

Worship Associates Annual Report 2021-2022

Worship Associates: Andy Capen, Charlotte Cardone, Bob Coulter, Eileen Herring, Pat Ladew, Carl Phillips, Emma Rearick, Vengerflutta Smith, Robin Trudel

The Worship Associates met virtually monthly with Rev. Allison Palm, Director of Faith Formation Sadie Kahn-Greene (before and after her sabbatical) and Ministerial Intern Caro Barschow during 2021-2022 to plan Sunday morning services, suggest and review changes and additions to the standard order of service, and share feedback about the services. This year we regularly reviewed how well we transitioned from virtual worship services to multiplatform services. Feedback from this group was shared with the tech team to further improve our multiplatform worship.

Once again this year, our worship services were guided by monthly themes from Soul Matters. Our themes for this year were:

September: Embracing Possibility
October: Cultivating Relationship
November: Holding History
December: Opening to Joy
January: Living with Intention
February: Widening the Circle
March: Renewing Faith
April: Awakening
May: Nurturing Beauty
June: Celebrating Blessings

Each month, we begin our meeting by reflecting on the services that have taken place since the last time we met and offering feedback. Then, the Worship Associates brainstorm ideas for the worship services based on the themes. From those brainstormed suggestions, potential worship services are discussed and chosen, and Worship Associates volunteered to participate, find readings and chalice lightings, and sometimes even lead the service.

We extended our Christmas Eve services to FOUR services, with options for outdoors, indoors and online, so that more people could enjoy this tradition. We also had several special services: one led by a guest preacher, three Worship Associate led services; and two Switch It Up Sunday workshops. We also took advantage of our virtual format to use a recorded service from the UUA. We have become more adept at integrating videos from the UUA as part of our services. In March, we did a pulpit exchange with the Manchester and Milford UU Churches.

For our virtual services we continued to rely on our fabulous Wonderbot (many thanks to Frank Grossman!); and, as we transitioned to our multiplatform approach, we returned to a box for our Wonderbox portion of the service. We were able to engage congregants, children, and youth in making videos and audio recordings for the services.

Worship Associates also assisted Rev. Allison on occasion in leading a small group with members and friends at the Huntington once a month. Typically, these groups were focused on the theme of the month.

This year, all of our summer services will be multiplatform. We think you'll be delighted with who is leading worship and what they have planned. Rev. Allison led a Summer Worship Workshop in April and May for those who are leading summer worship to take them through the planning and sermon writing process.

Thanks to the Worship Associates, Tech Team, Music Team and our wonderful staff, we have successfully transitioned from 100% Zoom based services to our current multiplatform worship experience.