

## Unitarian Universalist Church of Nashua, NH

### **Music Program 2018-2019**

Jared (Jed) Holland led the choir and special event choirs this year. The choir sang during Sunday morning services along with three All Ages Choir events, one Greater Choir anthem, and the Christmas Choir sang two anthems at both Christmas Eve evening services. Jed has also been leading our involvement in the Community Interfaith Choir which sang at four Interfaith celebrations this year (Crop Walk, Thanksgiving, MLK, Holocaust Memorial, as well as our Campbell service), 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. It is also a pleasure to have Rev. Allison participate in our Music Team meetings.

The choir involves a large number of church friends and members, currently totaling 38 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, teaching FF classes, or they left the church. We have a 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 58 anthems, and sang at 35 out of 39 services from September through June. The only Sundays the choir did not sing were the Youth Service, a Sunday where Kathy, Dan, and Harry sang for Steve's minister emeritus service, a service for the Children's Christmas pageant, and a service that was conducted over Zoom due to snow. Members of the congregation and choir also joined the Christmas Eve service choir for 2 more anthems, sung twice, for a total of 28 adults, youth, and children, who sang at either one or both of the Christmas Eve services.

Nine new members joined the choir this year. Out of those 9, three are new to our church this year (names are in bold), one is a youth new to our choir (asterisk by his name), and the other four are church members joining for the first time or rejoining choir members. These members are **Emma Rearick**, Kathy Fletcher, John Sanders, Gillian Hinkle, Dan Holland, \*Nate Griffis, **Sarah Shor**, Steve Ladew, and **Ian Ouziel**.

We had eight events this year that were geared toward involving children musically: a music/dance themed story for all ages led by Music Team member Brenna Woods, three All Ages Choir songs, the Christmas Eve Choir, two Christmas pageant songs, and a song sung by members of the ROPES class. 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.

This year, we also did a massive pre-review of new songs. These songs had come from song suggestions and from UU Musician Network conferences.

Geri Davidson also worked a year ahead on her song suggestions, and was therefore able to offer these as possibilities for the Soul Matters monthly resource documents. These are offered to all congregations who are using the Soul Matters monthly themes.

Geri has also worked, with input from the team, to begin a music culling project. She is systematically reviewing the songs in our music library and working to remove those songs that are no longer a good fit for our music program.

The AV Team has signed up for a music licensing service to include live-streaming, audio recording, and videorecording. We have three choir members (Laurie Barr, Steve Hedges, and Kathy Grossman) doing the work posting recordings to [koober.uunashua.org](http://koober.uunashua.org), and will work to input data correctly for the AV Team to do reporting in accordance with the licensing requirements.

### **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 graciously hosted by Martha and Jed each summer.

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).

The Music Team began writing Thank You notes to soloists who performed during the church year, with a goal of writing to at least 50% of the musicians, to help people feel our appreciation when they share their talents.

### **Our goal of interacting with larger community**

We worked with the Community Interfaith Choir. The CIC sang at 5 events this year, including our own Campbell service. Jed organized the music, and invited the CIC to participate at this event. We encouraged our choir members to sing at all the CIC events, and Geri Davidson provided support to the CIC leader and the UUCN CIC members for each CIC event.

Geri Davidson has reached out to UU music directors to offer them sheet music from our music library that we no longer find useful. She connected with the Littleton, MA music director and another director in North Carolina who were excited to get some new songs for their choirs!

### **Our goal of supporting church initiatives**

Jed Holland invited the Community Interfaith Choir to join us in singing at the Campbell Service in September.

We transferred all of our team google drive files over to the church G-Suite Music Team Drive. This is part of an effort to have centrally located files that are accessible to church leadership, even as individuals change roles. The two team co-chairs have also provided thorough descriptions of their tasks, in an effort to help support lay leaders and staff in the future.

### **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 participate 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 as needed for certain choir anthems. Four musicians (Jed Holland, John Burkitt, Billy Parker, and Anthony Iovino) played on the various days.

Besides the band, we had great participation by 45 guest musicians to provide special music in addition to the routinely offered music by our choirs.

### **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 27 performances.

Vocal soloists and small group singers this year include Kathy Grossman, Brenna Woods, Rhonda Moore, Marty Storer, Lindsey Hedrick, Grace Morton, Ben Morton, Steve Hedges, Harry Purkhiser, Dan Murphy, Darcy Hinkle, Vengerflutta Smith, Mary Ellen Wessels, Kim Steele, Emma Rearick, Steve Ladew, Ian Ousiel, Devony Whiting, and Kathleen Griffis, many of whom sang multiple solos. We also had all the women of the choir sing one song, and the entire Music Team, with two helpers, sang one song.

Instrumentalists this year include pianists Jed Holland, Dan Murphy; organist Jed Holland; bass player John Burkitt; guitarists Steve Hedges, Dan Murphy, Andrew Holland; percussionists Billy Parker, Ben Morton; trombonists Anthony Iovino, Kathy Grossman; baritone players Lindsey Hedrick, Maggie Woolsey; clarinetist Suellen Davidson. Many of these folks played multiple times.

Over the summer, more musicians played and sang, including Jed Holland, Johnna Ross, Michelle Bozzi, Rhonda Moore, Zoe Holway, Charlotte Cardone, Paulie Cardone, Mary Holland, Mia Taylor, Gwen Davis, Shawn Cawley, and Lauren Cawley, providing 9 special music selections on 5 of the 10 summer Sunday services.

Also, a few leaders from the Jena Jubilee Singers from Germany visited our church in October (hosted by Jed and choir members Andee Rebeck and Fred Shirley) and sang for us during a Sunday service. Their visit was part of advanced planning for a return visit in October 2019, when they will hold a concert at our church as part of their New England concert tour. As some of you may remember, the Jena Jubilee Singers previously presented a concert at our church in 2005.

### **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 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.

Ruth Cannava continued to provide “Music Notes” that are often in the Sunday order of service. These are short explanations for many of our anthems, telling some history of the music or tying the lyrics to the theme. Ruth provided these for about half of the year and hopes to continue contributing these notes to the Order of Service in the future.

### **Church goal of year-round church services**

Jed Holland continues as our year-round pianist/organist. He played for 7 summer services, Johnna Ross played for 2 services, and Jed played for every service of the church year except the snow day service conducted over Zoom!

### **Printed Music/Folders**

We are ordering music and maintain folders for 40 choir members. The cost of sheet music has been increasing. This year, we also purchased several piano/vocal scores for small group and solo performances, which allowed us to have more guest musician presentations. Kathy Grossman also wrote one choir anthem “When I Wake Up” this year, which the choir premiered.

### **Jed’s professional development**

Jed plans to attend this summer’s AUUMM (Association for Unitarian Universalist Music Ministries) conference (previously UUMN).

### **Instrument Repairs/Maintenance**

The Sanctuary piano and the organ had three regular tunings and needed repairs done by Andover Organ Company.

### **Review of Music Budget 2018-2019**

We continue to have a large expense of printed sheet music for the choir. Since Jed is now a year-round employee, the music program has a budget for covering his scheduled absences on

Wednesday evening rehearsals or Sunday morning services. We paid for Julie Oliver as our choir director substitute 3 times, John Carey once, Jenn Erdody once, and Johnna Ross twice. We ordered 14 new songs for the choir, as well as additional copies as needed of music we already own. We spent \$70 on music for the CIC and contributed \$130 toward the expenses for the Community Interfaith Choir.

### **Goals for 2019-2020**

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.

To work toward supporting church initiatives.

To help support a concert by the Jena Jubilee Singers on their tour from Germany.