

Good afternoon,

My name is Lindsey Hedrick and I am grateful to be the President of the Congregation.

I want to begin by first thanking all the members of the Board of Trustees for their time and dedication:

Burns Fisher, Vice President
Emma Rearick, Treasurer
Karen Murray, Clerk
Victoria Agnew
Amanda Banner
Cecile Bonvouloir
Paul Cardone
Robin Trudel

Specifically, a large thank you to both Victoria Agnew and Burns Fisher who will complete their tenure on the board this year. Victoria has served as a member at large for six years. Burns served for a member at large for four years, and then as vice president for the past two years. I am grateful for the leadership that they each have provided over the past six years.

Next, I want to acknowledge that I had a difficult time writing this report this year. Last year, by the time I sat down to write my report, I felt like I already knew what I was going to say. We had just come off the heels of a successful capital campaign, and were preparing to break ground on our construction project which will transform our building to be more energy efficient, more accessible, and more welcoming. Last year's annual meeting felt like the end of a chapter. I stand in front of you now feeling very much mid-chapter. We're not back in our building yet, but the construction is progressing along. And when I think of all that we've accomplished over the past year, it has been no less busy than any previous year.

It was nearly one year ago that we said good bye to our building. Reverend Allison even let us write on the walls in marker. Then we packed up and set off on our nomadic journey. While on our mobile church adventure, we are fortunate to have the relationships that we do within our Nashua community. We spent last summer at Temple Beth Abraham, just a few blocks from our own building. In addition to their hospitality, we enjoyed their air conditioning and ample parking. And then in September we transitioned to the Rivier campus. Rivier University has been nothing short of welcoming and accommodating to us as we've made this building our temporary home for the past nine months.

In September, the Board of Trustees approached the congregation with a Window of Opportunity challenge. As preparations for construction began, a re-costing activity revealed that our 2022 estimates were short of the 2024 reality by 17%. This led to a \$400,000 deficit. A generous donor agreed to fund to replace all of the windows in the Parish House and White Wing building (projects not in scope at the time), if we could meet our \$400,000 goal. I want to express that the Board talked at length about how to approach the congregation with this opportunity. Or even IF we should bring it to you at all. This was a big ask. And when I stood in front of you that Sunday to admit that we were short of the vision we worked so hard on the year earlier and ask you to consider donating more, I think it was the most nervous I had ever been in front of this group. The result was that we surpassed our goal of \$400,000. Again you gave generously, and we will have new windows in the Parish House and White Wing. Truly amazing.

After moving past this Window of Opportunity, the Board focused on a bunch of fine tuning throughout the year. We revamped the survey that we use to conduct Reverend Allison's annual ministerial review. Depending on which teams or committees you participate on, some of you were asked to complete this survey. This years' updated survey took on a much more user friendly format, and we're optimistic that the qualitative data we gather from it will provide a solid framework for the Board's ministerial review of Reverend Allison each year moving forward.

The Board also reviewed how we approach monitoring our finances. After all of the work we've spent updating our governing policies for the past several years, it was time we took a wholistic approach to how the board reviews and monitors the financial matters of the church. Are we doing what we say we're going to do? Do the checks and balances we have in place make sense? As a result of this work, we're proposing changes to the Financial Records Review Committee to bring it more in line with how the board and congregation are currently operating. And, that means we get to discuss some Bylaws changes. Like I said, lots of fine tuning this year.

One additional piece that the Board has been working on this year is the clean up of a restricted fund in the endowment. In case you're not familiar with it, a restricted fund in our endowment is just that – it is money that has been donated to the UU Church of Nashua for a specific purpose. We have a handful of these restricted funds in our endowment, and as time goes on and the mission and operations of the church evolve, these restricted funds can in some ways lose the impact they were once intended to have. One example of this is the Deschamps fund. I have emails as far back as 2016 anecdotally citing that this was set up to assist with visits to a local prison. And for awhile now, we haven't had a way to put this money to good use within UU Nashua. The Board and Invested Funds Committee have agreed it does not fit within our current mission. And rather than just sit on this money and do nothing with it, we chose to find an organization that fits within the restrictions on the account and gift them this money. It was at this point, that Paul Introcaso suggested we look into the Oh So Beautiful Womens Reentry Initiative which is an organization that works to transform the lives of incarcerated woman & create a future where they are valued, celebrated, & given the opportunity to thrive. But before moving forward with that, the Board asked Reverend Allison to do one final exhaustive search in regards to when and why this restricted fund was created.

This is where it got interesting.

In the 1984-85 minutes, Reverend Allison found a report showing that the Deschamps fund was actually intended to be used for "emotionally disturbed children," and the fund created "for our program at the N.H. Hospital, and always to be used for some mental health cause" was the Margolin fund. It seems that over the years, the names and intentions of these funds had become muddled. Back in 1984/85 each of these funds had \$1,000 in them. The present day Deschamp's fund had over \$11,000 in it. As it was no longer clear if this money we've been calling the Deschamps fund was intended for mental health causes and prison work, or to benefit emotionally disturbed children, the Board voted to split this fund between two worthy causes. UU Nashua donated \$5,659 to Oh So Beautiful Womens Reentry Initiative, and another \$5,659 was donated to the Children's Law Center of NH who provides integrated civil legal representation and social services advocacy to at-risk children. For at least a decade it's been suggested that the money in this restricted fund be given to a group who can use it, and I'm so glad this Board was able to see this through to fruition. This money will do so much more good through these organizations

that it was just sitting unable to be used within our restricted endowment.

Okay, let's take an abrupt transition and talk about the logistics of this year. And yes, logistics is really an operational thing, and the Board is not supposed to get into the weeds of operations. And yet, I cannot reflect about how this year has gone without talking about logistics. Because while all of us get to experience that Sunday magic that happens between 10am-noon, there is a whole lot of unmagical things that happen before and after that.

1. Technology – Because I consider myself not a very tech-y person, I can't actually tell you what the technology is, and I won't embarrass myself by trying to pretend that I do. But think Zoom, and microphones, and camera angles. All of these things had to be planned for, first at Temple Beth Abraham, and then again here at Rivier University.
2. Equipment – Every Sunday morning, the staff and volunteers meet at our building to load up their cars, minivans, and SUVs with all of our equipment. And the equipment is not just what you see in this room. It's also the tables for the lobby, and the magnetic building blocks for the childrens room, and art supplies for the workshops.
3. Snacks – Our Smooth Sunday teams have become just that. These are the people who show up early on a Sunday morning to make sure that when the service ends, a beautiful array of snacks has just suddenly arranged itself on a table, and the coffee is ready. And after we've all left, they sweep up all of the crumbs, and make it look like we were never here.

While we get to sit here in these extra comfortable chairs and enjoy the Sunday magic, there are so many unmagical, logistical things that happen on a Sunday morning. There could have been so many speedbumps and obstacles in our year of mobile church, but the staff and volunteers manage to pull everything together week after week. These people deserve to be recognized. If you've had a hand in setting up or breaking down for a Sunday service, can you please rise? Thank you for making this happen so seamlessly for the rest of us.

And finally, what surprises me most of all during the time that we've been out of our building, is the new faces that have shown up. I'm talking about the people who "found" us while we've been here. If we're attracting new people to this community while we're not even in our typical location, that says something, right? To me, that right there tells you everything you need to know about how the UU Church of Nashua is doing. We're not just "getting by." We're doing it. We're doing it well.

In summary, as I look back on our maybe not quite complete chapter, it's been a pretty good chapter regardless. And upon reflection of the highlights of the past year, I felt a common theme. It's not about what we have. It's not about where we are. It's about who we are. It's about the community. It's about each one of us doing what we can to create something bigger than ourselves. And I am eager to see what we can create together moving forward.

Respectfully submitted,
Lindsey Hedrick
President