

## Minister's Report 2024-2025

### UU Church of Nashua, NH - Rev. Allison Palm

This report marks 10 years of shared ministry together, and what a year it has been. If I were going to use one word to sum up this year, it would be “boxes.” We had exactly one service in our sanctuary this year before we moved out to prepare for construction. Since then, we have been an itinerant church, with summer services at Temple Beth Abraham, church year services at Rivier University, and Christmas Eve at Alpine Grove. Our staff and volunteers have packed and unpacked and repacked boxes over and over again. We have not always remembered everything, but we have always made it work.

I am so proud of the all the ways this congregation has shown up this year. You have adapted joyfully to being out of our building, you have waited patiently as construction has been delayed again and again, and you have held each other with so much love in this tumultuous political moment. Even as we have been away from our church home, you have created home wherever we have been, welcoming newcomers with open arms and reminding us that our congregation is so much more than our building.

At the same time, so many of you have invested yourselves in this big bold project of making our building more welcoming, accessible, and sustainable. In September, when we realized we were short on funds to complete the full vision for our building, you rallied and we raised \$445,000 in our Window of Opportunity Campaign. This unlocked a challenge gift that made it possible to replace every single window in the Parish House and White Wing building. This was on top of the already generous \$2.3 million we had already raised in 2023. In addition to fully funding our project, you have given your time in clearing out our building last summer, moving and packing boxes over and over again, and offering opinions and insight as we move through the many decisions that are a part of this type of project. This really is an all hands on deck endeavor, and you have fully taken on that challenge. I am so grateful.

In the midst of all the boxes, we have continued to live out our mission well this year, in a world that needs that mission now more than ever. In the next few pages, I will share some of the highlights of how we have been working towards each of our Ends Statements this year. This report won't capture everything, but I hope it offers a snapshot of our year.

#### Highlights by Ends Statement

For each of our Ends, I wanted to share just a couple of the things we've been up to this year. There is a lot that is not included here, but much of that can be found in other reports. The Ends statements are in italics.

*We create brave space for all ages where we:*

*Know our authentic Unitarian Universalist faith identity, teach it to our children, share it with others, and live it in the world.*

- We held an **Election Day Camp** for elementary and middle schoolers, where we talked about democracy as part of our faith (and had a lot of fun together!).
- We created our **own set of Monthly Themes** this year, shaping our services and faith formation programming for the year.

- Our **Sunday morning Faith Formation programs** followed our monthly themes again this year, with workshops for elementary ages and a Teens and Tweens group. We had the **highest average attendance** we have had since 2018 for these programs, with 74 children and teens involved over the course of the year.

*Develop meaningful spiritual practices that connect us to wonder.*

- We have continued to hold **high quality multiplatform services every Sunday**, navigating new tech systems in each of our borrowed homes.
- The Music Team worked hard to expand their cadre of **soloists and small group participants**, and offered music from a wide variety of performers this year.
- We had **five services led by various groups in the congregation** this year: Worship Associates, Pastoral Care Associates, Board of Trustees, Welcoming Congregation Working Group and Green Sanctuary Working Group.

*Ask for and receive care, support, and connection in times of struggle, joy, and transition.*

- Our Pastoral Care Associates **led a Sunday service in March** about accompanying one another through the chaos of life.
- Our monthly drop-in **Caregivers Support Group** and **Grief Group** both met all year. We also offered pastoral support with **one-time groups** on getting through the election and parenting.
- We offered **many opportunities for connection** throughout the year, including Circle Dinners/Kids Movie Night, Game Night, a summer Camping Trip with over 50 participants, summer playground meet ups, and a Carol Sing.

*Grow leaders who serve the needs of our congregation and our community with faith, resilience, and courage.*

- We piloted “**Smooth Sunday Teams**” over the summer and during this last church year, combining all the roles of hosting the Sunday Service into one team. We had 4 teams over the summer and 6 during the regular church year. During the church year they each took on 6-7 services over the 10 months. The teams have made Sunday mornings run so well!
- 20 people attended a **1-1 Training** led by the Granite State Organizing Project in February. They set a goal to each have 5 1-1 conversation with others in the congregation between February and June.

*Steward our congregational community with our time, talent, and money.*

- In September, we **raised \$445,000 for our Window of Opportunity Campaign**, allowing us to close the gap in funding for our construction project, and fulfill our full Visionary plan.
- Despite being out of our building and in the middle of construction, we had a **solidly successful Auction and Stewardship Campaign**.
- Being out of the building has required **so many volunteers** to make everything keep running – this includes Smooth Sunday Teams, tech volunteers learning new systems, people moving boxes to and from the church, folks who cleaned out the church last summer, and more.

*Participate actively in our larger Unitarian Universalist community.*

- Eleven people attended the virtual **UUA General Assembly** last year, and we have 17 signed up to be in person in Baltimore for General Assembly this year.
- Our Campbell Study Group proposed a **workshop for General Assembly** on our work the Campbell family, which was accepted. They worked hard to put together a video workshop which will be included in the GA library.

*Understand systems of oppression and privilege and work to dismantle them within ourselves, our congregation, our community, and the larger world.*

- The Racial Justice Working Group held their first annual **Campbell Day of Action** on March 16, honoring Rev. Jeffrey Campbell, Marguerite Campbell Davis and Lillian Campbell with a day of remembrance and action. There were three workshops after the service, and opportunities to contact legislators.
- The Welcoming Congregation Working Group partnered with folks from UU Concord to host the **Building Beloved Community Beyond the Binary** conference in April, one of many satellite sites for this hybrid conference for trans and nonbinary folks and their allies. Over 50 people from across the state attended.

*Work in deep partnership to advance justice and heal our community and our world.*

- We have continued and deepened our partnership with the Granite State Organizing Project. In the fall, we worked with them and two other faith communities to do **Get Out the Vote canvassing in the French Hill neighborhood**. This spring we have had more folks than ever attending regular chapter meetings, working on **immigration issues and affordable housing**.
- We continue to be active with the **New Hampshire Community Bail Fund**, started by several members from UU Nashua and hosted by the UU Action Network, which has bailed out 532 people during this church year and a total of 1271 since the fund began in 2019.
- Our Ministerial Intern, Erin Scott, has helped to organizing a **Green Sanctuary Working Group** to get us more involved with environmental justice work.

## **What's Next**

We will be saying goodbye to our Ministerial Intern, Erin Scott on June 15. We are grateful for all that she has brought to the congregation over the last two year and wish her all the best on her ministry moving forwards! We will have a new intern starting in August who will be with us for two years. Michael Packard is a UU from Framingham, MA, who comes to us with a degree from Andover Newton Theological School and experience in religious education.

We will be completing nearly all of our construction project this summer, and should be back in our sanctuary in September. I know we are all eager to be back and it will also be an adjustment to be in our new space. I hope our new space offers us new ways to live in to our mission and ends, offering a place of wonder and welcome and a voice for justice in Nashua in the coming year.

## **Gratitude**

Of course, I cannot end my report without some gratitude. I want to offer a huge thank you to our staff, who give so much time and dedication: Lori Bonnette, Emma Goyette, Jed Holland, Sadie Kahn-Greene, Ericka LaValley, Sam Murray, Ramon Rivera, and Erin Scott. They consistently go above and beyond, pouring their hearts into this work and this community, and I am filled with gratitude for our shared ministry. I am especially grateful this year for their flexibility and willingness to adapt to whatever comes our way.

Thank you to our Board of Trustees: I am consistently in awe of their steady leadership, and the many gifts they offer to our community. Last summer they dropped everything multiple times for special meetings as we navigated the contract decisions and negotiations with our construction company, and all the decisions around our extra fundraising. They have also been a deep source of support for me and our staff in this complicated year.

And finally, a big thank you to all of you who make this congregation continue with your time, talents and money. We exist and are able to further our mission both inside and outside these walls because of you. Thank you. You are a really amazing group of individuals and a beautiful community, and I am so grateful for the ways you care for one another and for our world.

I look forward to our continued shared ministry in the coming year!

In faith,  
Rev. Allison Palm