

Presidents Report, Unitarian Universalist Church of Nashua, 2026

Good afternoon again, everyone.

My name is Lindsey Hedrick, and my pronouns are they/them. This is the last year of my term and I can't tell you how honored I've been to serve as President of this congregation. As I've done a lot of reflecting recently about my three years as President, I'd like to start by reminding you of where we were when my term began. SO much has happened.

Three years ago, we had just locked in the commitments for over \$2.3 million dollars which would be collected to fund our capital campaign. We had not yet signed the contract with Hutter, the construction company that we would work with to deliver our vision for our campus. The chancel stood about 18 inches higher where I'm currently standing. The sanctuary was cold in the winter and hot in the summer. And there was a swimming pool, right over here between the sanctuary and the dining room.

We spent over a year of Sunday morning services out of our building due to construction. This began with a summer at Temple Beth Abraham, and then another 12 months of Sunday mornings at Rivier University. We returned here to our campus last fall, where we then held an open house and building re-dedication to celebrate being back in our building, as well as acknowledging Reverend Allison for the 10 years she has spent as the minister here at UU Nashua.

During the past three years, we've had two ministerial interns. Sámhna Scott was with us for two years, and we just recently ordained her in a joint ceremony with the Groton UU church. And Michael Packard has been with us for the past year, and will continue with us into next year.

And in between all of the planning and fundraising, and planning and construction....and planning and more fundraising and more construction, we still managed to grow and thrive as a church. We had child dedications and memorial services, camping trips and OWL classes, and countless powerful Sunday morning worship services. This congregations ability to simultaneously run a large capital campaign and construction project AND sustain a community with quality faith formation and worship experiences, regardless of whether or not we are in our building, is nothing less than amazing. In short, it's been a busy three years. And it has been no less busy at the board level.

From a board perspective, I've noticed two overarching themes to the past three years: the cemetery and finances. There's a joke somewhere in there about death and taxes, but I couldn't quite pin it down in time for this meeting. One, we've focused on our relationship with the Cemetery's Board of Trustees. Our two organizations are more in step now than they have ever been before, and I'm excited to see where we go from here. And two, we looked at many of our financial policies and monitoring tools . This has involved reviewing Rev Allison's Letter of Call, and the Ministerial Review we conduct of her each January as well as creating a job description for her. We have also expanded the roll of the treasurer on the board, and adjusted the structure of the Financial Records Review Committee. This will allow the board a more direct connection with the church's finances and included a Bylaws revision last year.

And this past year has been a lot of adjusting back into being in our building. With a major capital campaign largely in our rearview mirror, the board did a lot of housekeeping this year. It's possible I willed that into existence knowing that my term was concluding, but in many ways it felt like the board was tying up a few loose ends and sort of filling in some groundwork. I think this new group of boarders is well poised to bring us into our next 200 years.

And as it always goes, the work isn't done, right? Over the coming years, I expect the relationship to continue to evolve between the church board and the cemetery board. And the board has some figuring out to do in terms of how it communicates with the congregation. In this post-pandemic world, things have changed. Systems that once worked, now don't work quite as well. And I see that as an opportunity for the board to reassess what the needs and wants of the congregation are, and then to adapt accordingly.

Before I wrap things up, I want to express my gratitude.

First, I want to begin by thanking all of the members of this year's Board of Trustees for their time, dedication, and service. I appreciate the attentiveness and care that you've brought to our discussions; and I know that we have learned a lot from each other over the past year.

Emma Rearick, Vice President

Amanda Banner, Treasurer

Karen Murray, Clerk

Rob Bate

Paul Cardone

Julia Firmbach

Dave Hudson

Robin Trudel

Second, I want to thank the staff here at UU Nashua. I am biased, but I remain convinced that we have the best staff. They are endlessly devoted to this congregation, and we are all the better for it. I am grateful for all of the ways that they have supported me during my time on the board. In particular, thank you to Ericka for answering all of my text messages and emails regardless of how ridiculous they were. And thank you to Reverend Allison for all of the meetings where you held space for me and offered support during the times when I wasn't sure what the path forward looked like.

Next, there are many people in this room who cared for my children while I attended meetings and worked on other Board business. Thank you. It takes a village, and I appreciate having you as part of mine.

Lastly, I want to thank my wife, Dana, for her support and encouragement through nearly a decade of Board meetings, Board prep meetings, and countless additional meetings. I could not have done everything I did, and for so long, without her backing me up.

I have served on the board for nine years. And during that time, I've learned so much about this church and our congregation. But more than that, I've learned a lot about myself. You all have taught me. Helped me to see my strengths. Helped me to see my....less than strengths. And shown me how in this community, with all of our different backgrounds, personalities, strengths and flaws, we can lift each other up. When I think about this congregation, when I think about us - I see a group of wonderful, caring, imperfect people. And I am humbled and grateful to be a part of that. You all have pushed me, supported me, questioned me, and taught me. At times, there were more growth opportunities than I wanted, but overall, this has been a great journey. May we continue to learn and grow together.

Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,
Lindsey Hedrick, President