

Annual Report of the Membership Team 2018–2019

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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

2018/2019 Membership Team Report

It was determined that the 2018/2019 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

In March of 2018, the Membership team welcomed Acting Membership Coordinator, Molly Yarrington, who stepped into the vacant position and helped the Membership Team clarify the priorities and scope of their work, which led to changes in both the structure and function of the Membership Team over the course of this past year.

We transitioned to operating as a task-based team after determining that it was a better use of time to accomplish our goals than the traditional monthly team meeting format. The new format called for 2–3 meetings of the whole team per year (we had 3), one in Fall, one in Spring, prior to the New Member Reception, and a final one toward the later part of the church year. Additionally, Lead Greeter meetings consisted of two separate training sessions to coordinate new processes and welcome new Lead Greeters to the team, (the second of which will be taking place on June 2nd).

Molly liaised with various “Task Teams” consisting of 1–6 people each, depending on scope of role and work required, including “Lead Greeters”; “Classes”; “New Member Reception Planning”, and “Name Tags”. This structure also allowed for participation from some people who wanted to be available for helping with certain tasks, but were not interested in serving on the Membership Team as a whole (i.e. committing to monthly meetings).

As planned, we have continued to tweak the systems adopted last year of having Lead Greeters and using Sign Up Genius for volunteers to sign up to serve as worship service greeters, and we really focused our efforts on three things this year-

- 1) Implementing changes to the Greeter program to include the entire congregation taking turns with greeting, led by the Lead Greeters as the consistent knowledge leaders.
- 2) Revamping the visitor engagement process to make it more welcoming, easier to navigate, and more technology enhanced, thus automating pieces of new visitor connection follow up without increasing staffing needs (which is still in process...to be completed and rolled out by end of church year/June).
- 3) Improving the welcoming and hospitality feel of our church through a combination of initiatives including the Fellowship Hour and Greeter Program revisioning and introducing new opportunities for involvement in small groups for newcomers, such as Starting Points and a newcomers' covenant group.

The changes made in these areas have received positive feedback from both newcomers and congregants alike. Overall, the church feels more welcoming and inclusive according to the feedback we've received.

Throughout this church year, for various personal reasons, several team members stepped down from service of the Membership Team, including Nancy Cegalis, Elizabeth Lewis, and Marie Bozzi. (Laurie Goodman, co-chair, departed at the end of the 2017/18 church year as well). Some of these former team members have remained in service as Lead Greeters, and two new Lead Greeters have been recruited and joined the ranks- Laurie Barry and Lois Taylor. Additionally, Monica Staples and Laurie Barry have remained the support for making visitor and member name tags as needed.

In addition to our Greeting and Worship Service responsibilities, members and former members of the team also coordinated the following activities:

Circle Dinners and Lunches

Organization of the Circle Lunch. There is an open invitation Circle Lunch that has taken place on the first Thursday each month, first at City Moose Café. and now at The Arbor, due to acoustical challenges. This was previously organized by committee member Nancy Cegalis and was taken over by Elizabeth Lewis part way through the year. It has been consistently well attended.

Organizing Traditional Circle Dinners was put on hold for this year. With the creation of the Fellowship & Fun (fUUn) Team this year, we imagine if these events are planned in the future they will fall under the umbrella of that team.

Exploring Membership Classes and Events

The team helped to organize a series of classes and events in both fall and spring to encourage newcomers to explore membership in our congregation. These included assisting with Intro to UU classes, "Exploring Membership" sessions, introducing a new small group for newcomers called 'Starting Points,' which led into a newcomer's covenant group, a New Member Reception and a House of Faith Tour Open House (in conjunction with the Nashua Area Interfaith Council.)

We welcomed 13 New Members in 2018/2019! – (Grace Morton, Tom Harris, Andy Capen, Jill Cane, Alexis McDonald, Mark Campbell, Amanda Banner, Nick Stolos, Lori Stolos, Sara Hiland, Ian Ouziel, Joyce Trudel, Robin Trudel)

Correction on last year's annual report: This church year (2017/18) we welcomed ~~17~~ (15) new members into the congregation!

Dissolution of Membership Coordinator position and Transition of Membership Team

After implementing the changes this year, and with the departing of the Acting Membership Coordinator as of June 30, 2019, and the dissolution of that role (for the time being), a decision has been made to move forward with a new plan for the Membership Team to transition into the Lead Greeter Team, which will be a fully task-based team that meets twice a year, at the beginning of the church year for training and in the spring, before the New Member Reception, for planning purposes.

Lead Greeters will continue in their current role, with a few additional duties, regarding liaising with various staff for support of their roles.

Looking to the 2019/2020 Church Year

The Lead Greeters, with staff support, will continue to support the congregation in welcoming visitors and members to Sunday services and assist the staff in planning a New Member Reception in the spring. Optionally, Lead Greeters will be invited to assist the Minister and director of Faith Formation with holding Intro to UU, Exploring Membership, and visitor covenant group programming. **We currently have 5 Lead Greeters; Karen Thomas, Allison Annand, Elizabeth Lewis, Laurie Barry, Lois Taylor.** (Laurie Goodman is stepping down next year and we thank her for her service!) We would love to have 8-9 so if you are interested in serving as a Lead Greeter or finding out more, speak with one of them about it, or Rev. Allison!

Additionally, other Membership Team tasks will be distributed as follows:

1. Name tags (currently Monica Staples and Laurie Barry) – liase with Staff Administrator to fulfill nametag needs. Lead Greeters will track who needs new nametags and share with Staff Admin. Via weekly attendance tracking form.
2. Circle Lunches will live under the Fellowship and Fun Team.

Membership programming for the 2019/2020 church year has been tentatively determined to be as follows:

Sunday, Oct. 6 - Intro to UU

Sunday, November 3 - Intro to UU

Thursdays, Nov. 21, Dec. 19, Jan. 16 and Feb. 20 - Starting Point

Sunday, January 12 - Exploring Membership

Sunday, February 2 - Intro to UU

Sunday, March 1 - Intro to UU

Sunday, March 8 - Exploring Membership
Saturday, April 4, 4-6pm - New Member Reception

Sunday, April 5 - New Member Ceremony

Respectfully Submitted May 24, 2019 by:

Chair: Karen Thomas

Staff Liaison: Molly Yarrington