

Annual Report of the Music Program 2017-2018

Provided by Kathy Fletcher, May 2018
Unitarian Universalist Church of Nashua, NH

Jared (Jed) Holland led the adult choir and special event choirs this year. The adult choir sang during Sunday morning services along with four Family Choir events, and the Christmas Choir sang at the Christmas Eve morning and evening services. Jed has also been leading our involvement in the Community Interfaith Choir which sang at three Interfaith celebrations this year, and had good participation by members of our choir and congregation.

Our music team has been assisting Jed with the music program. This team (co-chairs Geri Davidson and Kathy Grossman, and members Steve Hedges, Ruth Cannava, Kathleen Griffis, Brenna Woods) has been doing a great job. We have added new members Brenna and Steve. It continues to be a pleasure to have Rev. Allison participate in our Music Team meetings. She brings enthusiasm and new ideas to our meetings. We look forward to her return from parental leave next year.

The adult choir involves a large number of church friends and members, currently totaling 44 choir members. We have slightly lower numbers this year since some members left for a variety of reasons, such as moving, reducing activities, too busy, or they left the church. We have smaller choir size on Sundays too because of infrequent attendance due to busy lives. The adult choir continues to sing almost every Sunday. The choir sang an amazing total of 60 anthems, and sang at 37 out of 41 services from September through June. The only Sundays the choir did not sing were the Youth Service, and three Sundays for which the worship leaders requested other music. Members of the congregation and choir also joined the Christmas Eve service choir for 3 more anthems, for a total of 44 adults, youth, and children, who sang at either one or both of the Christmas Eve services.

Ten new members joined the choir this year. Out of those 10, six are new to our church this year (names are in bold), and the other four are church members joining for the first time or rejoining choir members. **Vengerflutta Smith**, Mandy Eberle, Stuart Schneiderman, Sharon Machado, Laurie Barry, **Marissa Volpe**, **Nicole James**, **Jakob Cawley**, **Jeff Epstein**, and **Lexie Blais**.

We started the year with the implementation of a Family Choir, and have transitioned to implementing an All Ages Choir. We had five events this year that were geared toward involving children musically: a Family Choir song, the Christmas Eve Choir, two All Ages Choir songs, and inviting youth to join the adult choir for one song. All of those seemed to work well. Music team member Kathleen Griffis led the logistics for the children's events this year.

Since Rev Allison uses monthly themes, we continue to ask the choir to provide music suggestions based on the themes. This has yielded a wonderful diversity of anthems and solo songs for our services.

The AV Team has signed up for a music licensing service to include live-streaming, audio recording, and videorecording. We have two choir members (Laurie Barry and Kathy Grossman)

doing the work posting recordings to koober, and will work with the AV team to get the necessary music reporting figured out.

Our goal of more congregation participation

In keeping with our goal of participation by members of the congregation, we continued to solicit soloists, and groups of vocalists and instrumentalists.

To help with our goal of engaging children & youth musically, we have included youth vocalists and instrumentalists, organized All Ages Choir song events, invited children to participate in our Christmas Eve Choir, and invited youth to help in other ways, such as assisting visiting guest musician Matt Meyer. Jed also assisted the youth group with music planning in advance of their service.

Jed brought live band music to our services 9 times this year, about once a month. Four musicians (Jed Holland, John Burkitt, Billy Parker, and Anthony Iovino) played on the various days.

Besides the band, we had great participation by 31 guest musicians to provide special music other than the normal choirs, for a total of 18 musical offerings. We also had soloists in the choir sing with the choir for 7 anthems during the year.

Our goal of promoting a feeling of community among choir members

We encourage choir members to get to know each other better. We occasionally hold a choir social event, such as the summer choir pool party. This year, we also had a field trip with 40 choir members and friends to attend the play "Sister Act", put on by Actorsingers.

During Wednesday evening rehearsals, we regularly share joys and concerns. Sometimes everybody there says something about themselves to help us get to know each other better.

Working towards our goal of keeping personally connected to the individuals of our choir so that they feel this church is their family, we continue a program of taking a monthly attendance. When a choir member is absent for an extended period of time, without having notified us of their absence, we reach out to them to ask if everything is alright, and follow-up as needed (including perhaps asking the Pastoral Care Team to make contact).

Church goal of better communication

Kathy continues writing up seasonal updates to send out to the choir, helping them know what the music team and choir are doing.

We assist as needed with efforts to project the words on the wall during the services, such as providing lyrics for the slides.

We continue to utilize electronic methods of communication. We are using Facebook, the UU network, the church website, the choir google group, and YouTube. We continue to post audio recordings of our services on the website.

One communication we've added this year are our "Music Notes" that are often in the Sunday order of service. Music team member Ruth Cannava has been writing short explanations for many of our anthems, telling some history of the music or tying the lyrics to the theme. We started this so we could help members of the congregation understand how the music fits in. And we found that sometimes even the choir members who have been practicing the song for weeks have said they find these words give them a deeper connection with the theme and the music!

Church goal of ending hunger and homelessness

We continue to work in support of the church goal of providing community dinners. Bass player John Burkitt and friends provided live music at most of the community dinners this year, Kathy Grossman played once, and Suellen Davidson performed once as well.

Church goal of year-round church services

This past summer Jed Holland became our year-round pianist/organist. He played for 7 summer services, Ben Telerski played for 2 services, and 1 service leader made arrangements to bring in a musician.

Printed Music/Folders

We are ordering music and folders for 45 choir members. This year, we also purchased several piano/vocal scores for small group and solo performances, which allowed us to have more guest musician presentations.

Guest Musicians

This year's guest musicians include many congregation members and friends as well as a few outside musicians. All of these musicians sang or played solos or in small groups totaling 24 performances.

Vocal soloists this year include Suellen Davidson, JoAnn Kaplan, Kathy Grossman, Brenna Woods, Rhonda Moore, Harry Purkhiser, Marty Storer, Lindsey Hedrick, Steve Hedges, Dan Murphy, Vengerflutta Smith, Sue Chadwick, and Sarah Chadwick, many of whom sang multiple solos.

Instrumentalists this year include pianists Jed Holland, Dan Murphy, Ben Telerski; organist Jed Holland; bass player John Burkitt; guitarists Steve Hedges, Dan Murphy, Anthony Iovino; percussionists Billy Parker, Ben Morton; trombonist Anthony Iovino; flute player Marjorie Hogan; ukulele players Brenna Woods, Kathy Grossman, and Martha and Mary Holland, and violinist Nancy Goodwin. Many of these folks played multiple times.

Over the summer, more musicians played and sang, including Dan Murphy, Cosy Sheridan, Jed Holland, Ben Telerski, Mia Taylor, Darcy Hinkle, Ben Morton, Grace Morton, and Gwen David, providing 8 special music selections on 5 of the 11 Sunday services.

Jed's professional development

Jed was unable to attend last summer's UU Musicians' Network convention. He hopes to go this summer, since he really enjoys them and gets lots of ideas from them.

Instrument Repairs/Maintenance

The Sanctuary piano and the organ were tuned once by Andover Organ Company and are due for their second tuning this summer.

Review of Music Budget 2017-2018

We continue to have a large expense of printed sheet music for the choir, due mostly to the large choir membership. Since Jed is now a year-round employee, the music program has a budget for covering his absences on Wednesday evening rehearsals or Sunday morning services. We paid for Julie Oliver as our choir director substitute 3 times, Ben Telerski 3 times, John Carey one time, and Johnna Ross once. Jed also hired two special guest musicians: flautist Marjorie Hogan and violinist Nancy Goodwin. We ordered 12 new pieces for the choir, as well as additional copies of music we already own.

Goals for 2018-2019

To keep personally connected to the individuals in the music program so they feel this church is their family, especially during troubled times.

To integrate new choir members.

To find even more ways for church members and friends to contribute musically to the life of the church.

To find more ways to make services musically engaging for the children.

To encourage teenagers who are interested in running the sound system, running the word projections, performing solos or in small groups, or joining the choir.

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

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