\$294.90	\$800.00
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$101,810.39</b>	<b>\$525,546.00</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
<i>Programs</i>		
Music & Worship	\$2,752.63	\$9,800.00
Faith Formation	\$1087.33	\$6,350.00
Membership	\$339.93	\$3585.00
Social Justice	\$404.73	\$39,300.00
Leadership Development	\$0	\$500.00
Discretionary Funds	\$22.68	\$2,000.00
<b>Total Programs</b>	<b>\$4,607.30</b>	<b>\$61,535.00</b>
<i>Operations</i>		
Administration	\$2,617.39	\$35,844.00
Communications	\$1,328.98	\$3,300.00
Stewardship	\$0	\$1,800.00
Denomination	\$21,172.00	\$21,172.00
Property	\$26,626.73	\$85,200.00
<b>Total Operations</b>	<b>\$51,945.10</b>	<b>\$147,316.00</b>
<i>Staff</i>		
Minister	\$33,783.22	\$123,932.00



Director of Faith Formation	\$21,728.51	\$76,719.00
Music Director	\$4,177.28	\$16,516.00
Membership Coordinator	\$4,347.38	\$15,906.00
Church Administrator	\$12,209.99	\$41,783.00
Bookkeeper	\$1,649.10	\$4,575.00
Sexton	\$7,031.78	\$27,420.00
Child Care	\$1,250.11	\$4,468.00
Coffee Crew	\$271.84	\$905.00
<i>Total Staff</i>	<i>\$86,449.21</i>	<i>\$312,224.00</i>
One-Time Expense: DFF Search	\$256.67	\$4,000.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$143,258.28	\$525,075.00
Difference	-\$41,447.89	\$471.00

## 6. SCHEDULE

In reviewing my Letter of Agreement, I noted that I am supposed to report vacation and study leave to the Board. David and I spoke about this at our meeting last week and agreed I would add a section to my report with that information.

- In October, my Sunday off will be October 23. I will be out of the area (in northern NH) that weekend for a family wedding.
- I will be attending the New England Ministers Retreat Nov. 1-3 in Greenfield, NH. I plan to combine that with half a week of study leave, meaning I will be out of the office Oct. 31-Nov. 4.

## 7. REPORT ON POLICY IV.E and POLICY IV.I

Policy language is in italics; comments are in plain text.

### ***Policy E: Financial Planning and Budgeting***

*With respect to planning fiscal events, the Executive Director may not jeopardize either the programmatic or fiscal integrity of the Church. Accordingly, the Executive Director shall not allow the Church to:*

1. *Operate without the guidance of an annual operating budget, derived from a multiyear plan, that conforms to the Board's Ends and has been reviewed and approved in accordance with the By-Laws;*

We have an approved annual operating budget for this year. We do not have a multi-year plan. I would like to look at creating such a plan this year and would love to hear more about what the Board thinks this should look like.

2. *Cause or allow financial planning or budgeting for any fiscal year or remaining part of a fiscal year that:*
  - i. *Contains too little detail to enable reasonably accurate projection of revenues and expenses, separation of capital and operational items, cash flow and subsequent trails, and disclosure of planning assumptions,*
  - ii. *Plans the expenditure in any fiscal year of more funds than are conservatively projected to be received in that period, absent legitimate articulated reasons, or*
  - iii. *Does not separately present a plan for capital expenditures and the means to pay for them. Capital expenditures are all repayments of debt and any building additions or equipment purchases over \$5,000 each;*

Our annual operating budget for this year meets all of the above requirements.

3. *Operate without a liquid operating reserve of two months of operating expenses to cover unanticipated expenses, unless otherwise approved by the Board;*

Two months operating expenses is \$87,512.50 (1/6 of the annual budget). Our checking account balance typically hovers right around \$100,000

4. *Deviate from the following strictures on operating reserve when preparing the annual budget:*
  - i. *If the operating reserve at the end of the current fiscal year is projected to be less than 2 months of operating expenses (1/6 annual budget), the following year's budget must be balanced;*
  - ii. *If the operating reserve at the end of the current fiscal year is projected to be less than 1 month of operating expenses (1/12 annual budget), the following year's budget must provide for a replenishment of operating reserves by at least 1 week of operating expenses (1/52 annual budget)*

We had a two-month reserve when the current budget was created, so these requirements did not apply.

5. *Operate without a 20-year facilities maintenance/replacement plan and restricted replacement reserve fund;*

This particular part of the policy has not been followed in previous years, so it will take some time to reach full compliance. I have asked the Property Team to take on the task of creating a 20-year facilities maintenance/replacement plan this year. We also have \$8000 in the budget that will start a Building Maintenance Fund if it is not used up by the end of the year.

6. *Fail to budget for the Church's requested Annual Program Fund contribution to the Unitarian Universalist Association and the local District (previously know as our "Fair Share").*

We budgeted for an have already paid our full APF contribution for FY2017.

## ***Policy I: Facilities Planning***

*In guiding the Church's facilities planning, the Executive Director shall not fail to:*

- 1. Be governed by the Church's Ends Policies;*
- 2. Respect the history and heritage of our Church and faith;*
- 3. Communicate regularly with all of the stakeholders, as appropriate, about plans regarding facilities; or*
- 4. Be mindful of the needs of the stakeholders of all ages and abilities when making facilities changes.*

As far as I am aware, we have not had any recent facilities work that has not followed these guidelines.

### **Attachment: EMERGENCY RESPONDER POLICY**

Our facility is always in use but not regularly staffed after business hours during the week or on weekends. This presents an opportunity for members of our church to be Emergency Responders. The staff will ask up to 4 members of the church if they would be willing to serve as an Emergency Responder. One staff member will be a 5th Emergency Responder.

The following criteria must be met:

- Live within a 1.5 mile radius of the church
- Have a vehicle and phone service that is reliable
- Can arrive at the church within 5-7 minutes
- Pass a background check

These responders will have their name and phone number given to our Alarm Company, the Nashua Fire Department and Nashua Police Department to call should the alarm go off or there is an emergency. Responders will be assigned a key to the building, a key to the church office and an alarm code. The Church Administrator will keep the master list of Emergency Responders.

If a responder no longer meets the above criteria they will be asked to return the keys and will be removed from the list.

Staff Approved 9/27/2016

**Safe Congregation Policy**  
*Unitarian-Universalist Church of Nashua*  
Approved: 11 October 2016

## Table of Contents

- I. Safe Congregation Purpose and Policy Statements
- II. Definitions
- III. Policy Administration & Monitoring
- IV. Prevention
  - A. Identifying Vulnerable Groups
  - B. Building & Facilities (Building access, Sunday morning monitoring, Evacuations, Intruders, Severe weather)
  - C. Medical (First Aid and Incident Reporting)
  - D. Hiring and Staffing (Employees, Volunteer Staffing)
  - E. Screening
  - F. Training and Education
  - G. Supervision
  - H. Transportation
  - I. Electronic Communications
- V. Guidelines
  - A. Classes and Programs
  - B. Discipline
  - C. Touch
  - D. Youth Groups
  - E. Overnights and Trips
  - F. Nursery and Child Care
  - G. Pastoral Care
- VI. Disruptive Behavior
- VII. Safe Congregation Response Team
- VIII. Responding To A Report or Allegation
  - A. Role of Person Who Receives a Report of Child Abuse
  - B. Role of Minister, DFF or other Safe Congregation Response Team Member Who Receives A Report
  - C. Evaluation of Need for Limited/Permanent Access
  - D. Disclosures or Concerns About Staff or Volunteers.
  - E. Youth Who May Be Abusers
  - F. Safety and Pastoral Needs of the Congregation
- IX. Reporting Procedure
  - A. Role of Person Informed of An Incident of Abuse
  - B. The Role of the SCRT



## I. PURPOSE AND POLICY STATEMENTS

*The mission of the Unitarian-Universalist Church of Nashua is to engage people in a search for truth and meaning within a supportive liberal religious community that encourages personal and spiritual growth, embraces diversity, and promotes social justice. (Policy 1.K of the Unitarian-Universalist Church of Nashua Governing Policies)*

UUCN is a spiritual community that takes seriously its responsibility to provide a safe and nurturing environment for everyone who participates in our congregation, placing a special emphasis on meeting the unique needs of children, youth and vulnerable adults. We are committed to protecting children, youth and vulnerable adults from harm and promoting their spiritual growth while part of our community. This Policy strives to provide an environment in which we may each deepen our acceptance and understanding of one another, and in which personal transformation and spiritual growth are encouraged and supported in an atmosphere of civility, mutual respect, trust and kindness.

As Unitarian Universalists, our commitment to the inherent worth and dignity of every person and to justice and compassion compels us to affirm and maintain an environment free of discrimination and harassment based on race, color, ethnicity, religion, national origin, age, physical ability, gender, or sexual/affective orientation. This includes safety from physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

This Policy reflects the guiding principles articulated by the UUA including:

1. prevention through consideration of responsible staffing and supervision
2. screening of volunteers and paid staff
3. training and education on this Policy and current understanding of abuse
4. guidelines for groups/classes, transportation, nursery/child care, youth engagement
5. responding to incidents responsibly, including reporting both internally and to state/federal authorities
6. evaluation of limited access and pastoral needs of the congregation.

The larger goal of this Policy is to be a “sexually healthy faith community:” a community that is committed to fostering spiritual, sexual, and emotional health among the congregation, and to providing a safe environment where sexuality issues are addressed with respect, mutuality and openness (as defined by Rev. Debra Haffner).

This Policy, created by the Safe Congregation Policy Task Force and approved by the Board of Trustees, applies to all UUCN employees/staff, volunteers, members, friends, attendees and

guests while attending or participating in any UUCN function (i.e., church-sponsored events). It also applies to other UU-affiliated groups and events sponsored by and using the facilities of UUCN.

We view this Policy as a “Living Document” that may need to be amended to reflect changing needs. Requests for amendments should be made through the Minister/Executive Director. All amendments must be approved by the Board of Trustees.



## II. DEFINITIONS

*Age of Consent* - age for consensual sexual relations as defined by the laws of the State of New Hampshire

*Board* - the Board of Trustees of the Unitarian-Universalist Church of Nashua

*Child/Children* - anyone less than 18 years of age

*Child Abuse* - harm or endangerment of a child including, but not limited to physical or sexual abuse, and/or neglect of a child's health or welfare. NH State Law RSA 169-C-3, II, defines an abused child as "...a child who has been:

- Sexually abused;
- Intentionally physically injured;
- Psychologically injured so that said child exhibits symptoms of emotional problems generally recognized to result from consistent mistreatment or neglect;
- Physically injured by other than accidental means."

*Church-Sponsored Event/UUCN-Sponsored Event* - any event, program or activity held on or off UUCN grounds; applies to activities of all committees, teams, classes, task forces or Boards acting on behalf of the church

*DCYF* - Division for Children, Youth and Families

*DFP* - Director of Faith Formation

*Faith Formation (FF) Program* - The structured program for the entire congregation centered on Unitarian Universalist principles, values, identity and relationships.

*Field Trips* - outings, conferences, meetings and other UUCN activities which take place off UUCN grounds and may require transportation by UUCN staff or volunteers.

*Harassment* - acts or behaviors which show unwanted pressure or intimidation of another, unwanted persistent communications and all acts defined as harassment as defined in NH State Law (644.4)

*Leadership* - refers to individuals in the following positions: Minister, Director of Faith Formation, Church Administrator, Membership Coordinator, Music Director, Board of Trustees, Committee/Team Chairs.

*Limited Access Agreement* - document restricting participation in specified UUCN activities or types of activities

*Nursery* - Care and supervision provided for children age 3 and under

*OWL* - Our Whole Lives is a comprehensive lifespan sexuality program.

*Positive Discipline* - Positive Discipline is characterized by techniques that consciously and consistently focus on positive behavior. Examples include but are not limited to: giving attention before a problem occurs; recognizing, praising, or rewarding behaviors that are caring, respectful, or helpful; honoring even small progress toward a goal; and/or clarifying expected behavior in response to a problem (rather than listing what not to do or describing all the things that are going wrong). When teachers use positive discipline effectively, every student experiences far more positive interactions than negative.

*ROPEs* - Rite Of Passage Experiences is UUCN's Coming of Age Program for youth in 8th and 9th grades

*Rover* - A screened adult who monitors the Faith Formation wing on Sunday mornings.

*Safe Congregation Response Team (SCRT)* - a team that includes the Minister, the DFF, the Church Administrator and the President of the Board of Trustees, and that is responsible for responding to reports of any alleged instances of abuse.

*Staff/Employee* - individuals employed by UUCN

*Teacher/Facilitator*- person who leads a Faith Formation (FF) class or facilitates discussion in a FF activity.

*UUA* - Unitarian Universalist Association

*UUCN* - Unitarian-Universalist Church of Nashua

*Volunteers* - individuals who donate their time and efforts to UUCN events, programs, tasks, projects, and activities

*Vulnerable Adults* - individuals 18 and older who are in need of special care or concern due to physical, mental, cognitive, sensory or emotional disability or strain

*Young Adults* - individuals who are between the ages of 18 and 35 and who are no longer a part of our Children and Youth Faith Formation programming

*Youth* - children between the ages of 12 to 18 years of age.

*Youth Advisor* - individuals who work with youth, most often in the Senior High Youth Group.

### **III. POLICY ADMINISTRATION AND MONITORING**

This Policy is in effect at all times. It must be implemented by the UUCN staff year round and monitored by the Board of Trustees on a regular basis. Due to the confidential nature of the policies, it must be administered by UUCN staff and not by volunteer leadership.

The Board of Trustees will conduct a review of this revised policy, adopted October 11, 2016, and its implementation within 18 months of its adoption and at least every three years thereafter. As a part of this review, a brief questionnaire may be given to employees and representative church members asking for their reactions and concerns.

## **IV. PREVENTION AND GUIDELINES**

### **A. Identifying Vulnerable Groups**

This Policy is intended to minimize risk of abuse, harassment, or harm to vulnerable populations within the congregation. Vulnerable populations are defined as:

- *Children*
- *Vulnerable Adults*

### **B. Building & Facilities**

1. The entrance to the church by the Chapel is locked at 10am on Sunday mornings.
2. Teachers and group leaders must follow UUCN's current Evacuation Procedures
3. *Additional Items Pending*

### **C. Medical**

1. First Aid Kits
  - a. An accessible First Aid Kit can be found in each of the following areas: Sanctuary, Kitchen, Parish Hall upstairs, White Wing lower level and the Resource Room.
  - b. Each classroom binder will have basic first-aid supplies and a reminder where full First Aid Kits are located.
  - c. Off-site activities and events - the organizer, contact person or youth leader will bring at least one travel first-aid kit. See Section IV.H for more details on Transportation and off-site activities.
  - d. The responsibility for the maintenance and replenishment of all First Aid Kits rests with UUCN staff.
2. Parents/Guardians will be informed of any situation involving a vulnerable person requiring medical attention aside from rudimentary First Aid.
3. Reporting
  - a. Minor injuries or need for first-aid that take place during an FF class or program will be documented using an "Ouch" report.
  - b. More serious or major injuries at any UUCN-sponsored event must be documented within 24 hours and submitted to either the DFF or the Church Administrator using an Incident Report. Accident reports are typically required by police, safety personnel, and insurance companies. Staff or Volunteers in charge should be ready to record all pertinent information.

- c. Incident Reports are filed with the church's insurance company and kept in the Church Administrator's office. If necessary, they will be filed with the appropriate state agency.

#### **D. Hiring and Volunteer Selection**

This section applies to all UUCN-sponsored activities either held onsite or offsite.

UUCN staff, leadership and volunteers who have access to privileged information or work with families or youth in the course of church sponsored activities are considered to have "access to children and youth." Such access should only be granted to screened and trained individuals according to the policies outlined below.

For UUCN-sponsored activities where parents or guardians are not present and it is explicitly understood that children or youth are in the care of teachers, volunteers or staff, said teachers, volunteers or staff are considered to be "supervising children". Such a responsibility should only be granted to screened and trained individuals according to the screening requirements previously outlined.

#### ***Working with Children and Youth***

It is ultimately the responsibility of the entire congregation, not just those in leadership and teaching positions, to create and maintain a climate that supports the growth and welfare of children and youth. We encourage all church members and friends to read and abide by the Policy on Sexual Abuse and Molestation Prevention. However, those working with young people in the context of our Unitarian Universalist movement have a crucial and privileged role, one which carries with it a great deal of power and influence. Whether acting as a youth advisor, chaperone, childcare worker, teacher, or in any other role, the volunteer has a special opportunity to interact with our young people in ways which are affirming and inspiring to all involved.

While it is important that volunteers be capable of maintaining meaningful friendships with the young people they work with, they must exercise good judgment and mature wisdom in using their influence with children and youth, and refrain from using young people to fulfill their own needs. Young people are in a vulnerable position when dealing with people older than themselves, and may find it difficult to speak out about any inappropriate behavior of their leaders, teachers, and caregivers.

Teachers, helpers, or youth group leaders who have gained the trust of young people, are in a unique situation to observe behavior or be party to a conversation in which a possible abusive situation (either within or outside the UUCN) is revealed. In this situation, it is the adult's responsibility to report any reasonable cause to suspect child abuse to the Director of FF or the

Minister if the Director of FF is unavailable. The FF Committee will provide regular training on dealing with suspected abuse or neglect. Refer to the section on Training.

#### Staff:

1. To support our efforts to provide a Safe Congregation, the Minister(s) and all adult employees will undergo a reference check and criminal and sexual offender background checks prior to employment. Subsequent criminal and sexual-offender checks will be completed during employment at least once every three years.
2. Youth staff must be a minimum of 15 and have been actively involved at UUCN (or an affiliated UU congregation) for a minimum of one (1) year and will undergo a reference check prior to employment.
3. The DFF and any staff member who works directly with youth in the Faith Formation Program must be at least 25 years of age.
4. The Baby/Toddler Lead Caregiver must be at least 21 years of age.

#### Volunteers:

1. Adult volunteers or lay leaders who wish to work with children and vulnerable adults must be a minimum of 18 years of age and have been actively involved at UUCN (or an affiliated UU congregation) for a minimum of one (1) year.
2. Youth volunteers must be a minimum age of 15 and have been actively involved at UUCN (or an affiliated UU congregation) for a minimum of one (1) year.
3. Adult volunteers or lay leaders who wish to work with youth must be a minimum of 25 years of age and have been actively involved at UUCN (or an affiliated UU congregation) for a minimum of one (1) year.
4. Drivers who transport children and youth must be at least 25 years old. See sections on Youth and Vulnerable Adults for other restrictions.

#### ***Working With Vulnerable Adults***

All volunteers who work with vulnerable adults (Pastoral Care Team, Adult Faith Formation facilitators, etc.) must meet the following criteria:

1. Prior to participating, all volunteers will agree to a background check. After the initial background check, a background check will be done every two years.
2. All volunteers will attend a yearly Safe Congregations Training.
3. All volunteers must have been attending the congregation for at least one year prior to working with vulnerable adults.

In addition, all Pastoral Care Team members will participate in yearly Pastoral Care Team Training and sign a Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement.

## **E. Screening**

1. Prior to volunteering, individuals will meet with a supervising staff to discuss their volunteer interests and past volunteer experience.
2. All volunteers who work directly with or near children and youth as Faith Formation Teachers, Youth Advisors, OWL Facilitators, ROPEs Mentors, or in other capacities must agree to undergo a criminal and sexual-offender background check administered by UUCN staff prior to beginning volunteer work.
3. Background Checks will be completed by UUCN staff and will include a Criminal Offender Record Information, based on reported places of residence. CORI will check for Registered Sex Offenders nationwide .
4. All youth staff and volunteers who work directly with children must undergo a separate screening process that will include reference checks, and written permission from a parent/guardian.
5. All members of the Board of Trustees will agree to undergo a criminal and sexual-offender background check administered by UUCN staff at the beginning of each term.
6. All drivers for UUCN-sponsored activities involving vulnerable populations must show proof of license, registration, and insurance coverage. UUCN will also run a Volunteer Drivers Screening Report. Drivers with any points on their driver's license are ineligible to drive for UUCN-sponsored events unless they receive an exception from the SCRT.
7. Positive returns from any screening process will be evaluated by UUCN staff.
8. Authorization forms for background checks, drivers screening report and reference checks will be kept strictly confidential. Only members of the UUCN staff and Board President will have access to these forms, which will be kept in paper format in a dedicated, locked filing cabinet in the office of the Church Administrator. *Only the Minister, DFF and Church Administrator will have keys to this cabinet.*

Exceptions to Background Check Requirement: Background checks will not be required for adults who come in as guest speakers or presenters in Faith Formation (FF) classes and events but they may be invited to sign the Code of Ethics for Working with Children and Youth. However, during all Faith Formation events where unscreened adult speakers or presenters are present, at least two (2) unrelated screened UUCN volunteers and/or staff will be present. Unscreened adult speakers or presenters will never be left alone with children or youth in any scenario.

Response to Reported Past Sexual Misconduct Convictions: If an adverse report is received, steps to be taken can be found in the Policy Section on Responding to A Report or Allegation.

## **F. Training and Education**



1. Each year the Safe Congregation Response Team, in consultation with the Church Administrator and the DFF, will offer at least one training program that details UUCN's Safe Congregation Policy. Training will include:
  - a. The definition of child abuse according to the New Hampshire mandated reporting law – Child Protection Act RSA 169-C-3 II<sup>1</sup>
  - b. Recognizing the signs of physical, psychological and sexual abuse, and neglect, and how to respond to suspected abuse and neglect
  - c. What constitutes appropriate boundaries and inappropriate conduct
  - d. High risk activities and circumstances
  - e. Church policies that govern working with children, youth and other vulnerable populations
  - f. The civil and criminal consequences of misconduct
2. The staff will make their best efforts to meet individually with volunteers who cannot attend the annual training. All volunteers will complete training within 30 days of assuming duties.
3. The link to this UUCN Safe Congregation Policy will appear at least annually in the congregation newsletter, on the Church web site, and in visitor and new member packets.

#### **G. Supervision**

1. Each baby, child and youth will have a registration form on file that includes information about special needs and permission to accompany their group on walks around the building or neighborhood on Sunday mornings. In addition, the registration form will ask for permission to post photographs for UUCN purposes. When registering, parents and guardians will agree to abide by the guidelines within this Safe Congregation Policy.
2. Parents and guardians will speak with the DFF or the Minister about any custody issues, and, upon request, put the most important facts in writing. The DFF or the Minister will communicate appropriately with teachers and youth leaders.
3. During services and classes, children sixth grade or under must have a parent or another responsible adult on the premises unless prior arrangements have been made with the DFF.
4. There will be a Rover in the White Wing section from 9:45a to 11:15a who will follow all procedures for safety.
5. Parents and guardians may join their children in their programs. If they choose to stay, parents/guardians of school age children will try to support the lesson and minimize any distraction their presence may create.

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<sup>1</sup> RSA 169-C-3, II, defines an abused child as "...a child who has been: Sexually abused; Intentionally physically injured; Psychologically injured so that said child exhibits symptoms of emotional problems generally recognized to result from consistent mistreatment or neglect; Physically injured by other than accidental means."

6. Any participating adult may not consume alcohol or use any drug, which can affect physical or mental performance before or during the carrying out of their responsibilities.

## **H. Transportation To and From UUCN Sponsored Events**

All field trips must be approved by the DFF or the Chairperson of the Children & Youth Faith Formation Team, ideally at least two weeks prior to the event. It is the responsibility of the Children & Youth Faith Formation Program, or the parents/guardians, to provide safe transportation to and from UUCN sanctioned events. This Policy requires the following:

1. Location: All field trips will originate and end at UUCN. Participants may be driven to and from an event separately if desired.
2. Permission Slips: When traveling to and from field trips, a permission slip signed by a parent or guardian is required for each child/youth participating or being driven to an offsite activity. If a child or youth does not have a signed permission from their parent or guardian, that child or youth will not be allowed to participate in the scheduled event.
3. Youth Responsibilities: There must be a signed Youth Code of Ethics on file in order for a youth to participate in an event.
4. Drivers: All drivers must meet the minimum age and screening requirements as outlined in the Hiring and Screening Sections.
5. State and Federal Laws: Every person in the car will have a seat belt and age appropriate seating arranged in reference to airbag safety rules and State requirements. Drivers must comply with all applicable State and federal laws regarding the operation of a motor vehicle. Adults are encouraged to set a good example for children and youth by wearing their seatbelts.
6. Ratios: Ideally, a minimum of two unrelated adults per vehicle must accompany a group going offsite. Exceptions for exigent circumstances may be made by the DFF or the primary adult leader(s), or written permission may be provided by the parent or guardian. When possible, two adults shall be present to transport a single child.
7. Parent/Guardian Communication: There will be a phone chain for parents of children on trips at the discretion of the teacher for arriving at destination and when leaving to return to home site.
8. Safety: the primary adult leader will be supplied with at least one first aid kit.
9. Leader Information: Leader(s) must have a list of names, emergency contacts, medical conditions and a parent/guardian emergency treatment authorization with them at all times (See Appendix ##).
10. Medications: Parents/Guardians should disclose any medication that may need to be taken by their child during the trip to the FF Staff member in charge of the trip. Parents/Guardians should talk directly with the UUCN staff member responsible for the

field trip to agree on appropriate procedures for administering *emergency* medication that their child may require during the field trip.

## **I. Electronic Communications (Pending)**

## **V. GUIDELINES**

### **A. Guidelines for Faith Formation classes/programs for children and youth**

1. Parents and guardians of children in Faith Formation programs are responsible for supervising their children before and after class time and other Sunday morning activities.
  - a. Preschool through Grade FIVE - Parents of children in preschool through fifth grade classes must pick up their children promptly when classes end.
  - b. Sixth Grade and Older - Parents of children in sixth grade and up may make arrangements with the teachers to have their child dismissed independently.
  - c. Mixed Aged Classes - In mixed aged classes the entire class will follow the guidelines for the youngest grade present.
2. At least two unrelated adults should be present in each FF classroom on Sunday mornings and during any UUCN functions involving children or youth unless the DFF or Minister determines otherwise in their sole discretion.
3. Parents may serve as classroom aides and/or visit classes at any time. In the Our Whole Lives (OWL) class, parents and aides generally are not allowed unless approved ahead of time.
4. Approved guest speakers are welcome at OWL overnight activities.
5. Teachers are subject to the approval of the Children & Youth FF Team.
6. One individual may be alone briefly with a group when the other must leave as dictated by common sense and necessity for such purposes as bathroom breaks and escorting individual children away from the group.
7. If an adult needs to leave the room for more than a brief time, the Rover will be asked to come into the classroom.
8. All classes require an open or windowed door. This does not apply to OWL classes.
9. Children and youth must let teachers know when they are leaving the classroom or meeting space for bathroom visits, water breaks or other adult leader-approved purposes. Children and youth are expected to go straight to the bathroom or approved destination and then return directly and promptly. They will let the teachers or youth leaders know when they have returned.

10. If teachers or youth leaders wish to move their class/group to a location outside the classroom that is approved by the DFF or Rover they will post a sign or message in their classroom clearly indicating where they will be and when they will return.

## **B. Guidelines on Discipline**

For this section, the word “teachers” should be understood to include any person working with children in a UUCN classroom, program or event. UUCN recommends positive discipline techniques (see Definitions Section). Teachers will make best efforts to establish clear expectations, provide rewards and incentives for acceptable behavior, and to use appropriate verbal redirection. In particular:

1. Teachers will strive to discipline with kindness and patience.
2. Teachers will discipline with actions and words designed to help children develop a sense of responsibility and self-control.
3. Teachers will support children in creating caring communities and happy learning experiences.
4. Inappropriate discipline, including corporal punishment and punitive techniques that cause pain, is not permitted and may be construed as child abuse.
5. UUCN does not permit yelling, shaming, or belittling. UUCN discourages sarcasm, which is likely to be misunderstood by children.
6. Teachers will consult with FF Staff and children’s parents/guardians to plan collaboratively how to improve problematic behavior.
7. If a child’s behavior is disruptive and has not improved in response to a variety of positive discipline techniques, teachers will communicate with FF staff and may choose to enforce consequences as follows.
  - a. **BREAK INSIDE CLASSROOM:** The child takes a break from participation, but remains inside the classroom. The child is NOT told to stand in a corner, but is directed to sit silently in an area apart from the activity. One teacher is available to supervise the break. The teacher briefly discusses the solution to the problem with the child when s/he is ready to rejoin the class activity.
  - b. **BREAK IN HALLWAY:** A teacher accompanies a child outside the classroom for a break from participation in the hallway. Make sure to summon the Rover if one teacher leaving results in less than two teachers in the room. They briefly discuss the problem and solution when the child is ready to go back in the classroom.
  - c. **BREAK WITH FF STAFF:** A teacher walks with the child to find FF Staff, and the child has a longer break in the company of FF Staff. The FF Staff discusses the problem with the child and works collaboratively to develop a plan or solution.

- d. PARENT/GUARDIAN SUPERVISION & REMOVAL FROM A LESSON: A teacher or FF staff person finds the parent or guardian of the child, and the parent or guardian is asked to supervise the child for the remainder of the class. The parent/guardian and teacher and/or staff member meet subsequently to discuss the problem and develop a plan.
8. Physical violence among children is not allowed. In the unlikely event that a child intentionally hurts someone, teachers will enforce one of the more serious consequences above and report this incident to the parents or guardians of both children, as well as the DFF.
9. In the event that a child's behavior is highly disruptive, dangerous, or repeatedly emotionally hurtful, the FF Staff may decide that the child needs to be excluded from some, or all, participation in the Sunday school program or FF-sponsored events.

### **C. Guidelines on Touch**

Healthy, loving touch is a basic, human need. Common expressions include, but are not limited to, appreciation (high five), condolence (hand on shoulder), comforting and affection (hugs); affirmation (pats on the back); and physical caretaking (diaper changing, face washing, etc.).

These are all acceptable and encouraged as long as three guidelines are followed:

1. Touch needs to be respectful and age appropriate.
2. Staff and volunteers will respect a child, youth, or vulnerable adult's preference not to be touched and adjust activities accordingly.
3. Adults should only touch a child if they are in the presence of another adult or in a room with an open door.
4. Staff and volunteers will not touch or interact with children, youth or vulnerable adults in any way that is intended to be sexually stimulating or undertaken for purposes of sexual gratification.

### **D. Guidelines for working with high school-aged youth**

1. All Youth Advisors and teaching volunteers are encouraged to attend a Basic Youth Advisor Training and Advanced Advisor Training when they are appropriate and available.
2. Volunteer teachers, youth advisors and ROPEs mentors will maintain regular contact with the DFF during any year in which they are volunteering as youth advisors, mentors or teachers.
3. There will be a minimum of two screened adults present for youth group meetings and at other events involving youth of the congregation. There must be a minimum of three adults present for overnights. If the required number of adults cannot be present, the event will be canceled.
4. The minimum age for adult volunteers working with youth is 25.

5. Youth Group Events. Youth daytime and evening events and overnights are an integral part of UUCN's youth program. To keep these experiences safe, nurturing, welcoming and enjoyable, UUCN has established these guidelines:
- a. Only UUCN Youth Group members may participate in Youth Group events other than meetings, unless express permission has been granted by the DFF for visitors to attend. Youth Group members are those youth who have registered for the Children & Youth FF program and have attended UUCN classes or events regularly. Walk-in visitors are not allowed.
  - b. The onsite ratio of adults to youth will be at least 1:10. A minimum of two adults is required for a daytime or evening-only event to take place. The off-site ratio of adults to youth will be at least 1:6 with a minimum of three screened adults required for the event to take place.
  - c. Youth must sign a Youth Code of Ethics in order to participate in the program and are expected to treat each other with kindness and respect. Youth participants will respect the requests and requirements of adult leaders.
  - d. Youth will not go outside after dark unless accompanied by adult leaders or with an adult leader's permission. If this rule is violated, youth may be sent home after one warning.
  - e. Youth will stay with the larger group or with a designated small group. If this rule is violated, youth may be sent home after one warning.
  - f. No firearms, weapons, fireworks, illegal drugs or alcohol are allowed. If a youth violates this rule, they will be sent home immediately. The youth will stay under adult supervision until the parent/guardian arrives. The youth will not be able to participate in overnights, retreats and field trips for one calendar year and then may resume participation if approved by the DFF or their designee.
  - g. No smoking or tobacco products are allowed. If a youth participant violates this rule, the tobacco products will be confiscated, the youth's parent/guardian will be called and the youth will be sent home. Further participation in overnights, retreats and field trips will require an individualized written agreement among the youth and adult leaders, the DFF and the youth's parents/guardians.
  - h. No sexual activity. Sexual behavior is inappropriate during a youth overnight, field trip or retreat. Sexual activity detracts from the group environment and the sense of group safety. If this rule is broken, the parent/guardian of the youth in question will be called, and the youth may be sent home. Further participation in overnights, retreats and field trips will require an individualized written agreement among the youth and adult leaders, the DFF or the designee and the youth's parent/guardian.

- i. Youth and Advisors will respect UUCN and others' property. If willful destruction of property occurs, the relevant parent/guardians will be notified, restitution will be required and involved youth may be sent home.
- j. Youth and advisors will work together to clean up and restore the overnight space to a tidy and orderly condition.

#### **E. Guidelines for Overnights and Trips**

1. Adults supervising youth sleepovers must comply with Screening requirements of this Policy. Parents who are staying over with their own youth need not have been active participants.
2. There will always be a minimum of three adults, preferably unrelated, present during sleeping hours regardless of the numbers of youth attending. Two unrelated adults must remain awake during these sleeping hours. During a sleepover at UUCN, there should be a minimum ratio of one adult to eight youth with one additional adult required for each additional four youth.
3. During sleepovers at the UUCN, all outside doors will be locked against entry once the last youth has arrived, and will remain locked until parents arrive for pick-up in the morning or until the building is open for other events.
4. A Parent/Guardian Consent and Medical Release Form and a Medical Information Form will be required for each youth at the sleepover.
5. Each youth will be required to complete and sign the Youth Code of Ethics.
6. The adult supervisors will maintain a list of attendees.
7. Youth will sleep only in areas equipped with a functioning smoke detector.
8. Adults will be informed of fire safety procedures and youth will be made aware of fire safety guidelines.
9. Ideally, no other groups will be in the building when an overnight occurs. If there are other groups in the building, youth will remain in a separate part of the building until the other event concludes. Every effort will be made to avoid contact between youth and other groups.

#### **F. Guidelines on Nursery and Child Care**

1. Drop off and pick up: Parents must sign in/out children and provide cell numbers. The Child Care Provider may use discretion in asking for identification when parents or guardians pick up their children.
2. Parents/Guardians of infants and toddlers may remain in the Nursery or classroom with their children.
3. Registration: Parent(s) or Guardian(s) must register their children annually. Visitors must complete a Visitors' Card. The Registration Policy regarding attendance will be followed.
4. Diaper Changing:

- a. Parents must give written permission to allow Child Care Provider/Staff to change diapers.
  - b. Professional childcare providers who have been trained on diaper changing procedure by the DFF can change diapers.
  - c. Teachers who have not had training in diaper changing should not change diapers. When a child's diaper needs to be changed, teachers will call a parent/guardian on the cell phone or go find a parent/guardian, so s/he can change the diaper.
  - d. Anyone who changes a diaper must wash their hands thoroughly when finished.
5. Toilet training: if there is a lavatory in the nursery/classroom a child may go unaccompanied in the room. If the child needs assistance the door must remain open. When using the public restroom, the door to the hallway must remain open and the Child Care Provider will be available if assistance is needed. If possible, Child Care Provider will contact Rover to provide assistance. Everyone must follow hand washing protocols. If an older child has special needs, DFF will work with child's parents/guardians to develop an individualized plan.
  6. Ratios: There will be one caregiver for every four children with a minimum of two child care providers at all times. Parents will be invited to stay to maintain this ratio if needed.
  7. Age of providers: Age 15 or older. See Hiring and Screening Sections for details on Baby/Toddler Lead age.
  8. Minimum number of child care providers: There is a minimum of two child care providers at all times. It is acceptable for both child care providers to be minors, provided they meet age requirements.
  9. Training - Child Care Providers shall participate in Safe Congregation Policy training within 30 days of being hired and on an annual basis thereafter.

**G. Guidelines on Pastoral Care Team (PENDING)**



**VI. DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR (PENDING)**

## **VII. SAFE CONGREGATION RESPONSE TEAM**

In order to ensure continuity, the Safe Congregation Response Team (SCRT) will be established and in place at all times, with the names and phone numbers of team members available to all members and friends of UUCN.

Safe Congregation Response Team membership, responsibilities and roles include:

- A. The membership of the SCRT will include the Minister, the DFF, the Church Administrator, and the President of the Board of Trustees. The Board may add additional Team members at its discretion but may not remove any of the aforementioned unless a conflict of interest arises or for issues found in the Personnel Policy.
  - a. In the case of a conflict of interest, a Team member must be excused from participation and replaced by a suitable alternate.
- B. All members of the SCRT will sign the SCRT Confidentiality Agreement.
- C. The SCRT's function, individually and collectively, is to evaluate and respond to accusations, actual incidents and reports of abuse or any criminal behavior that jeopardizes the safety and well being of the congregation and offer confidential support, advice and counsel with concern for the safety of all parties involved.
- D. The SCRT will generally have the following responsibilities
  - a. Know about community resources for child abuse, intimate partner violence, treatment for sex offenders and support groups for survivors.
  - b. Know about state laws regarding reporting.
  - c. Be a resource for people to share their concerns.
  - d. Evaluate prospective teachers, child care providers, youth group leaders or other volunteers that are flagged as needing more information or follow up.
  - e. Participate in an annual training for all volunteers and staff who work with vulnerable populations on issues, policies and procedures relevant to sexual/physical abuse.
  - f. Receive allegations of possible abuse and follow a process for expedient handling of each allegation.
  - g. Communicate with other SCRT members upon receiving a report or allegation.
  - h. Meet with convicted sex offenders to develop a Limited Access Agreement for participation in congregational activities.
- E. All activities of the SCRT will be conducted in a confidential manner and may only be disclosed when necessary and appropriate as determined by the SCRT or as required by law.

## **VIII. RESPONDING TO A REPORT, COMPLAINT OR ALLEGATION**

UUCN is committed to maintaining the safest environment possible for children, youth and adults while being a religious community open to those who would like to worship on Sunday morning. The goal of this policy is to respond to a report, complaint or allegation rationally, compassionately and with unity of purpose. Creating and maintaining a healing community is to create an environment of trust within which both victims and offenders feel safe enough to speak about what has happened. With this goal in mind, the SCRT is charged with responding to abuse allegations.

When someone who has been legally charged with or convicted of a crime against a child, youth or adult - including but not limited to child abuse, sexual abuse, assault and intimate partner violence - seeks to attend our services or participate in other congregational activities, it is our responsibility to address both the need to be a welcoming congregation and the need to maintain as safe an environment as possible for all people.

Additionally, when someone has been accused of a crime against a child, youth or adult (whether or not the incident is church-related) or an allegation or complaint of inappropriate or illegal behavior has been made, it is our responsibility to execute due diligence in following all applicable federal, state and local laws as well as to maintain the respect and dignity of all people involved.

There are several situations which may prompt a response regarding a complaint, report or concern about sexual or physical abuse, including but not limited to:

1. A child, youth or adult reports possible abuse by congregational staff, a member, another youth or an attendee
2. A UUCN member, official, friend or attendee suspects that a child, youth or vulnerable adult is being abused
3. A child or youth reports possible abuse by a family member or another individual
4. UUCN officials learn that a member, friend, employee or attendee (child, youth or adult) is under investigation for allegedly abusing others, or
5. UUCN officials learn that a member, friend, employee or attendee (youth or adult) has been convicted of a crime.

Because child abuse (and abuse of incapacitated adults) is addressed directly in New Hampshire state law, such cases require that reporting laws be followed. Those steps are outlined in the following section.

- A. Role of Person Who Receives a Report of Abuse.
  - a. Any person witnessing, having knowledge of or having reasonable suspicion of injury, exploitation, objectionable conduct toward, physical or sexual abuse of any child or youth or other vulnerable person at UUCN shall report the information immediately to the Minister, the DFF or a member of the SCRT. Of these, whoever receives the information shall be responsible for reporting to the others. The reporting person will follow all UUCN Policies as well as federal, state and local laws.
  - b. Any person who becomes aware of charges or convictions made against an employee, volunteer, member or attendee of UUCN shall report the information immediately to the Minister, the DFF or a member of the SCRT. Of these, whoever received the information shall be responsible for reporting to the others.
- B. Role of Minister, DFF or other SCRT Member Who Receives A Report
  - a. Inform other SCRT members so that the Minister and DFF can determine:
    - i. What level of confidentiality should apply to the Report
    - ii. If there is imminent danger and a child should not be released to their parent/guardian
    - iii. Whether a report must be made immediately and the local authorities called
    - iv. Whether a meeting of the SCRT should be convened
  - b. Assist the reporting person in completing a written report using Report of Suspected Abuse Form.
  - c. Take appropriate action to ensure the safety of the children and/or vulnerable person in the congregation pending investigation of the Report
  - d. Abide by New Hampshire law on reporting abuse
  - e. Where the Report may disclose criminal activity, refer the matter to law enforcement
- C. Evaluation of Need for Limited Access
  - a. If it is determined that any person should have restricted access to children or vulnerable adults, or should be denied permanent access to the congregation, that person shall be required to sign a Limited Access Agreement and shall not be allowed to have any contact with children or youth and may be asked to resign their membership and/or participation in congregational life. The latter would involve a permanent denial of access.
  - b. Steps to assessing and implementing an Agreement include
    - i. The Minister and/or the DFF will meet with the individual in question to discuss the charges against them and to determine how they would like to participate in congregational life.

- ii. The Minister and/or the DFF will inform the remaining members of the SCRT. The SCRT will determine whether this person may safely participate in congregational life, and under what conditions. The SCRT will provide an individualized agreement for the individual in question to sign governing the manner in which they may attend UUCN worship services and other UUCN sponsored events.
- iii. The individual will sign and abide by the Agreement. A copy of the Agreement will be retained by the Minister who will oversee its implementation with the support of the SCRT.
- iv. The Board of Trustees will be informed about all Limited Access Agreements.
- v. A list of companions will be provided to the individual in question if specified in the Agreement.

D. Disclosures or Concerns About Staff or Volunteers

- a. The SCRT will follow all policies in the UUCN Personnel Manual.
- b. If the SCRT or Minister deems that it is appropriate to remove a staff member or volunteer from a position, or to restrict in any way their role with children, youth or vulnerable adults, the SCRT and/or the Minister will provide the affected employee or volunteer an opportunity to:
  - i. Know the complaints/allegations against them
  - ii. Know the evidence supporting such complaints/allegations
  - iii. Have the right to reply to such complaints/allegations

E. Disclosures or Concerns about the Minister

- a. Disclosures or concerns about the Minister will be taken directly to the President of the congregation, who will work with the Board of Trustees to respond.
- b. The next points of contact shall include the New England Regional Lead of the UUA or the UUA Department of Ministry.
- c. The Board will follow all policies in the UUCN Personnel Manual, and abide by the guidelines spelled out in the Minister's Letter of Call and Ministry Agreement.
- d. If the congregation votes to dismiss the Minister, or the Board decides to restrict in any way the Minister's role with children, youth or vulnerable adults, the Board will provide the Minister an opportunity to:
  - i. Know the complaints/allegations against them
  - ii. Know the evidence supporting such complaints/allegations
  - iii. Have the right to reply to such complaints/allegations

F. Youth Who May Be Abusers

- a. If a youth incident comes to the attention of the member of the SCRT, the Team member should contact the parents of both children to discuss the allegation and

next steps. In most cases, the family will be required to demonstrate that the alleged abuser has completed a comprehensive assessment by a child psychologist or appropriate mental health professional before the alleged abuser is allowed to continue to attend Faith Formation Programs. The SCRT may ask for documentation of the assessment from the professional.

- b. It is not the responsibility of the Minister or the SCRT to determine if abuse has occurred, but rather to assure that an appropriate assessment does take place. In some instances, the SCRT may also determine that the matter should be referred to DCYF.
  - c. If the evaluation described above indicates that the child has a behavior problem that is likely to result in continued abuse, the SCRT, in consultation with the child's parents and the Children & Youth FF Team shall determine how and if the child can safely be involved with the Faith Formation Program. If the SCRT determines that the child can participate in FF, a individualized Limited Access Agreement shall be developed and signed by both the child and their parents/guardians. In some cases, it may be necessary to deny the child continued involvement with other children until psychological counseling, therapy or other appropriate treatment is completed.
  - d. In some situations, a family will want to bring a child who has been treated for abusive behavior back into the congregation after psychological counseling therapy, or other appropriate treatment is completed. In such cases, the SCRT, in consultation with the child's parents, shall develop an individualized Limited Access Agreement to be signed by both the child and their parents/guardians. The SCRT recognizes that in such cases, pastoral care and support from the wider congregation for the family(ies) involved is an important element of this process.
- G. Safety and Pastoral Needs of the Congregation
- i. Following a report of suspected abuse, the SCRT will also develop a plan to address the pastoral needs of our congregation, including the needs of:
    - i. The person/child who has allegedly been abused: This may include providing information about or referrals to appropriate professional, community, and UUCN or UU resources, as needed. Additionally the SCRT may assist in dealing with the appropriate authorities.
    - ii. Other members and friends of our congregation:
      - iii. members, friends, or attendees immediately affected by the incident (such as family members or partners) whose needs we can help meet, either directly or indirectly;
      - iv. the Minister (or other members of the staff) to aid in dealing with the pastoral needs of the victim or accused person;

- v. other members and friends of the congregation who witnessed one or more incidents or, who having heard about them, are reminded of their own concerns; and
  - vi. other congregation members and friends who are relied on to a great degree by the person/child who has allegedly been abused or accused offender (or those connected to them).
- b. The accused person: Support may include helping the accused person access the appropriate professional, community, and spiritual resources. While there may be feelings of ill-will toward the accused person, if that individual is a part of our community, they also deserve our support; withdrawing it at this critical point in that person's life might have severe detrimental long-term effects on their behavior in the future. It remains the mission of this congregation to recognize and support the integrity and inherent worth and dignity of that person even though we do not condone inappropriate behaviors, and to treat them with compassion.
  - c. Other persons/children who have allegedly been abused and who have been reluctant to come forward: If warranted, the response plan will include a way of reaching out to these individuals in a manner that is non-threatening.
- B. The plan established will be such that other individuals are not put at risk for further incidents.

## IX. REPORTING PROCEDURES

Anyone who becomes aware or suspicious of sexual or physical abuse, sexual harassment, disruptive/dangerous behavior, conduct, charges, reports, complaints, investigations or convictions must report this information immediately to either the Minister, DFF, or a member of the SCRT.

### A. Role of Person Informed of An Incident of Abuse

- a. Report the incident to the Minister, DFF or other member of the SCRT. Of these whoever receives the information shall be responsible for reporting to the others. In the event that the charges involve a minister, the next points of contact will be the Regional Lead of the New England Region or the UUA Department of Ministry
- b. Complete the Report of Suspected Abuse form
- c. New Hampshire state law, RSA 169-C, the Child Protection Act, states that any person who has reason to suspect that a child under the age of 18 has been abused and/or neglected **must** make a report to the Division for Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) immediately. This law also states that any person making a report in good faith is immune from any civil or criminal liability.
- d. New Hampshire state law, RSA 161-F 46<sup>2</sup>, the Adult Protection Law, requires any person who has a reason to believe that an elderly incapacitated adult has been subjected to physical abuse, neglect, or exploitation or is living in hazardous conditions must notify their local law enforcement agency.
- e. It is not the function of the SCRT to conduct an investigation into accusations of child abuse. It is both New Hampshire law (RSA 169-C, “Child Protection Act”) and the policy of the Unitarian-Universalist Church of Nashua to immediately

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<sup>2</sup> **161-F:46 Reports of Adult Abuse; Investigations.** – Any person, including, but not limited to, physicians, other health care professionals, social workers, clergy, and law enforcement officials, suspecting or believing in good faith that any adult who is or who is suspected to be vulnerable has been subjected to abuse, neglect, self-neglect, or exploitation or is living in hazardous conditions shall report or cause a report to be made as follows:

I. An oral report, by telephone or otherwise, shall be made immediately, followed by a written report, if so requested, to the commissioner or his authorized representative. When oral reports are made after working hours of the department, or on weekends or holidays, such reports shall be made to the police department of the appropriate political subdivision, or to the sheriff of the county, in which the alleged abuse, neglect or exploitation occurred. Law enforcement officials receiving reports under this paragraph shall notify the commissioner within 72 hours of receipt of such reports.

II. Within 72 hours following receipt by the commissioner or his authorized representative of such oral reports, an investigation shall be initiated by the commissioner or his authorized representative.

III. Investigations shall not be made if the commissioner or his authorized representative determines that the report is frivolous or without a factual basis.



report any situation in which any person has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been or is likely to be abused or neglected.

- f. In the presence of one of the members of the SCRT, the reporting person must report the incident to DCYF (1-800-894-5533). The reporting person should keep careful written notes of the telephone conversation and the name of the person they are speaking with. A follow-up written report by the reporting person may be required by DCYF.
  - g. If the victim is an adult, the abuse report must be made through the local or State Adult Protective Services (APS) Agency in the presence of one of the members of the SCRT. Calls may be made to the Bureau of Elderly and Adult Services (BEAS) at 603-271-7014 or toll free at 1-800-949-0470.
  - h. The entire matter must be kept confidential from anyone other than the Minister, the DFF or other members of the SCRT until information is received that an investigation has been completed.
- B. The Role of the SCRT
- a. The Minister, DFF, and other members of the SCRT shall carefully document the handling of the incident and report the incident immediately, as appropriate, to the child's parents/guardians, the proper civil authorities and the congregation's insurance company.
  - b. If the member of the SCRT, upon being informed of suspected abuse, believes that a child may be in imminent danger should that child be released to their parents, the SCRT will contact state and local authorities and turn over the investigation to those agencies.
  - c. When a report is filed by any person on behalf of any child and the alleged abuser is a church employee, member or attendee, the SCRT will immediately develop an interim safety plan during the investigation of the abuse. The purpose of this plan is not only to safeguard our children, but to provide protection to the accused abuser from further complaints. If the accused abuser is another youth, the plan must be developed with input from parents or guardians of both the alleged abuser and the victim. The plan will be clearly communicated to the accused abuser or, if a minor, their parents or guardians, by the SCRT. If an individual has been legally accused of sexual misconduct and is currently involved in civil or criminal litigation of such a charge, that individual will not have contact with children or youth or the parties involved until there is final disposition of the case (resolution).
  - d. In all cases, the SCRT or the Board of Trustees may seek legal counsel before proceeding with a Limited Access Agreement.
  - e. The SCRT shall reach out to the victim and the victim's family and extend whatever pastoral resources are needed.

- f. In the event that knowledge of the incident becomes public, the SCRT shall utilize the UUCN Crisis Communication Plan.
- g. The SCRT shall determine how to address the incident within the congregation. While civil authorities are investigating the reported incident, the SCRT shall determine the appropriate actions to be taken regarding the accused.

## IV: Executive Limitations

### Policy B: Treatment of Church Members, Visitors, and Groups

The Executive shall not cause or allow conditions or procedures that are unsafe, disrespectful, or unnecessarily intrusive to members, friends, or visitors, including children. *Accordingly, the Executive shall develop and maintain a Safe Congregation Policy that formalizes and details the necessary systems, policies, and procedures to support this goal. The Board of Trustees will approve this policy and any changes, but implementation will be the responsibility of the Executive, except when issues arise that require Board involvement as noted in the policy itself.*

The Executive shall not allow members of the congregation to be disconnected from the life and care of the Church.

The Executive shall not allow Church groups (committees, task forces, and other groups) to operate without his or her authorization and supervision.

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NOTE, text in black is the current language in Policy B. *Orange text* is the proposed addition.

## Self Evaluation and Professional Development Plan For the UUA Ministerial Fellowship Committee

Name of Minister: **Allison Palm**

Date:

Address: 14 Sawyer Street, Nashua, NH 03060

Phone: **320-420-0921**

Email: **rev.allison.palm@gmail.com**

Application for: 1<sup>st</sup> Renewal  2<sup>nd</sup> Renewal  final renewal

Specialty in ministry (current ministerial setting):

Check one:

Parish  Religious Education  Community

Period being evaluated: From **August 1, 2015** To: **August 1, 2016**

### Notes Relating to Completion of Form

This evaluation should be completed by the minister. Separate forms for your supervisor/governing board and committee on ministry should be given to those bodies for completion. When all evaluations are complete they should be shared with each other body. The MFC is looking for feedback from you supervisor/governing board and COM as separate bodies. Do not have them complete one evaluation together or the MFC will not accept it For tips on how to do an assessment of a minister, please refer to the forms page on our website at: <http://www.uua.org/careers/ministers/support/fellowship/15505.shtml>.

When completing this evaluation form, review the suggested considerations, and then comment on your particular strengths and areas for growth. The MFC looks suspiciously on evaluations that are only positive. All ministers have some areas where they excel and some areas where there is still room for learning and growth. Be honest and self-reflective and this process will enhance your ministry.

The section entitled "Comments on congregational ownership and involvement in this area" is your opportunity to express your assessment of the congregation or organization's commitment and engagement in that area. For example you might note that you have not done much in the area of prophetic outreach but then recognize that there is not much commitment within your congregation to engage in this area.

**Forms should be submitted as email attachments to  
mfccordinator@uua.org.**

Please note that fields for your text will expand to accommodate your entries.

## Area of Ministry:

### 1. Counseling & Pastoral Care

Check One:

Strength  Satisfactory  Area for Growth  Unsatisfactory  Not Observed

**General Comments:** (*Consider availability, responsiveness, warmth, empathy, knowledge of family systems, skill level in pastoral care, confidentiality, hospital visitation, etc.*)

**There are some ways in which I have felt very successful in pastoral care this year. Part of my focus this year was to build relationships and trust with members of the congregation. I feel as though I succeeded here. As the year went on, I found people disclosed more to me, and were more open to support. I believe I have established myself as a warm, open, nonanxious presence.**

**There are other ways in which I have struggled with pastoral care. The congregation's culture is not one that is conducive to easily slipping into a pastoral role. New England reserve, combined with a long-term ministry that was not pastoral in its focus, means that people do not naturally think to come to their minister to support and care. This has been a challenge for me, as I have often had to find out things through the grapevine, and figure out how much to push people to accept support. I've struggled at times to know whether to approach people myself or let them come to me. I have found that some of the most important connections and care have happened in the unexpected, casual moments, and so have made sure to put myself in places where those can happen. This is an area where I hope to continue to hone my skills in the coming years, as well as continuing to help the congregation know that I am available for them.**

Comments on congregational/organizational ownership and involvement in this area:

**When I arrived, the congregation had a small and relatively new Pastoral Care Team in place. They have not had a great deal of experience or training. We spent a large part of this year starting to figure out some systems for the group. I also spent time reflecting with them on what their role might be. I think we have some direction going forward and have recruited some new members who I believe will help strengthen the PCT. We also engaged in some training this past year, and I plan to integrate training into our monthly meetings in the year to come. The PCT has begun to take some ownership for pastoral care this year, and I hope this will grow in the year to come.**

### 2. Practical Arts

Check One:

Strength  Satisfactory  Area for Growth  Unsatisfactory  Not Observed

**General Comments:** (*Consider administration, organizational development in out of congregation, management of staff, attention to detail, support and leadership development, recognition and appreciation of others, delegation of responsibility and authority, follow through*)

*and completion of tasks, time management, attention to finances, fund raising, funding ministry, public relations and publicity skills, ability to work with boards and committees, clarity of roles, attention to long range plans, etc.)*

**I am grateful to have come into this congregation with a fair amount of administrative experience, even though I have never been in the role of solo congregational minister before. The congregation was in need of a strong administrative leader, and I feel I have been able to step into that role successfully. The congregation had switched to policy-based governance about ten years ago, but this was the first year of really having their minister fully take on the Executive Director role. Because of this, there were a lot of systems and processes that needed to be built from scratch. This is ongoing work for the years to come, but I feel we put some good groundwork in place this year.**

**I feel particularly proud of successfully moving the day-to-day financial work into the hands of the staff this year, and of the five-year strategic plan that I worked with a task force to develop for the congregation. We also built on last year's successful Stewardship Campaign with another 8% increase in pledges this year.**

**One area where I hope to continue to grow is in staff supervision and staff team building. I feel like I have done some good work here this year, but I also feel like I could be stronger as a supervisor. I would like to be more adept at offering support to staff when they are struggling, while also not taking on their anxiety. I would also like to be better at identifying and dealing with problematic behavior from staff.**

Comments on congregational/organizational ownership and involvement in this area:

**There are lots of ways in which the congregation is involved in this area, including a general commitment from the lay leadership to strengthening the administrative side of the congregation. There was strong lay leadership that helped lead to the success of both the strategic planning process and the Stewardship Campaign.**

**There are also some areas where there is too much ownership by single lay leaders. With support from the Board and others, I have been working to disperse this power, and re-allocate it in more appropriate ways.**

### **3. Organizational Ministry**

Check One:

Strength  Satisfactory  Area for Growth  Unsatisfactory  Not Observed

*General Comments: (Consider integration of new member and clients, creates a welcoming environment, encourages a sense of community, encourages growth, supports broad variety of programs, involvement of others in planning and conducting programs, nurtures lay leadership, professional presentation of self, pastors to various age groups, etc.)*

**I have felt relatively successful in this area this year. Working with our Membership Coordinator, we have introduced a new path to membership that will likely continue to evolve over the next couple of years. We had a good crop of new members this year, who appreciated the more intentional path to membership and most have been well integrated into the congregation. Encouraging folks to be welcoming is a challenge, but there is a general**

sense in the congregation that they have grown in their welcoming over the past few years. I have loved getting the opportunity to connect with and welcome new members, and hope we will continue to grow as a congregation in this area.

One area where i hope to continue to grow myself is in nurturing lay leadership over the long term. I think I have been able to encourage people to take on some leadership roles that they may not have otherwise, but I would love to have more resources for helping folks once they get into those roles, and for helping folks grow into other roles.

I do think I have been able to minister to various age groups. I have made sure to create opportunities for this - leading children's chapel, going to youth group and young adult group meetings, leading a once-a-month service at the local retirement community, joining our monthly humanist discussion group as I am able, etc. I think there have been some who have been slower to trust me because of my own age, and so I have sought particularly to gain that trust, and be clear that I value the contributions of people of all ages.

Comments on congregational/organizational ownership and involvement in this area:  
**Both Membership and Leadership Development are teams that could use some strengthening in the year to come. When I began, there was also a new Membership Coordinator, who has spent much of this year learning the job. In the ear to come, I expect she will be able to strengthen the Membership Team so that they take more ownership over new members welcoming and integration. The Leadership Development Team is brand new this year, and needs more time to really get a handle on their role. I hope to work more with them in the year to come and develop leadership development skills alongside the team.**

#### 4. Personal and Professional Growth

Check One:

Strength  Satisfactory  Area for Growth  Unsatisfactory  Not Observed

*General Comments: (Consider performance under stress, hears criticism and feedback, skillfully gives constructive criticism and feedback, conveys energy and enthusiasm, gives and receives praise, sense of humor, manages conflict, models a healthy balance of work and personal/family life, engages in a rewarding spiritual practice, etc.)*

**I knew coming into my first full-time parish ministry, one of my challenges would be making sure it did not take over my life. In this area, I think I have successfully managed to set boundaries around my time and stick to a pretty regular, effective schedule. I have made time in my schedule for morning walks, weekly ballet classes and time with my spouse. There have been weeks that have been challenging, but all-in-all I feel good about my work-life balance this year. The one thing I plan to change for next year is doing a better job of spreading out my vacation and study leave throughout the year.**

**Coming in to a congregation that struggles with conflict has meant dealing with some less than ideal dynamics around disagreements in the congregation. I feel like I have managed to confront conflict head on when it crops up, and tried to model this for others. The congregation has a long way to go in terms of changing their culture around conflict (which has been one of conflict avoidance for many years). I am sure that walking with them in this work will continue to push me to improve my own skills with conflict, boundary-setting, etc.**

I always seek to bring energy and humor into my work and I think this has had a good effect on the congregation. There is a general sense of energy and enthusiasm for the future. I hope we will continue to laugh more together in the years to come.

In terms of feedback, I think I have done a good job of hearing feedback and separating what is about me, what is about the congregation, and what is about the individual giving feedback. I have gotten some good support on this from my mentor and spiritual director. I continue to grow in learning to give constructive criticism. I think there are times when I could be more critical than I am. I am definitely more adept at giving praise than criticism, but am learning to do the latter as well.

Comments on congregational/organizational ownership and involvement in this area:  
**As I mentioned, the congregation struggles with conflict - as well as giving feedback. I will continue to try to encourage them to be open and honest with me, and with one another. This is an area I hope the Leadership Development Team will put some focus on.**

**Mostly, folks in the congregation have been supportive of the boundaries I have set around time and my personal life.**

## 5. Teaching (All Ages)

Check One:

Strength  Satisfactory  Area for Growth  Unsatisfactory  Not Observed

General Comments: (*Consider program development and coordination, seminar design and facilitations, teacher training, supports teachers in planning and conducting classes, provides program resources and support for parents, teachers, and colleagues, intergenerational activities, programs for children, youth and adults, volunteer recruitment, articulation of liberal religious education approach and philosophy, knowledge of resources and curriculum, etc.*)

**This is an area that I focus on less than others because we have a full-time staff person devoted to it. My role has been more to act as a support and supervisor to her, which has been relatively easy, as she excels in her job. I have been involved in some pieces of visioning and program development simply because we have an Interim Director of Faith Formation, and it makes sense for me to be a part of the interim work.**

**Our biggest success in this area has been beginning the shift from a "religious education" mindset to a "faith formation" mindset. We have done a lot of work with folks in the congregation to begin to develop a vision for the future of Faith Formation in the congregation. This is work that will continue next year and likely beyond. It is clear that folks in the congregation are yearning for programming that goes beyond classroom and curriculum, and it has been fun to dream about what this might look like.**

**I have done some direct teaching this year, and have felt successful in engaging people and encouraging them to go deeper on particular topics. This is a role in which I feel comfortable.**

Comments on congregational/organizational ownership and involvement in this area:  
**We have an amazing Interim Director of Faith Formation this year, which has meant that I have been able to entrust most of this to her. She has responsibility for Faith Formation for**



children, youth and adults. There is less strong lay leadership in this area than we would like, and this is part of her focus for the coming year.

## 6. Worship

Check One:

Strength  Satisfactory  Area for Growth  Unsatisfactory  Not Observed

General Comments: (*Consider preparedness, coherence, intellectual challenge, spirituality, creativity, inspirational message, effective use of humor, effective use of ritual and liturgical arts, music, prayer and meditation, readings/stories, rites of passage, pulpit presence, voice, etc.*)

**Worship is an area of ministry that I feel a lot of passion for, and I have felt like I have been able to translate that passion into quality, meaningful worship experiences for the congregation this year. I have appreciated having a congregation that is willing to experiment in worship, and will go with the flow, even when it might not have been expected. I introduced monthly themes to the congregation and it has been very well received - even better than I had expected. Even folks who were skeptical at first have appreciated being able to go deeper on the themes by exploring them over an extended period of time.**

**I feel like there are ways in which I am still finding my rhythm in terms of worship planning and preparation - especially in terms of advance planning. This second year will be a different experience, given that I have more time for advance planning, and am not doing everything for the first time. I will be curious to see how both of these factors effect worship.**

**One area I hope to grow in throughout the coming year is managing the Worship Associates. It felt like they were a well-oiled machine when I arrived, so I didn't worry about them too much. However, having now spent a year working with them, I see where their strengths and weaknesses are, and where they could use some more support and training. This will be an area to focus on in the coming year.**

Comments on congregational/organizational ownership and involvement in this area:

**There is a relatively strong Worship Associates program and an excellent choir and Music Director who have helped make worship a success this year. I have also had the benefit of an Interim Director of Faith Formation who is skilled at worship, and who has been a partner in worship planning this year, helping with all of our multigenerational services, as well as some others.**

## 7. Denominational Activities

Check One:

Strength  Satisfactory  Area for Growth  Unsatisfactory  Not Observed

General Comments: (*Consider involvement in UU denominational and District events, UUMA Chapter meetings and interfaith activities, encouragement of member involvement at the district and continental levels, informing congregation of UUA denominational concerns and issues, etc.*)  
I consider involvement in our larger faith to be deeply important to my ministry. As I entered a new district/region and UUMA chapter this year, one of my first priorities was to get involved in local events and make connections with colleagues in the area. I have faithfully attended both monthly UUMA cluster meetings and bi-yearly chapter retreats. I also attended the District Annual Meeting, along with one other staff member and seven lay leaders from the congregation. I also attended General Assembly and Ministry Days this year. One staff member and four lay leaders joined me at General Assembly, including one of our youth members. All six of us are currently engaged in sharing some of the highlights of GA through a Sunday service and evening adult programming. The group has already decided that the one thing we will do differently next year is to try to do more communication with the rest of the congregation about denominational issues before the delegates have to vote.

The congregation also took part in various trainings offered by the region this year. All were of great benefit, and helped folks think outside our congregational walls.

At the District Annual Meeting this year, I was elected to be Secretary of our District Board. I have begun this role and look forward to serving in this capacity. I hope it will continue to keep both me and the congregation connected to our larger faith.

Comments on congregational/organizational ownership and involvement in this area:

The interim work that was done prior to my arrival emphasized the need for the congregation to explore more of Unitarian Universalism outside of the small world of UUCN. When I arrived, there was some momentum in this direction, and I was able to capitalize on that to continue to grow the congregation's involvement in the denomination. The Board understands the importance of this, as do a growing number of lay leaders. There is a Denominational Connections Team that is minimally active.

## 8. Prophetic Outreach

Check One:

Strength  Satisfactory  Area for Growth  Unsatisfactory  Not Observed

General Comments: (*Consider involvement in witnessing and advocating for community/social justice issues, encourages congregational involvement in community/social justice issues, leads the congregation in addressing issues specifically related to anti-racism, anti-oppression, etc.*)

This is an area where I feel that I have not yet fully figured out my role in the congregation or the community. I have been able to address social justice in my sermons effectively, in ways that help people think a little differently. I have also supported the congregation's monthly community dinner, engagement with the area Interfaith Council, and the development of a working group in the congregation focused on racial justice. As the congregation becomes more diverse (particularly in terms of socioeconomic class), I have guided some conversations

around cultural differences and how these may play out in congregation life. All of these have felt like positive contributions to the congregation's social justice work.

At the same time, I have struggled with a Social Justice program that feels disorganized and unfocused. There are so many things that folks in the congregation want to do and support that I am unsure where I should best put my energy. There is a desire to do good, to create a more just world, but I often feel that people are too overwhelmed by the many worthy causes to contribute meaningfully. There is also a lack of clarity about who decides which issues are important.

I would like to grow in my ability to help the lay leaders in the Social Justice program truly engage the whole congregation in working for justice. I feel like my own analysis of power and privilege is nuanced, and ever-growing, but I am not always sure how to best help the congregation become more anti-racist and anti-oppressive as a whole. I would like to learn more about leading a congregation in this work.

Comments on congregational/organizational ownership and involvement in this area:

**There is a Social Justice Team with well-established leadership. These individuals are very active in the community themselves, but do not always know how to engage others. There is also a strong contingent of folks who lead our monthly Community Dinners, and a small group that has been working specifically on engaging with the Black Lives Matter Movement. Neither of these is particularly well integrated into the main Social Justice Team.**

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

**Date: 10/10/2016**

**Please note that the field for your text will expand to accommodate your entry.**

The Ministerial Fellowship Committee views the Renewal Process as a time of development and growth for new ministers. Pay particular attention to suggestions from your Supervisor/Board and/or Committee on Ministry evaluations when planning your continuing education. Consult with your mentor regarding your evaluations and development plans. Outline below, the continuing education plans you have for the upcoming year. Include workshops, programs, retreats, collegial groups, self-reflective work (therapy, spiritual direction, etc.), self-study (books, coaching, etc.) and self-care. We ask that you do not overlook the UUA's commitment to anti-racism, anti-oppression, and multi-culturalism. THIS SHOULD NOT BE A LIST OF PROGRAMS THAT YOU PLAN TO COMPLETE WITH THE CONGREGATION OR ORGANIZATION, BUT A LIST OF YOUR OWN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS.

1. Engage in coaching around staff supervision with a senior colleague in order to improve my skills as a supervisor.
2. Make time for reading books and listening to podcasts that will help inspire worship planning.
3. Participate in the "Learning Circle on Lower-Income Ministries" sponsored by the New England and Central East Region.
4. Read "Doing the Math of Mission: Fruits, Faithfulness, and Metrics," by Gil Rendle, to better understand how to use metrics in the monitoring.
5. Read "Mobilizing Congregations: How Teams Can Motivate Members and Get Things Done," by John W. Wimberly, to learn more about current theories of leadership development and volunteer engagement.
6. Read "A Ministry of Presence: Organizing, Training and Supervising Lay Pastoral Care Providers," by Denis Meacham, in order to improve my skills in organizing and utilizing a Pastoral Care Team.
7. Read "Healthy Congregations," by Peter Steinke, with my Committee on Ministry and engage in conversation with them around systems theory and conflict.
8. Attend New England Regional Ministers Retreat in November, led by Jacqui Lewis on the topic of worship.
9. Attend at least one workshop focused on ARAOMC work to continue to deepen my skills and knowledge in this area.
10. Attend Stewardship workshop in November in order to continue to improve my skills in cultivating strong stewardship.



## Parish Ministry - Committee on Ministry Evaluation For the UUA Ministerial Fellowship Committee

Name of Minister: **Allison Palm**      Date: **August 30, 2016**

Position being evaluated: **Parish Minister**

Congregation: **Nashua (NH) Unitarian-Universalist Church**

Name of Contact for this evaluation: **Carol Houde**

Contact's Phone: **603-888-1432**

Contact's Email: **choudephd@comcast.net**

Committee Members: **Carol Houde (Chair), Cecile Bonvouloir, Steve Ladew, Brenna Woods**  
*Notes Relating to Completion of Form*

This evaluation should be completed by the minister's Committee on Ministry or other body that is acting as the new minister's reflection group. The Committee on Ministry (COM) should meet with the minister monthly for at least one church year before beginning this evaluation process. If the minister is supervised by an individual, that individual should not serve on the COM. Plans for how to complete the assessment process should be coordinated with the Board (or supervisor) as they will be required to do their own evaluation for the MFC. The MFC is seeking separate feedback from two bodies, the COM and the Board or supervising minister, so the COM should not be a sub-group of the Board. For tips on how to do an assessment of a minister, please refer to the forms page on our website at:  
<http://www.uua.org/careers/ministers/support/fellowship/15505.shtml>.

When completing this evaluation form, review the suggested considerations and then comment on the particular strengths and areas for growth of the minister. Simply checking a box is not sufficient feedback. Without detailed responses, the evaluation will be considered incomplete by the MFC. Both the minister and the MFC benefit from an honest and thorough assessment of the ministry.

Please provide the evaluation as a consensus report of the group. Do not provide individual ratings from each COM member.

The section entitled "**Comments on organizational ownership and involvement in this area**" is your opportunity to reflect on the organization's own engagement in this particular area.

**Continuing Education/Action Steps:** When appropriate, make concrete suggestions to the minister for appropriate continuing education or action steps that will strengthen this area of ministry. (i.e., take time management course, study system's theory, etc.)

When completed, this evaluation should be shared with the minister and the minister's supervisor and they should share their evaluations with you as well.

**PLEASE ONLY SUBMIT TYPED EVALUATION FORMS. Forms should be submitted via email to [mfccordinator@uua.org](mailto:mfccordinator@uua.org).**

Please note that fields for your text will expand to accommodate your entries.

## Area of Ministry:

### 1. Counseling & Pastoral Care

Check One:

Strength  Satisfactory  Area for Growth  Unsatisfactory  Not Observed

**General Comments:** (*Consider availability, responsiveness, warmth, empathy, knowledge of family systems, skill level in pastoral care, confidentiality, hospital visitation, etc.*)

**Rev. Palm has woven pastoral care into the fabric of her ministry through a deliberate structuring of the strategies and interventions that effectively meet this need. The Pastoral Care Team, which is well-placed to witness these improvements, has described her efforts in this regard “as the direction we’ve been waiting for.” She has defined pastoral care to the congregation, a necessary first step, given the multiple changes in ministers since 2012, and has made clear how to access it. Rev. Palm has turned what has long been almost an afterthought in our congregation to a developing strength which has already had the best of impacts: making a difference in people’s lives.**

Comments on congregational ownership and involvement in this area:

**Pastoral care has not been known as a strength in our congregation for some time, a gap that has been the source of frustration and sadness over the years. As such, the congregation had almost become accustomed to its absence. To be fair, some members of the congregation did feel their needs had been well met in this area, but the general undercurrent was one of disappointment. To date, the congregation has responded with clear appreciation of the visible efforts Rev. Palm has made to strengthen this area of ministry and the Pastoral Care Team has used the foundation she has helped establish as a springboard to better identify those in need and to provide support to them.**

Recommended Continuing Education/Action Steps:

**The Pastoral Care Team is committed to meeting this important function within the congregation, but they would benefit from building essential skills. Rev. Palm could research strategies for helping team members develop skills in the areas of actual pastoral contact with individuals within the congregation and in maximizing outreach efforts to identify those in need.**

### 2. Practical Arts

Check One:

Strength  Satisfactory  Area for Growth  Unsatisfactory  Not Observed

**General Comments:** (*Consider administration, organizational development in out of congregation, management of staff, attention to detail, support and leadership development, recognition and appreciation of others, delegation of responsibility and authority, follow through*)

*and completion of tasks, time management, attention to finances, fund raising, funding ministry, public relations and publicity skills, ability to work with boards and committees, clarity of roles, attention to long range plans, etc.)*

To truly understand Rev. Palm's achievements in this area, one must first recognize that her operating as CEO of the congregation was a significant departure from the previously defined role of minister, and as such, perhaps a bit threatening to some of our members. Despite this potentially disadvantageous start, Rev. Palm was able to develop a proposed annual budget (the first time a minister has done so for our church within human memory), present it to the congregation at Annual Meeting, and have it pass unanimously. She has helped the congregation make the key distinction between policy and operations of the church, and in doing so, has been able to provide much needed clarity regarding the roles of staff, lay leadership, and the congregation at large. Her successes in these areas must be seen as a product of her capacity for meticulous and sensible planning, not only of the logistical elements of the task, but the essential human ones, as well.

Rev. Palm has achieved the delicate balance of embedding a well-integrated holistic leadership style in her work with both staff and lay leaders while still supporting their initiative and autonomy. As a result, staff and leadership have been better able to define the meaning of their work within the church, the larger community, and beyond. Lastly, the Nashua church has long been conflict avoidant, largely based in the importance placed on being "nice." Rev. Palm has started a conversation about the need for respectful conflict resolution, a process that has been largely accepted by the congregation with some degree of relief as a welcome alternative to the long tradition of unproductive avoidance.

Comments on congregational ownership and involvement in this area:

**Policy governance has been a term often referenced in conversations about staff and leadership roles, long-term goals, accountability, etc., but without a clear and consistent understanding of its meaning. As true with many concepts, its understanding comes with actual implementation. Significant steps were taken during the June 2016 Annual Meeting to bring the church into closer compliance with policy governance through changes in the by-laws and a redefinition of staff and lay leadership roles. The congregation has responded to these shifts with an open mind and a willingness to explore these changes, despite the anxiety they may produce. They do seem to be embracing the reality that after two very long-term ministers, the arrival of Rev. Palm represents an opportunity to make changes in church policy and operations for the health of the church.**

Recommended Continuing Education/Action Steps:

**Rev. Palm faces a complex task in moving into a true CEO role as minister of UUCN, as doing so represents a significant departure from previous definitions of the minister's role with respect to staff. Thus, she might find it helpful to pursue coaching or peer consultation regarding the supervision of staff. In addition, given that Rev. Palm is only the third settled minister in just over fifty years, many of the church's long-term "standard operating procedures" warrant review, and this process can be enhanced by effective data analysis. She is encouraged to explore relevant technology and procedures.**

### **3. Organizational Ministry**



Check One:

Strength  Satisfactory  Area for Growth  Unsatisfactory  Not Observed

**General Comments:** (*Consider integration of new members, creates a welcoming environment, encourages a sense of community, encourages growth, supports broad variety of programs, involvement of others in planning and conducting programs, nurtures lay leadership, professional presentation of self, pastors to various age groups, etc.*)

**How can a few sentences truly capture the excitement, vibrancy, and spirituality now palpable in our church, generated by Rev. Palm? More than thirty people have joined the church and visitors frequently comment on the warmth of the welcome they receive, an authentic reaching out from the congregation that flows from the intentional model of a welcoming for all set by Rev. Palm. She has taken an active role in supporting the youth and young adults in our congregation to an extent virtually unprecedented for our church, demonstrating the depths of her faith in their potential by linking them to opportunities for leadership growth. Rev. Palm has also deftly balanced the longstanding traditions of the church with well-crafted “experiments” of change that manage to pique members’ interest without arousing anxiety, not an easy task for a new minister in an almost two hundred year old church! In the same vein, Rev. Palm has been able to assist the congregation in taking a major step forward towards aligning our by-laws to allow for true implementation of Policy Governance. While changes in by-laws can often trigger considerable conflict, discussions of the changes during the Annual Meeting were respectful and productive, with the result being that all proposed changes were adopted by the congregation.**

Comments on congregational ownership and involvement in this area:

**The congregation has become more intentional about welcoming diverse visitors, mirroring Rev. Palm’s lead in this area. Whereas in the past, it was noteworthy to hear a visitor describing an enthusiastic welcome, such a response has in the past year become more frequent, and of sufficient power to cause visitors to make of point of speaking to it at Joys and Concerns. There is a much greater sense in the congregation that we are all responsible for the health of the church and the various teams and committees seem much more enthusiastic and energized.**

Recommended Continuing Education/Action Steps:

**While the Nashua congregation has historically skewed towards the affluent, it resides on the edge of a low income area. Recent outreach efforts have been one factor in bringing a more economically diverse array of visitors through our doors. Rev. Palm may find useful identifying additional approaches to support the congregation as they become more diverse, as well as ensuring that all new members feel welcome, regardless of income level. In addition, the arrival of a new minister has sparked increased energy within the congregation to accomplish tasks that have been lingering. To this end, Rev. Palm could research strategies for harnessing this energy to make it both productive and rewarding for members of the congregation who are putting in such efforts.**

#### 4. Personal and Professional Growth

Check One:

Strength  Satisfactory  Area for Growth  Unsatisfactory  Not Observed

General Comments: (*Consider performance under stress, hears criticism and feedback, skillfully gives constructive criticism and feedback, conveys energy and enthusiasm, gives and receives praise, sense of humor, manages conflict, models a healthy balance of work and personal/family life, engages in a rewarding spiritual practice, etc.*)

**In a shift that is anticipated to be healthy for both minister and congregation, Rev. Palm is moving towards a more balanced schedule that allows for time off during the formal church year and a greater presence over the summer. She has taken advantage of her move to New Hampshire to explore new outlets for her many and varied interests, as well as more frequent visits with family which are clearly a source of renewal for her. The discipline Rev. Palm brings to her actions as minister can also be seen in the appropriate and necessary boundaries she has been able to establish between her church life and personal life.**

Comments on congregational ownership and involvement in this area:

**The congregation strongly supports this balance. The results of the survey taken for the Ministerial Search Committee were unambiguous in the wish for a minister who has a robust personal and family life outside of the church. In addition, there has been great appreciation for the illustrations Rev. Palm injects into her sermons based on experiences from her own life, along with an understanding that these experiences come from a full life beyond the walls of the church. Rev. Palm's scheduling breaks during the church year has been well accepted by the congregation as means of personal and spiritual renewal for her.**

Recommended Continuing Education/Action Steps:

**It would seem easy for any newly arriving minister to become so caught up in the endless whirlwind of things to do and people to meet that time for contemplation is lost. Rev. Palm's second year of ministry at UUCN would therefore be an ideal time for her to strengthen an already healthy balance of an active church life with time for uninterrupted reflection and peace.**

## 5. Teaching (All Ages)

Check One:

Strength  Satisfactory  Area for Growth  Unsatisfactory  Not Observed

General Comments: (*Consider program development and coordination, seminar design and facilitations, teacher training, supports teachers in planning and conducting classes, provides program resources and support for parents, teachers, and colleagues, intergenerational activities, programs for children, youth and adults, volunteer recruitment, articulation of liberal religious education approach and philosophy, knowledge of resources and curriculum, etc.*)

**Rev. Palm has taken major steps to bridge what has long been a significant gulf between the church's offerings for children and youth (centered on formal religious education) and adults (centered on Sunday worship). She has enthusiastically defined her mission as fostering religious and spiritual growth across the lifespan by embedding such learning within virtually all church activities and not just the traditionally structured forums. Rev. Palm is a natural teacher whose sermons invariably contain didactic elements that are always interesting, often humorous, but consistently avoid devolving into a mere lecture. She is particularly skilled at**

creating workshops and congregational conversations in a respectful manner that can maintain focus on the essential issue to be addressed in such a way as to seamlessly generate outcomes. Lastly, Rev. Palm has also been keenly attentive to opportunities to foster the learning of youth and young adults in the congregations, thereby demonstrating through her actions the immense value she places on these members (and potential members) of the church.

Comments on congregational ownership and involvement in this area:

The Nashua congregation has perhaps had a reputation as being “of the head more than the heart,” so there is a ready audience for a range of educational offerings. The additional emphasis on lifespan spiritual development has been enthusiastically received by the congregation, with good attendance at events such as “Deeper than Coffee (discussion about the morning’s sermon), PercUulate (a chance for people to speak their thoughts on a particular subject freely, without being questioned), and TUuesday, an adult faith formation program. Rev. Palm’s natural curiosity about a range of topic dovetails nicely with that of the congregation, creating a synergistic effect greatly appreciated by the congregation.

Recommended Continuing Education/Action Steps:

In anticipation of the arrival of a settled Director of Faith Formation, Rev. Palm could continue to focus on moving the congregation’s collective mindset from defining “teaching” as simply religious education for children to its being a lifelong spiritual process for all. Rev. Palm has already been able to embed teaching moments across multiple church activities that have not historically been seen as avenues for such enrichment, such as committee work. Once the new DFF is in place, a collaboration can be built which serve as a solid foundation for the development of skills within this functional area.

## 6. Worship

Check One:

Strength  Satisfactory  Area for Growth  Unsatisfactory  Not Observed

General Comments: (*Consider preparedness, coherence, intellectual challenge, spirituality, creativity, inspirational message, effective use of humor, effective use of ritual and liturgical arts, music, prayer and meditation, readings/stories, rites of passage, pulpit presence, voice, etc.*)

The congregation has overwhelmingly embraced Rev. Palm’s introduction of Theme-based Ministry to UUCN, an accomplishment facilitated by the reality that her sermons are consistently excellent. She can link together seemingly disparate elements into a cohesive whole that captures and holds the attention, injecting theology, history, and humor into the mix. The Congregational Survey compiled by the Ministerial Search Committee revealed a wish for a minister who could speak to both head and heart; Rev. Palm’s services do exactly that and more. The services she designs in collaboration with the Worship Associates and the Music Director are coherent, well paced and thoughtful, with increased attention to elements that may seem like minor details, but which can have a significant impact, such as the intentionality of the closing words. Increased involvement of children and youth in the services has helped the church strengthen its commitment to all ages.

Comments on congregational ownership and involvement in this area:

**It would be no exaggeration to describe the congregation as almost giddy with appreciation as to the spiritual depth, intellectual rigor, and gentle humor that have come to characterize worship in the church. This appreciation has spawned myriad conversations about worship among members of the congregation, ranging from a few moments in coffee hour to deeper discussions of the new opportunities for the spiritual and intellectual exploration upon which the fundamentals of Unitarian Universalism rest. There has been a hunger for greater depth of worship and its arrival has allowed the congregation to move closer to a shared ministry.**

Recommended Continuing Education/Action Steps:

**Recognizing that worship is already an outstanding strength for Rev. Palm, it would seem reasonable that she focus in the coming year not so much on specific skill acquisition, but more on simply safeguarding time to contemplate goals and themes of upcoming services, thereby being able to make the most of her considerable talents in this vital area.**

## 7. Denominational Activities

Check One:

Strength  Satisfactory  Area for Growth  Unsatisfactory  Not Observed

General Comments: *(Consider involvement in UU denominational and District events, UUMA Chapter meetings and interfaith activities, encouragement of member involvement at the district and continental levels, informing congregation of UUA denominational concerns and issues, etc.)*

**Through her involvement in the activities at the district and national levels, Rev. Palm has brought home to Nashua the importance of looking beyond our own community. In the process, she has been able to kindle the interest and investment of others, including youth, through the opportunities these opportunities present. Her list of activities in this area includes: Secretary of the Northern New England District, attendance at General Assembly, facilitating a retreat of the Universalist Heritage Foundation, etc.**

Comments on congregational ownership and involvement in this area:

**Members of the congregation who have long been involved with the denomination beyond the Nashua church have felt very supported by Rev. Palm's commitment to the wider UU community. Members newly invited by her to take part in these activities have responded with excitement that their potential has been recognized. Attendance at events sponsored by the UUA and the Northern New England Area has been on the increase and a hope exists that this trend will continue as those involved bring back their experiences in such a way as to pique the interest of others.**

Recommended Continuing Education/Action Steps:

**Rev. Palm is already quite active in the denomination beyond the Nashua church. Perhaps a goal for the coming year might be to bring home ideas and initiatives gleaned during such events and craft them for possible use in Nashua.**

## 8. Prophetic Outreach

Check One:

Strength  Satisfactory  Area for Growth  Unsatisfactory  Not Observed

**General Comments:** (*Consider involvement in witnessing and advocating for community/social justice issues, encourages congregational involvement in community/social justice issues, leads the congregation in addressing issues specifically related to anti-racism, anti-oppression, etc.*)

**The events of the past year throughout the country have provided Rev. Palm with ample opportunity to take action on issues of social justice, and she has stepped up to address the institutional racism on which the Black Lives Matter rests, using social media in an effective, fact-based manner. Within the church, she has worked with the Social Justice Team to define a strategic vision that will allow increased congregational involvement, a much needed development as considerable passion regarding social justice exists among members of the church, but without a clearly-defined mechanism for harnessing it. Rev. Palm represents UUCN at the Nashua Area Interfaith Council meetings and has just begun to connect with the Granite State Organizing Project.**

Comments on congregational ownership and involvement in this area:

**It could be said that organized social justice efforts had become a bit of a silo in the Nashua church, with a few church members taking on the lion's share of the effort. While some remarkable achievements were made possible through these efforts, there also seemed to be considerable energy within the congregation that was not able to be harnessed in the name of social justice. Rev. Palm has been vocal about the points of justice most meaningful to her and the conversation has begun as to ways in which the congregation as a whole can embrace a cause consistent with our principals. The congregation has a way to go still in exploring this issue in order to achieve a more unified sense of purpose, but the interest and will to do so are beginning to emerge. More work in this area will be needed over the coming year.**

Recommended Continuing Education/Action Steps:

**As mentioned above, the church has considerable energy to devote to social justice, but it has remained rather untapped and unfocused. The church would benefit from Rev. Palm's study of strategies by which this energy can be organized and directed to good effect. The congregation would also be strengthened by greater clarity as to its social justice mission (its current mission statement being rather diffuse), a process that Rev. Palm has begun and which needs to continue into the coming year.**

UPDATED 10/20/2015