

Intern's Annual Report: UU Church of Nashua, Ben Atherton-Zeman

My second year of internship was even better than the first! Even though it was mostly virtual, I have still felt supported, taught, nurtured and welcomed by the UUCN community. I have still been guided by staff, by congregational leaders and by my hard working Intern Committee. Although I will continue to learn, my overall goal to learn the skills needed to become a parish minister has been met. More specifically, I was found to be proficient in the seven areas required by the UUA Ministerial Fellowship Committee. With plenty of support from UU Nashua staff and congregation, I passed the MFC when I saw them this past December.

- 1. Worship:** I have continued to give monthly sermons and participated in the Worship Team for many others. My comfort with the “mechanics” of designing worship services improved as I gained more practice and confidence. The worship services I led last year include:
 - July 12, 2020: Social Distancing and Consent
 - August 9: Peace and Nuclear Disarmament
 - October 25: Active Listening
 - November 8: Healing the Nation
 - December 27: When bad years happen to good people
 - January 17, 2021: Imagining with the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
 - February 21: White Supremacy Teach-In
 - April 11: From Chrysalis to Butterfly
- 2. Pastoral Care and Presence:** I have continued my almost-daily web of Sabbath practices, and got to facilitate the Pastoral Care Associates Team this past year. I've continued pastoral counseling with several members of the congregation.
- 3. Spiritual Development for Self and Others:** I have participated in more Wonder Box activities during worship services, and was one of the adult facilitators of our Coming of Age program for our youth, along with the youth of our sister church in Manchester. I co-led an adult Coming of Age series of classes as well. Graduates of both youth and adult classes have given (and will give) their Faith Statements during worship services in front of the congregation. The monthly Men and Masculinities group has come to an end, with many male-identified participants eager for a men's Covenant Group this Fall. Along with Rev. Allison, I facilitated many “Eat/Share/Learn” sessions about a wide variety of topics: UU history, theology, ethics, etc.
- 4. Social Justice:** Along with Peggy and Charlotte Cardone, once again I co-coordinated the church's participation in this year's Hunger Walk, for which we raised over \$3500 and had a large turnout even though it was virtual.
- 5. Administration:** I continued to learn Google Docs, Breeze, Trello, WordPress and Instagram, but most of my learning was the Zoom platform. I participated in Board planning meetings and Board meetings, the Music Team and weekly staff meetings. I have been mentored in church administration by Rev. Allison, Sadie, Sherri, Jed, Ericka, both Treasurers and many others.
- 6. Larger UU Faith:** I participated in my first (online) General Assembly as a voting delegate, and am eager for the next one in just a few weeks. I continue to participate in the Unitarian Universalist Minister's Association Northern New England activities, as well as a Ministerial Formation Network group for divinity school students with disabilities. I am a member of many Facebook groups for UU ministers, and fill leadership roles in some of those groups. I take some leadership in the Canadian nonprofit “Mirth and Dignity,” which runs the 80,000-member “Unitarian Universalist Hysterical Society” Facebook group.
- 7. Leads the Faith into the Future:** I have increased the church's Facebook presence, which has resulted in more visitors to the church. I make regular posts on Twitter and am learning to do so on Instagram.



My two years of internship are culminating in my ordination this Sunday by this congregation! I thank you all for teaching me, loving me, challenging me and trusting that I can be a good minister. Biggest thanks to my coworkers on staff, especially the amazing, kind, super-smart, funny and thoughtful Rev. Allison.