

## Unitarian Universalist Church of Nashua, NH

### **Music Program 2019-2020**

The music program has been split into two distinct time periods this year: One at the beginning of the church year through early March, and one beginning in March when we began to do everything online. I'll talk about the portion of the year from September to March 11 first, then address what has been happening since we began doing church remotely.

Jared (Jed) Holland led the choir and special event choirs this year. The choir sang during Sunday morning services, and the Christmas Eve 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 (Nashua Multicultural Festival, Crop Walk, Thanksgiving, MLK), and had good participation by members of our choir and congregation. Some choir members participated remotely in the Holocaust Memorial Service for our first remote audio Interfaith Choir recording attempt.

Jed continues as a year-round employee, so he assisted all the summer service worship leaders as requested, providing piano and organ music, solos, and accompaniments as needed.

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.

Since the switch to remote church services, Music Team members Kathy Grossman, Brenna Woods, and Steve Hedges, as well as music director Jed Holland, have really stepped up to provide music, learn new electronic platforms of recording and providing music, and interface with the musicians who are helping with these efforts. Huge grateful shoutout to all the church members who have jumped in to suggest songs, record themselves singing or playing an instrument, provide photos and/or artwork for the backdrop behind music in the service, or otherwise helped with this effort. This has really been a complete switch in how everybody contributes, and we are grateful for all the help!

The choir involves a large number of church friends and members, currently totaling 40 choir members. The adult choir sang every Sunday that we held services in the sanctuary. The choir sang a total of 49 anthems in person through March, singing at 26 out of 26 services from September through March 11th. Members of the congregation and choir also joined the Christmas Eve service choir for 2 more anthems, sung twice, for a total of 37 adults, youth, and children, who sang at either one or both of the Christmas Eve services. Once we started online church services on March 15, some members of the choir participated in recording three anthems or hymns shared via Zoom for our services: Somos El Barco, We Are the World, and For The Beauty of the Earth, which was about 1 every month.

13 new members joined the choir this year. Out of those 13, 10 are new to our church this year (names are in bold), and the other 3 are church members joining for the first time or rejoining choir members. These members are Jeff Epstein, **Janine Leffler**, **Matthew Smith**, **Anne Smith**, **Matt Kasnetz**, Jason Pancoast, **Jewel Karue**, **Skye Wheeler**, Kenna McLeod, **Elizabeth Berrigan**, **Billy Steeves**, **Brionna Blodgett**, and **Atona King**.

We had two events this year that were geared toward involving children musically: one All Ages Choir song, and the Christmas Eve Choir. Music team member Kathleen Griffis led the logistics for the children's events this year.

Since Rev Allison used monthly themes, we continued to ask the choir to provide music suggestions based on the themes. This yielded a wonderful diversity of anthems and solo songs for our services. Geri Davidson also worked a year ahead on her song suggestions, and was therefore able to provide these as possibilities for inclusion in the Soul Matters monthly resource documents.

Since we began remote services, we have completely switched how we come up with music suggestions, since the choir repertoire is largely unable to be used. We have asked for suggestions, and come up with songs for soloists and small groups. These songs don't necessarily fit a theme, rather they are songs we want to be listening to right now, that strike chords of comfort and hope.

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

These recordings, found at [koober.uunashua.org](http://koober.uunashua.org), have proven helpful to the worship organizers during our remote services. They have been able to use recordings of past choir anthems as well as congregational singing to provide some of the music for the Zoom services.

### **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; this year we had a summer pool party at Jed Holland's house, and we held a potluck dinner before choir rehearsal on March 11th.

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. Since we had to stop choir rehearsals in mid-March, we have held Zoom meetings at the regularly scheduled Wednesday night choir rehearsal time so those who want to visit have a forum to do so.

The Music Team began writing Thank You notes to soloists who performed during the church year, with a goal of writing thank you cards to at least 50% of the musicians, to help people feel

our appreciation when they share their talents. We kept this up with over 95% completion until the remote services began, at which point we didn't have access to the cards and weren't able to have the team sign them. Since then, Music Team co-chair Kathy Grossman has been attempting to thank people who contribute musically.

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

We worked with the Community Interfaith Choir. The CIC sang at five events this year: September Nashua Multicultural Festival, October Crop Walk, November Interfaith Thanksgiving Service, January MLK Service, and online at the April Holocaust Memorial Service. We encouraged our choir members to sing at all the CIC events.

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

We continue to utilize 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. Geri has also provided thorough descriptions of her 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, invited children to participate in our Christmas Eve Choir, and invited youth to participate in other ways. We had one performance in October by the All Ages Choir of "Let It Shine".

### **Guest Musicians**

We had great participation by 58 guest musicians to provide special music in addition to the routinely offered music by our choirs. This year's guest musicians include many congregation members and friends. All of these musicians sang or played solos or in small groups totaling 31 performances. All of those contributions since mid-March have been done electronically, in either audio or video recordings that were submitted to the worship leaders or service technicians.

Vocal soloists and small group singers this year include Sarah Shor, Kathy Grossman, Brenna Woods, Tina Marshman, Ian Ouziel, Vengerflutta Smith, Ann Smith, Kathleen Griffis, Steve Hedges, Ben Atherton-Zeman, Harry Purkhiser, Lindsey Hedrick, Suellen Davidson, Jan Schwartz, Ruth Cannava, Darcy Hinkle, Dan Murphy, Emma Rearick, Zoë Vitalich, Andrew Holland, Martha Holland, Christopher Holland, Mary Holland, Rebecca Holland, and Jed Holland, and many of these sang multiple times.

Instrumentalists this year include pianists Jed Holland, Dan Murphy; organist Jed Holland; Hand drum players Ben Morton, Christopher Holland; bass player John Burkitt; guitarists Steve Hedges, Dan Murphy, Kathy Grossman; trombonists Anthony Iovino, Kathy Grossman, Jon Lasselle, Lindsey Sylvester; trumpet players Bruce Dye, Andy Capen, Bruce Cleaveland;

clarinetists Suellen Davidson, Burns Fisher, Lindsey Sylvester; and recorder player Mary Holland. Many of these musicians played multiple times.

Over the summer, more musicians played and sang, including Jed Holland, Johnna Ross, Charlotte Cardone, Brenna Woods, Kathy Grossman, Ben Morton, Darcy Hinkle, and Jess Woods, providing 6 special music selections at 6 of the 10 summer Sunday services.

In October, the Jena Jubilee Singers from Germany visited our church (hosted by Jed and many church members) and sang for us during an evening concert 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. The Music Team also hosted a reception for the singers and planned some activities for interested Jena Jubilee Singers and UU Choir members to join in on, including a hike at Andres Art Institute in Brookline, NH, where the Jena Jubilee Singers joined to give an impromptu concert to some hikers at the top of the mountain!

In May, we “hosted” online musical contributions from the singing group Emma’s Revolution, as well as Matt Meyer’s service. It was a joy to have them join us in Zoom and Meet!

### **Church goal of better communication**

Kathy continues writing up occasional 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 church website, the choir gmail group, and YouTube. We continue to post audio recordings of our services on the website.

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

Jed Holland continues as our year-round pianist/organist. He played for 9 summer services, Johnna Ross played for 1 service, and Jed played for every service of the church year except the one that Johnna handled!

### **Printed Music/Folders**

We are ordering music and maintaining folders for 40-45 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. Geri Davidson is working on a multi-year project of culling our music library. Sheet music that is out-of-print, for which we don’t have enough copies for our choir, is being donated to UU churches that have smaller choirs. So far, music has been sent to UU churches in Lynn, Bedford, and Littleton MA, Raleigh NC, Portland OR, and Eau Claire, WI. Music has also been given to Temple Beth Abraham here in Nashua.

### **Instrument Repairs/Maintenance**

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

In January and February, we had to stop using the organ due to sparks flying when it was running. Jed Holland, his brother Matt, his kids Michael and Mary, and Paul Lemaire all helped to disassemble the apparatus, transport the very heavy parts to be reconditioned, and then reassemble them. This saved the church a lot of money, and got our organ back in safe working condition. Thanks to all who helped with this effort!

### **Review of Music Budget 2019-2020**

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 Jenn Erdody and Julie Oliver as our choir director substitute once each. We continue to have a large expense of printed sheet music for the choir. We ordered 10 new songs for the choir, as well as additional copies as needed of music we already own. We offered financial assistance to UUCN members to cover their dues for the Community Interfaith Choir.

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

Our main focus now is to continue to provide some sort of music for the remote church services during the main church year.

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

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

To interact with the minister, the DFF, the ministerial intern, and the worship associates to continue to bring meaningful music to our congregation.