

## **President's Report**

### **Unitarian Universalist Church of Nashua**

**June 5, 2022**

Good afternoon to all of you both online and in person. I won't lie to you. After teaching through the majority of this pandemic, I was feeling pretty nervous about, yet again, another hybrid option. The idea of this meeting being both in person and online made (still makes!) me very nervous. There feels like there is so much room for error and that my shortfalls and mishaps will come out on top. However, when I slow my thinking down and look to all of you. I don't feel that anymore. I cannot feel that. The reason for this is because of this community that we have worked so hard to create and continue to build upon. I also pause to think of just how flexible and understanding this community is. This year, we have navigated through a continuation of a pandemic with ups and downs in numbers, COVID policy changes that seem to change as often as the weather, sabbaticals, parental leaves, and plans that change at the slightest cold symptom. Yet each and every time these things pop up, we welcome the change, support those in need, and go with the flow. I am so proud to be a part of you all.

### **Sub Committee Updates**

Over the past two years, our Board has been split up into two different subcommittees. We have half of the Board dedicated to our Monitoring subcommittee and the other half to our Endowment subcommittee. Your Board has been hard at work and I am excited to share with you some of the updates from this past year.

### **Monitoring**

The members of our monitoring subcommittee are Lindsey Hedrick, Jodie Holway, Cecile Bonvoulior, and Andy Capen. Over the course of the past two years, they have dedicated their time to looking into our Board policies to make sure we are following them correctly and examining Rev. Allison's limitations. One of the things we realized when we decided to make this goal was that we do a great job of figuring out how to keep things under control but need to work on monitoring when policies or limitations are no longer serving us. In this past year, this dedicated committee spent time poring over Allison's limitations and seeing where things could be scaled back and where there needed to be more attention to detail. This work was tedious and challenging but the subcommittee brought up powerful points of discussion to make sure that Rev. Allison can do her job smoothly.

One of the larger focal areas of the limitations was around finances. We wanted to make sure that we were not limiting Allison so much that it made her day-to-day tasks more challenging given our switch to Policy Based Governance in these previous years. As a result of this monitoring process, we have found that our next goal will focus on creating a job description. Rev. Allison has a letter of call with job expectations in it but there is no formal job description. Some of the limitations we looked at would be better suited in this format. We know there are limitations that are there for a reason and we

do not want to dismiss them but found the wording of an expectation as a limitation to be misplaced. We are hopeful that this will solve some confusing issues that came up in limitations and make Rev. Allison's job more defined.

## **Endowment**

Now, onto the Endowment committee. Our Endowment committee is made up of Burns Fisher, Roy Goodman, Lindsey Sylvester and Victoria Agnew. This task has been monumental to say the least and while it is not quite at the end of the line, we are certainly seeing the finish line in front of us. This group has been tasked with looking at our Endowment as a whole and seeing what it is that we do with it. Some questions that were asked included how does our endowment serve us when working towards our mission, values and ends? How is our money invested to serve our beloved community? If we are not finding answers to this question, then what is the reason and how can we change it so that our questions have answers that are clear.

Currently, our Endowment is used for our operational budget. Each year, we pull a small percentage out to supplement our budget which you heard about in Rev. Allison's budget presentation. Our money is put into different investments that are considered "socially responsible", but that definition can be determined differently depending on who you are talking to. Our Endowment committee did an incredible job looking into different avenues so that our definition of "socially responsible" was the one that our Endowment will be invested in.

The Endowment committee did some research on the UUA's Common Endowment Fund or CEF. They reached out to several different congregations of similar size to ours, and similar endowment size to ours to find out more information. Our Endowment committee had several meetings with the CEF, other churches, and our own Invested Funds committee to think of questions, pros, cons, and pathways to take some next steps in potentially moving our Endowment. While this is a Board vote, we want to also be transparent in the work we have been doing. As of right now, no such vote has been had as we are currently trying to focus on creating a policy around our Endowment. This policy will focus on how we will use our Endowment, how it will be invested, and ways to take money out and put money into it. This policy has been drafted and edited several times by the Endowment committee, looked at by our IFC and brought to the Board. We have not voted on this yet as we still feel it needed some more editing around our restricted funds but are hopeful to vote on this policy in our June meeting.

I am so appreciative of all the hard work our Endowment committee has accomplished. This is a long overdue task and they have taken it on with care, thoughtfulness, and clear intention. We all want what is best for this church and this interconnected web of people. If we have the ability to help, then let's.

## **Thank you volunteers/Board**

Now, I want to move onto some thank yous. I can stand up here all day and thank all sorts of people, including everyone in this meeting both online and in person for how much you all dedicate to this church. I wouldn't be surprised to see one of those hooks pulling me off stage at an award ceremony. But when I think about the amount of work that the Board has been doing over the course of these last few years, I would be remised to not name them all individually and thank them. Lindsey H., Jodie, Lindsey S., Victoria, Roy, Burns, Cecile and Andy. You all have no idea how incredible you truly are.

You are some of the most dedicated and hard-working people I have ever come to know. I have seen and learned so much from you over these last 2 years. Our conversations together have produced some great work and made affective change. These meetings are fun to attend and feel meaningful. I cannot wait to continue to work with those of you who are staying on and to those who are leaving us this year, you will be missed, but your work is remembered as being effective in moving us forward.

### **Thank you staff**

Next, I want to thank our incredible staff. Rev. Allison, Sadie, Jed, Ericka and Caro. While we are a beloved community, we are who we are because of you. Your dedication, your hours, the meetings you sit in, the plans you draft to keep us safe and connected, your care. Just you. You all are why we are here. You all are how we are able to move forward in the ways that we have. Our church has remained connected because of all that you do. I could never put into words what your work has meant to me personally and I do not dare try to encapsulate it for the congregation but I feel confident in being one of a sea of thank yous that you all deserve. You have made this place our safe space in this pandemic and continue to welcome those in while being guided by our readiness to do so. There is no other team quite like you all. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for who you are and what you bring to this community.

### **Thank you congregation**

Finally, I want to say thank you to this congregation. You are home. We are each other's mirrors. I see in you all that I hope to be as a leader, a member of this community, and as a person. Each of you inspires inside of me the strength to move on, move forward and keep fighting the fights presented to us with love. This is a community that loves one another, argues with one another, word smith's one another's documents, but most importantly is here for one another. No matter how long you have been gone or even if you haven't quite landed here yet. This community shows up loud, proud, and willing.

### **Ending**

I want to end with this. A beautiful poem written by Amanda Gorman about starting a new year ready to move forward by learning from what has helped us grow in this past year.

"May this be the day

We come together.

Mourning, we come to mend,

Withered, we come to weather,

Torn, we come to tend,

Battered, we come to better.

Tethered by this year of yearning,

We are learning

That though we weren't ready for this,

We have been readied by it.

We steadily vow that no matter

How we are weighed down,

We must always pave a way forward.

This hope is our door, our portal.

Even if we never get back to normal,

Someday we can venture beyond it,

To leave the known and take the first steps.

So let us not return to what was normal,

But reach toward what is next." – Amanda Gorman