

Annual Report of the Membership Team 2017-2018

Members: Allison Annand, Marie Bozzi, Nancy Cegalis, Laurie Goodman, Elizabeth Lewis, Karen Thomas
Unitarian Universalist Church of Nashua, NH

Background

The UUCN's 2016 Five Year Strategic Goals merged the "desired ends" and "steps to achieve the ends" of the Membership and Leadership Development Teams with the expectation that these teams would either combine into one or work closely together to:

- welcome and support visitors and newcomers through to the process of becoming members
- help to assimilate them into the life of the congregation through a variety of opportunities to engage, contribute, and share their gifts and talents
- encourage and support active members to investigate, learn about and take on leadership positions
- support new leaders as they adjust to the responsibilities and challenges of their new positions

2017/2018 Membership Team Report

Over the summer leading into the beginning of the church year, the Leadership Development Team took the initiative to begin a process to combine or align the efforts of our two teams. We had two very productive, inspiring meetings to discuss how this might work. However, the Membership Team was dealing with some internal issues that prevented us from moving forward with this process during this church year. In the end, our members agreed that we needed to spend this year reorganizing our Membership priorities before we could focus on the aspirational goals of merging the two teams. In discussion with Rev. Allison, we agreed that we would reevaluate this merger at a later date.

The 2017/2018 steps outlined in the "Five Year Strategic Goals" for Membership and Leadership Development that aligned more closely with Membership Team roles included:

- Assess Greeter/Usher program and implement changes as needed
- Establish a sustainable process for tracking visitors and new members
- Support the congregation in learning about and practicing hospitality

The following step contains aspects of responsibilities for both the Membership and Leadership Development teams, and may offer an opportunity for the two teams to work together in the 2018/2019 Church Year:

- Establish a process to occasionally check with active members to assess their satisfaction and sense of fulfillment with their current roles, to assess their interest and willingness to assume more responsibility in our church life, and to refer those who are interested to the Nominating Committee and relevant staff.

With the departure of our Congregational Life Coordinator in November, the entire Membership Team committed ourselves to stepping up our own involvement in the worship service back-of-sanctuary activities on Sunday mornings.

We closely examined and reorganized our Usher/Greeter program to accommodate the loss of the consistent weekly presence of our Membership staff person. We established a Lead Greeter position that was shared by members of the team. We created a Sign-up Genius account for volunteers to sign up to greet members, friends and visitors coming into the service and simplified instructions for the tasks involved in keeping track of attendance including returning visitors and conducting the Outreach Collection.

In the coming church year, we will continue to tweak these systems and to encourage participation of many more members of the congregation in serving as worship service greeters.

In addition to our Worship Service Responsibilities, members of the team also coordinated the following activities:

Circle Dinners and Lunches

There is an open invitation Circle Lunch that has taken place on the first Thursday each month, first at Seedling Café and now at City Moose Café. This is organized by committee member Nancy Cegalis, and has been consistently well attended.

Organizing Traditional Circle Dinners has been challenging this year. We have plenty of folks interested in attending, but not enough who are able to host the dinners. The team sees these shared dinners as an important way for new and existing members to get to know each other, and hope to build up participation in the coming year.

Exploring Membership Events

The team helped to organize a series of events in both fall and spring to encourage newcomers to explore membership in our congregation. These included assisting with Intro to UU classes, Welcome to UUCN sessions, "Explore Membership!" sessions, a New Member Reception and Welcoming Sundays. This church year we welcomed 17 new members into the congregation!

New Interim Membership Coordinator

The staff, Membership Team and congregation were very pleased to welcome our new Interim Membership Coordinator, Molly Yarrington in April. She spent the past few months observing and learning how we currently do things here at UUCN and has begun to share her observations and offer some great ideas on how we might continue to evolve and grow our Membership program. The team looks forward to working closely with her in the coming year.

Looking to the 2018/2019 Church Year

Co-chair Laurie Goodman will depart the Membership Team at the end of this year, knowing it is in great shape to continue the important work we do with and on behalf of the congregation. If you are interested in joining the Membership Team for the upcoming church year, please make your interest known to Molly or a member of the team. We would love to have you join us!

Respectfully Submitted by:

Co-Chairs Laurie Goodman and Karen Thomas
May 24, 2018