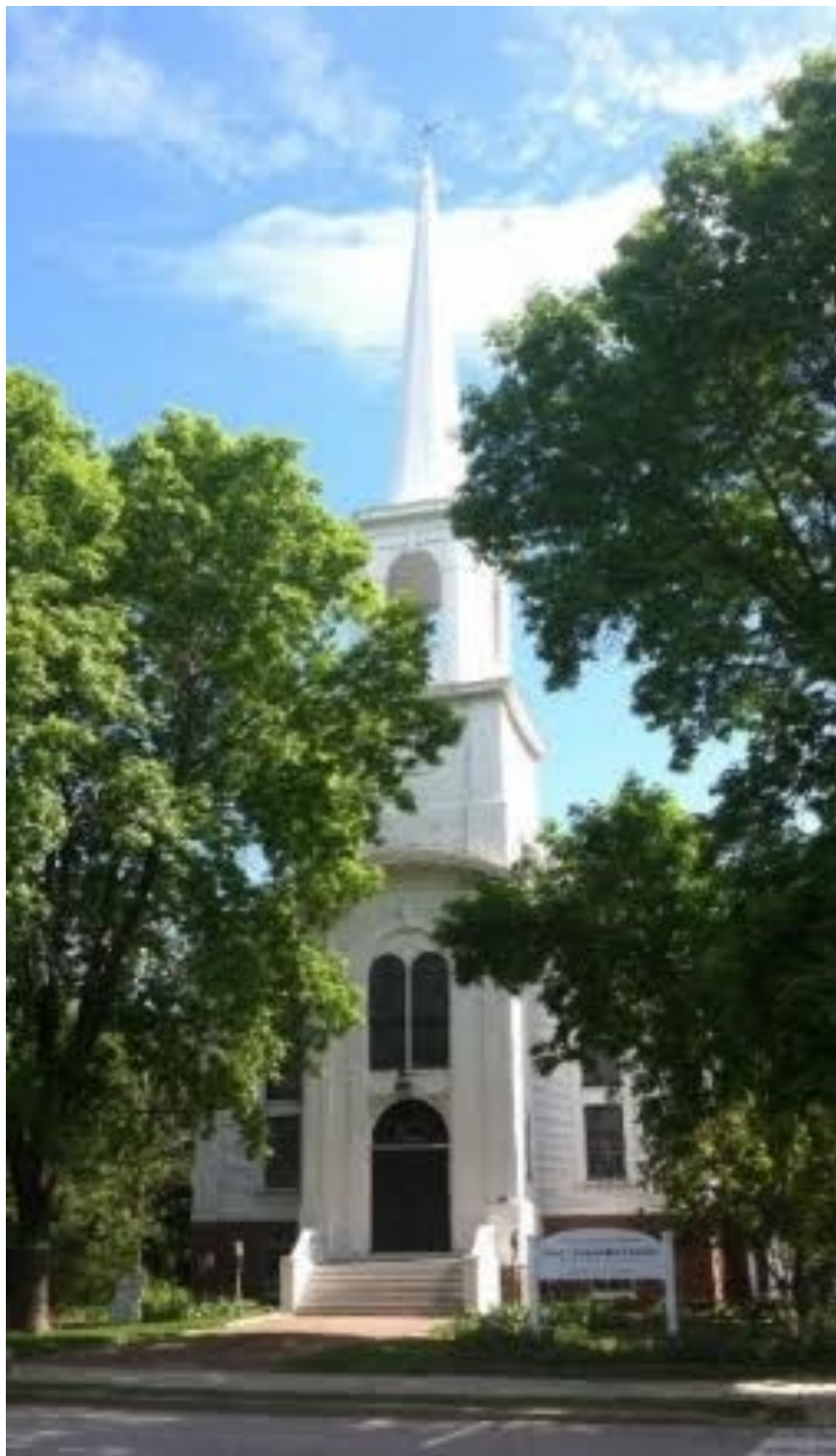


# FIRST UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF YARMOUTH



## INSIDE

Reports From Our:

Minister

President

Stewardship  
Committee

Treasurer

Nominating  
Committee

Buildings & Grounds  
Committee

Member Services  
Committee

Program Assistant

Worship Program

Faith-In-Action  
Program

Caring Connection

Healthy  
Congregations Team

Admin Assistant

# Annual Report 2015-2016

First Universalist Church of Yarmouth  
97 Main Street  
Yarmouth, ME 04096

phone: 207-846-4148  
email: [office@uuyarmouth.org](mailto:office@uuyarmouth.org)  
website: [www.uuyarmouth.org](http://www.uuyarmouth.org)

## OUR MISSION STATEMENT

*Connected by Unitarian Universalist principles,  
We join hands in open-minded and caring community  
To support spiritual exploration and growth,  
To celebrate and honor life's journey,  
And to inspire engagement in an evolving world.*

## STAFF

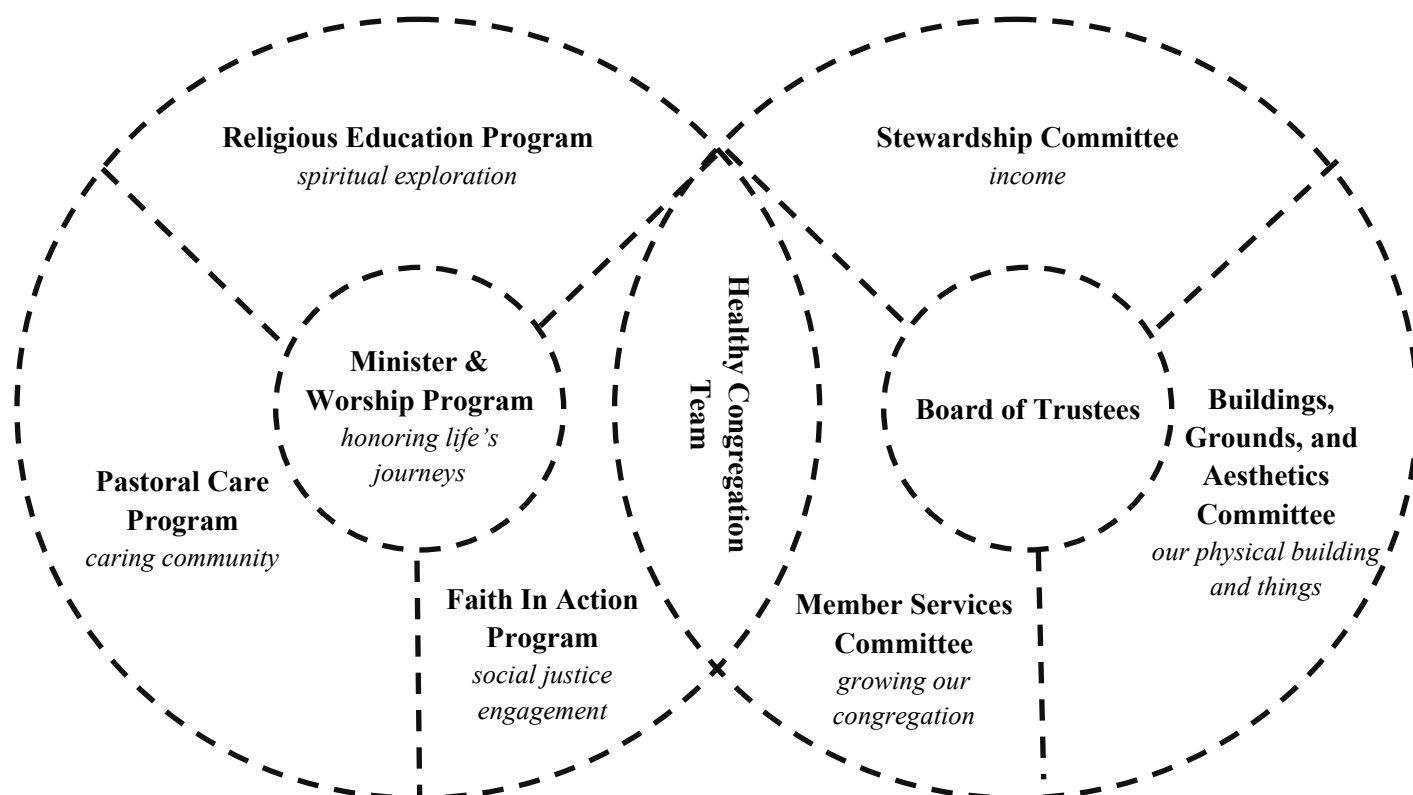
Rev. Jennifer Emrich.....Minister  
Claudia Frost.....Interim Music Director  
Gwen Matthews.....Program Assistant  
Jose Linares.....Sexton

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES 2016-2016

Ruth White, President  
Nancy Dix, Vice President  
Leslie Livingston, Treasurer  
Joanna Landsman, Clerk  
Charlie Horstmann  
Ron Robillard  
Rebecca Rundquist  
Joan Guild  
Tamara Pride  
Toby Ansfield

We are a Welcoming Congregation.

## The Structure That Serves Our Mission Looks Like:



Program leadership is guided by the Minister and staff.

Administrative leadership is guided by the Board.

Our congregation is mission driven.

## Minister's Report



In this, the 9th year of our shared Unitarian Universalist ministry, I have had the privilege of living out a profound change in the culture of this church. Much to my personal and professional delight, I have found myself able to spend as much time outside of our walls as I spend in them, in other words, we have opened our literal and metaphorical doors to the outside world and we are actively pursuing growth and transformation. I have spent 3 Sundays each month here with you at First U, and the 4th Sunday of each month facilitating Board retreats and/or Partner Church start-ups or refreshes in other UU congregations. Each time I work with one of our associate congregations I experience a profound sense of affirmation at everything we are doing so well here in

Yarmouth, ME, and I learn a great deal about what our next steps might look like. Whether you know it or not, you are inspiring health and commitment in other congregations as I spread your good news far and wide. And, you are influenced by the success of congregations larger and ...well, wilder!...than our own. This give and take makes for a distinctly brave and forward-thinking mission driven ministry in the world.

With this in mind I have worked hard this year with the Board of Trustees, their Committees, and the Program Councils to:

- Set and pursue shared ministry goals in a) Supporting the creation and integration of a Healthy Congregation Team to replace the outdated Committee on Shared Ministry b) Immediately strengthen and empower the Member Services Committee to expand their processes and influence in growing the congregation and c) prepare for a congregation-wide Covenant.
- Continue and expand Theme-based ministry, incorporating weekly Adult "civil discourse" offerings into our Sunday offerings, and align all children and youth programming with our Worship themes.
- Support existing social justice initiatives and partnerships with Gyepes, Romania and Preble Street Resource Center in Portland while also launching a new initiative to experience and expand relationships with refugees and asylum seekers in Maine - "New Mainers". We are now partnered with both Opportunity Alliance at their Parkside location, and with Portland General Assistance through their Family Shelter
- Continue the loving pastoral care we are accustomed to here at First U - visiting elders, supporting families in transition, providing grief counseling, responding to requests for pastoral support to children, and supporting our Caring Connection volunteer network in its phenomenal work of meals, rides, visits and other acts of loving kindness
- As well as the concrete responsibility and great privilege of being available for weddings, memorial services and other life-transition rituals and ceremonies!



## Minister's Report

Thank you to Gwen Matthews for the amazing work she has done for our congregation in such a short time! I encourage all of you to get to know her over the summer. And, congratulations to Phyllis Chinlund - long-time organizer of our commitment to the Preble Street soup kitchen - as she is being recognized by Preble Street as one of their top faith leader volunteers this June!

We also actively continue to explore how and in what context we are a lived-out-loud Welcoming Congregation, and I continue my PhD studies in Education with an emphasis on comprehensive human sexuality education. I will be requesting a brief sabbatical next winter to concentrate on my studies, so, stay tuned for details, and ways that you can be part of the sabbatical success.

With love to you all, and many wishes for a wonderful summer. I am grateful for all that you do, and the life of liberal faith that we live together.



Rev. Jennifer 



## President's Report

The Board's church year began with an amazing retreat lead by Roger Bertschausen, a consultant of the UUA. Roger lead the Board and other church leaders through a series of discussions about what constituted a healthy congregation. The church leadership was excited about the material offered at the retreat and have used some of Roger's material this year. You can find his advice for healthy congregations on the Board section of our website.

We kicked off our Jubilee Week in October with an art show, a pancake breakfast, and a moving worship service in our beautiful garden which becomes more and more beautiful each year! An amazing number of congregants participated in a wide variety of activities, from making prayer flags to gardening to meditating.

The Board is responsible for overseeing the business affairs of the church as well as furthering the mission and purpose of the church. In December our long-term office manager, Suzanne Warfel, resigned to spend more time with her family. The Board, with Reverend Jennifer, met to determine how best to restructure Suzanne's job to both manage our money and our financial responsibilities, while also developing our outreach and religious education programs. By the end of January, 2016, the Board has hired one wonderful new employee, Gwen Mathews.

Gwen will be working extensively with the Religious Education program on Sunday mornings. She will also be working closely with Reverend Jennifer to support outreach and growth. The Board is delighted to have a staff person on board who is dedicated to membership growth and committed to consistent follow-up and follow-through with members and friends of the church. We are grateful to have Gwen with us! Over the summer we will be searching for a new person to make sure we get our bills paid on time and we will be looking for a new choir director.

The Board wants to give special thanks to Dorothy McAloney, Leslie Livingston, and Ron Robillard for their hard work and commitment to the financial integrity of the church during the time when we had no one with accounting experience in the office. All three went above and beyond to keep our financial house in order. We will end the year in a fiscally responsible place because of their hard work. We have made a transition from one software accounting program to a new one. We have offered on-line pledging and can now accept credit cards. Members are now able to view their own accounts online. The transition to the new program was not easy and we are grateful to all the hard work that Dorothy, Leslie and Ron have done for us this year.

Four major efforts were to be the focus of the Board's work this year. We were able to focus on three of these. We now have a fully staffed Healthy Congregation Committee and a strong and active Member Services Committee. We also have a new Stewardship Committee that was formed to replace the Finance Committee. The Stewardship Committee has been meeting this Spring and will be fully operational in the Fall. The Board had hoped to begin working on a Board Covenant this year and then to begin the process of leading the congregation in the process of developing a covenant for all of us. The need and desire for a Covenant is still forefront in the Board's planning and I have no doubt that this will happen next year.

I want to thank everyone who has worked so hard and joyfully this year to help make this church the wonderful place that it is. I will be going off the Board this year but will continue to work with and for the church that I have loved and been a part of for the last 35 years.

Sincerely,  
Ruth White, Board President



# Stewardship

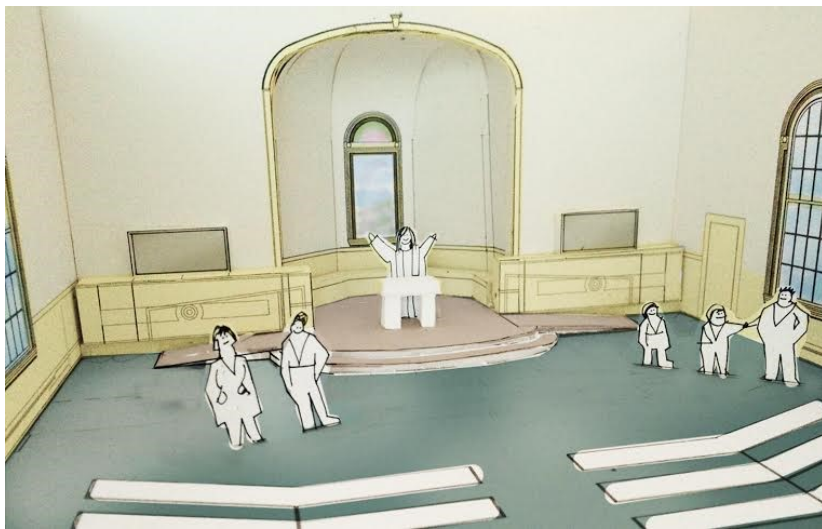
*Stewardship: taking care of that which belongs to another*

**Members:** Karen Carlisle, Jen Civiello, Joe Dreher, Cindy Guernsey, Phyllis Jones, Frank Read, Tom Settlemire, Marge Titcomb, Ruth White

Stewardship recognizes and honors that together we can be transformative as a faith community in our relationship to money and generosity. Stewardship collaborates with the board and committees of the church with a focus on shared learning and leadership education. We are grateful to several new members of the Stewardship Committee, and would welcome more who are interested in joining us!

**Here for Good Campaign**—Flexible, Accessible, Beautiful, while also being welcoming and safe. We are well into year 2 of this campaign for capital improvements to be made over 3 years. The Here for Good Steering Committee has raised \$210,000, and completed planned exterior building repairs and maintenance. During summer 2016 we will create an accessible chancel in the Sanctuary; a model is available for viewing in the Gathering Room.

**Foundation Renovation Project**—During fact-finding for the Here for Good moisture mitigation project, the Here for Good project team discovered that it was not the simple project we had anticipated. Engineers discovered water coming into the crawlspace under the ground floor due to deterioration of the driveway and cracks in the foundation. The solution is grading and replacing the driveway, sealing cracks around the foundation, and replacing the entire ground floor of the church. A plan for financing this new project has been presented to the board.



The **Annual Pledge Campaign** was conducted by the board this year, primarily online and through Channels.

**Fund-raising** involves **FOOD** and **FUN** and nearly everyone in our church community in one or more of our events! Many of our newer members have enthusiastically participated, offering an opportunity for getting to know each other. Major events and activities are Clam Fest, Holiday Fair, Heart-in-Hand Gala, and Gift Card sales. Other activities that also financially support our church are Maine Farm Suppers, Gather dinners, yoga classes, and fair-trade coffee sales.

Respectfully and with gratitude,  
Marge Titcomb, Stewardship Committee

## Treasurer's Report for Fiscal Year 2016

This has been a year of transitions. The organization fully moved onto new software for church management and accounting. This change was based on the recommendation of the Finance Committee and the Board of Directors. The software is working well and we have added both online giving software and the ability to take credit/debit cards at our events.

With the retirement of our Church Administrator in December, the Board of Directors re-organized and created two positions using the budgeted salary of the CA position. The new Office Assistant position has remained unfilled and the Treasurer, along with new and former Board members, have fulfilled the financial duties of the organization.

The Stewardship and Finance Committees were re-created into a new Stewardship Committee that began meeting in March of 2016. The Board took on other fiscal responsibility in the interim. The Board has also overseen spending for the Here for Good renovations and additional unexpected building needs.

Finally, the church dealt with a "break in" in December of 2015, requiring the closing of all of our bank accounts. New accounts were opened and all stolen monies were returned.



### Current Year

It is projected that operational revenue will modestly exceed expenses at the close of the fiscal year. It should be noted that the chart below shows operations through April 30, 2016. The fiscal year closes June 30, 2016.



# Treasurer's Report for Fiscal Year 2016

## STATEMENT OF ACTIVITY July 2015—April 2016

	Total
REVENUE	
Donations	1,495.00
Endowment Income	4,317.16
Fundraising Sales	24,940.24
Fundraising sales account	13,795.89
Pledges and Plate	107,899.37
Rental Income	23,499.67
Sales of Product Revenue	100.00
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$176,047.33</b>
COST OF GOODS SOLD	
Fundraising Expenses	12,619.23
<b>Total Cost of Goods Sold</b>	<b>\$12,619.23</b>
GROSS PROFIT	<b>\$163,428.10</b>
EXPENDITURES	
1. BOARD OF TRUSTEES	12,320.49
2. BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS	18,371.37
3. MEMBER SERVICES	591.77
A. MINISTER	8,779.04
B. CHURCH ADMINISTRATION	9,547.37
C. MUSIC AND WORSHIP	1,698.65
D. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION	1,824.56
Loan Interest Expenditures	699.59
Payroll Expenses	108,897.32
Program Discretionary	13.61
Staff and Volunteer Training	350.00
Unapplied Cash Bill Payment Expenditure	0.00
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$163,093.77</b>
NET OPERATING REVENUE	<b>\$334.33</b>
OTHER REVENUE	
Other Income(Clearing Account only)	390.00
<b>Total Other Revenue</b>	<b>\$390.00</b>
OTHER EXPENDITURES	
Other Expense (Clearing Account only)	24.00
Other Miscellaneous Expenditure	0.00
<b>Total Other Expenditures</b>	<b>\$24.00</b>
NET OTHER REVENUE	<b>\$366.00</b>
NET REVENUE	<b>\$700.33</b>



# Treasurer's Report for Fiscal Year 2016

## Statement of Financial Position

This report shows not only our cash assets in accounts and endowment accounts, but the value of our buildings/furnishings as well. It compares these assets to our liabilities, which include our furnace loans and building loans. It should be noted that the closed accounts are represented here. The -\$78.52 in the closed account is due to two checks that remain un-cashed. Should they be presented, they would go through our new account.

### STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION As of April 30, 2016

	<u>Total</u>
<b>ASSETS</b>	
<b>Current Assets</b>	
<b>Bank Accounts</b>	
Checking General #24-27989354	45,016.07
Closed Checking Debit #24-2883347	0.00
Closed Checking General #02-7801630	-78.52
Closed Checking Payroll #03-0559738	0.00
Closed Savings-Reserve #725722872	0.00
Debit Checking #242-7989453	2,643.64
Payroll #242-7989370	978.60
Savings-Reserves #242-7989461	84,658.87
<b>Total Bank Accounts</b>	<b>\$ 133,218.66</b>
<b>Other current assets</b>	
<b>Endowment Accounts</b>	
Building Endowment	15,406.91
Outreach Endowment	11,014.60
Spirit of Life Fund	75,115.00
<b>Total Endowment Accounts</b>	<b>\$ 101,536.51</b>
Giving Winds	10,000.00
Undeposited Funds	100.00
<b>Total Other current assets</b>	<b>\$ 111,636.51</b>
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>\$ 244,855.17</b>
<b>Fixed Assets</b>	
Church	742,359.53
Furniture & Fixtures	100,000.00
Parsonage	107,318.80
<b>Total Fixed Assets</b>	<b>\$ 949,678.33</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 1,194,533.50</b>
<b>LIABILITIES AND EQUITY</b>	
<b>Liabilities</b>	
<b>Long-Term Liabilities</b>	
Bank Loan Reduction(Furnace)	5,000.00
NNED (White Memorial Building Loan)	11,206.05
<b>Total Long-Term Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 16,206.05</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 16,206.05</b>
<b>Equity</b>	
Opening Balance Equity	1,091,377.69
Retained Earnings	-26,629.27
Net Revenue	113,579.03
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>\$ 1,178,327.45</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY</b>	<b>\$ 1,194,533.50</b>

## Treasurer's Report—Proposed FY17 Budget

The Board proposes the following budget, which replicates the current year's budget as adjusted to reflect the new personnel positions. There is a 3% increase in the Minister's salary. The Board is aware that funding operations is essential to the programming of the church. It is also grateful for the congregation's support of both operations and the Here for Good capital campaign.

### Budget Overview: First U Budget—FY17 P&L Departments July 2016—June 2017

	Total
<b>Revenue</b>	
Pledges and Plate	146,000.00
Rental Income	30,950.00
Fundraising Sales	29,200.00
Endowment Income	8,250.00
Billable Expenditure Revenue (deleted-1)	0.00
Cash Cards (deleted)	0.00
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$214,400.00</b>
<b>Gross Profit</b>	<b>\$214,400.00</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>	
Payroll Expenses	145,194.00
2. BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS	24,828.00
1. BOARD OF TRUSTEES	12,265.00
B. CHURCH ADMINISTRATION	10,560.00
Loan Principle Expenditures	6,319.00
A. MINISTER	6,100.00
C. MUSIC AND WORSHIP	3,720.00
D. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION	2,171.00
3. MEMBER SERVICES	2,000.00
Loan Interest Expenditures	1,013.00
Program Discretionary	0.00
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$214,170.00</b>
<b>Net Operating Revenue</b>	<b>\$230.00</b>
<b>Net Revenue</b>	<b>\$230.00</b>



Respectfully Submitted,  
Leslie Livingston, Treasurer

## Nominating Committee

The Nominating committee worked with the Healthy Congregation team and the Minister on the structure of the church committees and councils and how they work and defined the leadership skills needed to round out the openings on the Board. The Nominating committee's job is to propose a slate of candidates to fill the open Board positions. This committee also assists in seeking persons to fill leadership positions as requested by the Board of Trustees. We look to fill these positions in a balanced and embracing way by age groups, gender, and leadership skills.

## Nominations for Annual Meeting, 2016

### Board of Trustees

Terms of Office: Elected members of the Board serve two-year terms. There is a limit of two consecutive terms (4 years) for any Board position and a limit of four consecutive terms (8 years) for each Board member.

President:	Marge Titcomb <sup>°</sup>
Vice President:	Joan Guild
Treasurer:	open position
Clerk:	Joanna Landsman
At Large 1:	Nancy Dix
At Large 2:	Lily O'Brien*
At Large 3:	Charlie Horstmann
At Large 4:	Tamara Pride
At Large 5:	Ron Robillard
At Large 6:	Rebecca Rundquist

<sup>°</sup>fulfilling year 2 of a vacated term  
\*seeking first term

### Nominating Committee

Terms of Office: Members of the Nominating Committee serve three-year terms, and the Committee generally includes at least one past president of the Board of Trustees plus three at-large members from the congregation.

Our nominations for the 2016-2017 Nominating Committee are as follows:

Returning members: Cindy Guernsey, Phyllis Jones, Jane Cleaves, Joy Ahrens

New members: Ruth White



## Buildings & Grounds Committee



The Buildings and Grounds Committee manages our historic church and parsonage facilities and the surrounding grounds.

Pete Titcomb served as the Chair of Buildings and Grounds. Toby Ansfield served as the B&G liaison to the Board of Trustees. B&G works with our Sexton, José Linares, and a number of other congregation members for specific projects. For the paperwork task of bill paying, B&G gratefully receives support from our team of volunteers and staff who manage church financial matters.

Each year, Buildings and Grounds needs to address on-going maintenance of our facilities including:

1. Management of test/inspection/maintenance of church building systems: elevator, fire sprinkler, fire alarm, emergency lighting, fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, and heating.
2. Delivery of church trash and recyclables to the transfer station as well as delivery of returnables to the redemption center.
3. Management of our grounds including snow removal, mowing, and raking.
4. Parsonage routine maintenance of furnace, furnace filter, and annual replacement of smoke detector batteries.
5. Seasonal changes to heating, storm windows, and outside faucets.
6. Technology support for our office equipment (3 computers and copier) and perform weekly computer backups.
7. Support use of our projector, two sound systems, and our assisted listening equipment.

Additional maintenance activities this year included:

1. Service called for the Vulcan gas range in our main kitchen to repair pilot lights.
2. The elevator was out of service for several weeks while locating the cause of a problem that was difficult to reproduce.
3. A theft in our office area prompted the need to review security and plans to change the locks on church entry doors.
4. Participating with Here for Good project planning.



### **A special “thank you”:**

In March, 80 beautiful new pew card holders were installed in the Sanctuary. They were designed and made as a donation by Chris Becksvoort with project inspiration from Jerry Myers. A small group of congregation members donated the cost of materials.

Respectfully submitted,  
Pete Titcomb, Chair B&G Committee

## Member Services

### Major Initiatives

#### A part time staff position

Gwen Matthews!

- Follow up post cards to visitors
- Welcome letter after signing the book
- “Did you Know?” every week in OOW
- Friendly ushering, rainbow lanyards for greeters
- Small grant from UUA for membership outreach
- Consistent member message in Channels
- Developing Church Year magnet calendar
- Young family dinner/info session



#### Other committee accomplishments

- New signage out front
- Gather nights four times per year
- Bake Off to determine a signature snack for coffee hour
- Interviewing new members as to gifts/talents/connections to First U
- Farewell letter to those who leave and tell us why



#### Plans for next church year

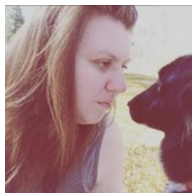
- Reworking new member process, newcomer celebration
- “Remembering,” keeping contact with those in the Directory
- Outreach to small groups to participate in more activities
- Work with worship council to have consistent, welcoming greeting from the pulpit, highlighting greeters
- Improve coffee hour interactions with visitors

Respectfully submitted,  
Nancy Dix, Board Liason





## Program Assistant



*I love supporting the programming here at First U. This is a wonderful community of caring and enthusiastic individuals who I'm excited to continue to collaborate with to grow programs and the church.*

I love to interact with people; here are some reasons that we should be in touch:

**Communications:** If you want a message to be broadcast to the church community via our e-newsletter Channels, in the Sunday Morning News, or put on the website, send me an email and I'll make sure everyone stays informed.

**Children's Programming:** Ursula Wilmot and I coordinate and implement our diverse and creative Sunday morning children's programs. If you have questions, comments, or suggestions about our religious education for children, let's get together over email, on the phone, or in person to discuss.

**Youth Programming:** Along with Joanna Landsman and Lily O'Brien, I facilitate our youth programs for middle and high school students at First U. Our youth groups are dynamic and active, playing games, doing service projects, planning and going on mission trips, and learning more about our faith, the world, and ourselves. If you're curious about what else we're up to, think your teen would enjoy being a part of this supportive and fun community, or would like to share your talents, skills, or perspectives with our youth, I'd be thrilled to have those discussions.

**Member Services:** I'm passionate about creating positive experiences for members and friends here at First U, and am always excited to welcome newcomers and explain the benefits of joining this community. Working closely with the Member Services committee, and especially Nancy Dix, Board Liaison, I'm able to answer questions about membership, or connect you to ways you can participate in outreach events.

Sincerely,  
Gwen Matthews, Program Assistant

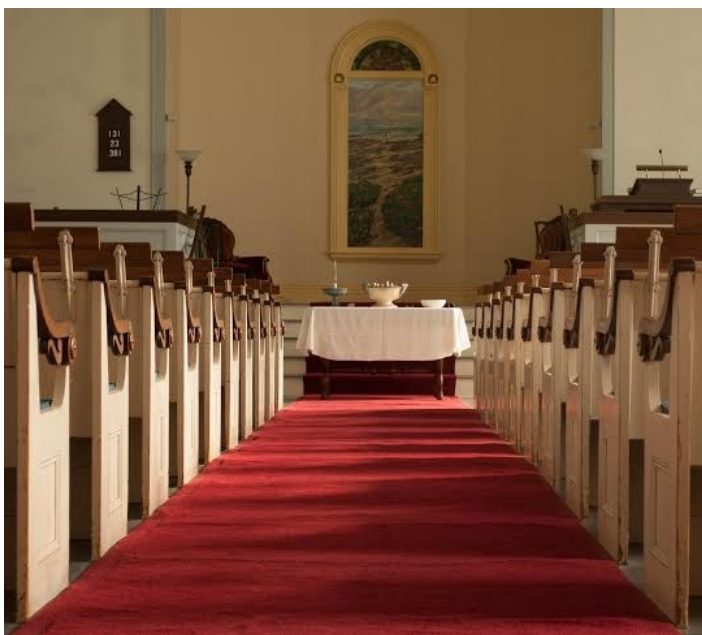




## Worship Council

**MEMBERS:** Sarah Witte, Chair, Kate Connelly, Brenda McKee, Kate Connelly, Stew Guernsey, Nancy Read, Nancy Austin, and Jeannette Newton

In general, Worship Council works with First Universalist's Minister and Music Director to create and continually evaluate our worship culture. Relative to the Mission Statement of First Universalist, our goal is to support spiritual exploration and growth.



**WORSHIP** is our main focus, since that is where most of the congregation comes together, however worship also celebrates and honors life's journey and inspires engagement.

**THEMES:** Since Calendar Year 2011-2012, the Worship Council and Minister have organized the worship around THEMES. This year our themes were based on the a journey of faith exploration: Voices and Conversations

Searches

Journeys & Bridges

The Ramble

Gifts & Wonder

and Promises.

The themes were also carried into the RE programs, including the Adult RE sessions which were held before worship each Sunday.

**WORSHIP FORMAT:** We have continued our efforts from the last five years to gently modify the Order of Worship, so that there is a smooth flow and a sense of safety in the space. The announcements before the service are succinct and successful. Often we enjoy an invitation to greet each other after the sermon and before a time of silent meditation.

**MUSIC:** Jane Hardy continued the position of Music Director in the fall and through the winter. She resigned due to personal reasons in March and we gratefully accepted Claudia Frost's interim return. (mid-March to mid-June). A Search Committee has begun the process of looking for a replacement, working to fill the position by September.

The choir has been regular in numbers and thriving, with practices on Thursday nights and Sunday mornings before worship. The choir practice on Sunday mornings does conflict with the Adult RE session, so we have asked ourselves to look for a solution. RE twice a month and Choir in service twice a month? Or RE after worship? We realize that there are many others (staff, for example) whose jobs and many commitments are involved. Still it does seem worth some thought.

**HOLIDAYS:** The month of December was full of worship opportunities, and we experimented with a few new ideas. We had the Festival Sunday on the 13th which is becoming an annual WC-led workshop style event with food and craft and meditation options for all ages, then a 4 pm Solstice and labyrinth service on the 20th, two services on Christmas Eve (6:30 with Rev. Jennifer, and 11:30 with the WC) and a wonderful service on the 27th with our Transylvanian guest.

## Worship Council

**CANDLES:** The time of Candles is often a concern for UU congregations, due to misuse, soap box speeches, and loss of control over timing. Over the past few years Rev. Jennifer and the Worship Council have guided the use of candles by inviting people to identify themselves, tell us the essence of the thought, and then to continue conversations downstairs after the service. We also invite silent candles, and sometimes use Silent Candles very intentionally, starting three years ago, to moderate use and to create a safe place for those who would otherwise never get up to speak in front of everyone. It seems that on Silent Candle days, participation soars, yet it doesn't take any more time.

**GUEST MINISTERS and SPEAKERS:** We have had both guest ministers and lay services this year, including: Rev. Eva Thompson, Rev. Erika Hewitt, Rev. Mair Honan, a trio in January of Rev. Angie Arndt, Rev. Leslie Hyde, Rev. Tamara Pride, and Rev. John Millspaugh in March. In late March we welcomed Dr. Rick Churchill with Rev. Nancy White, on the connection between people and nature. In April, member Landis Hudson spoke on rivers.

They were all well received, and worked nicely within our worship themes. Ideas for future guests are always welcome at the WC! We paid each guest an honoraria, according to a scale from \$100 for lay guest to \$250 for fully fellowshipped UU clergy.



Partly to contain the cost of Guest Ministers, but also most definitely to provide a space for members of our own congregation to stretch and grow in spiritual expression, we had six lay services and celebrations this year: a fall harvest of gratitude with the Board (sharing thoughts from the Leadership Retreat in September with Rev. Roger Bertschausen), the Festival Sunday in December, the late Christmas Eve service, a service created and led by the Board to express their commitment to the Mission Statement, the Mothers Day WC-led service, and one more to come on Memorial Day.

**LOOKING AHEAD:** We have moved our Annual Planning Retreat from August to June, primarily to generate worship themes and concepts for the coming year before the development of the RE program. Kate Connelly, Stew Guernsey, and occasionally Sarah Witte have provided WW'ing, mostly when we had a guest minister, and occasionally with Rev. Jennifer.

We look forward to the new open chancel area that is flexible, accessible, and beautiful. (FAB!) The choir has embraced the idea of alternative seating arrangements, and the Music Director looks forward to being able to see the minister, choir, and congregation.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sarah Witte, Chair

## Faith-In-Action Council

*to advance economic and environmental justice, working together as a community of faith*

*“Nurture your spirit, help heal the world”*

**Faith-In-Action Council members:** Marge Titcomb (chair), Phyllis Chinlund, Jane Makela, Ron Robillard, Pete Titcomb, Marie Wendt; Rev. Jennifer

**Partner Church in Gyepes Romania.** Many of our congregation are involved and supportive of this amazing relationship, including: Education Sponsorships (21 families donated \$4,380 to support the education of 18 Gyepes youth (1 at University); summer camps for the children and youth of Gyepes and 3 neighboring villages; and upcoming 2016 Senior Youth Mission Trip to Transylvania support. We also welcomed this year's Balazs Scholar, Laszlo Major, who shared kalaka stories of his village, Datk.

**Preble Street.** We help serve dinners to about 350 Portland homeless folks on the first Tuesday of the month at Preble Street. Come just once, or come every month you can!

**New Mainers.** We engage with the Portland immigrant community through weekly English Conversation Circles, listening to their stories, and offering emergency housing when needed. Stay tuned for news of a potential English immersion weekend in July when we host several New Mainers for a weekend of food and fun!



**Social Justice Funds Distribution.** This church year we distributed about \$15,000. \$10,000 is from generous donations from the congregation (sponsorships & half of the weekly collection plate); \$5,000 is from Endowment Funds. The “half plate” is shared with a wide variety of organizations; this year 12 organizations are within Maine; 6 are beyond our Maine borders.



**Other ways we put our Faith into Action.** Environment/Green Spirit. We sell (and serve) Fair Trade coffee, and deliver the church "returnables" to the Yarmouth Beverage Center for the benefit of our church. We participate in Tri-Community Interfaith Council (TCIC) projects: Clam Fest Interfaith Service, school supply collections, and fuel assistance. In support of Habitat for Humanity we are a way station for the Good Friday Walk, helping to raise over \$30,000 for Greater Portland Habitat.

We welcome you to join us in these many exciting projects that are being enthusiastically received by our congregation.

Respectfully submitted,  
Marge Titcomb



## Caring Connection

Caring Connection would like to thank Joy Ahrens for countless years of service to our community. Joy single-handedly managed our volunteer lists and helped us to provide a variety of services to those in need. Joy has passed this job on to Nancy Read and Joan Guild. We will do our best to uphold the standard which Joy has established.

We manage a list of volunteers who are available to help folks out during challenging times. Most often this help is in the form of meals or rides but other needs may be addressed as well. Thank you to all who helped out this year. You bring valuable warmth and service to our community.

If you have a need which we can help out with, please contact Nancy Read (nafread@prexar.com, 829-3285) or Joan Guild (joan@guilds.net, 829-9252). Also, if you would like to join us in providing help in times of need, please let us know.

## Healthy Congregation Team



*Healthy congregations are  
spirited. They are graced  
and gracious, generous with  
each other and outsiders.  
They are communities of  
thanks and praise.*

Peter L. Steinke

In September 2015, the church hosted a workshop retreat for leadership on Healthy Congregations, with Rev. Roger Bertschausen as our guest. We were inspired by his former church's (Appleton WI) Healthy Congregation policy, and his list of "12 Behaviors of a Healthy Congregation."

We realized that this was the direction we had been seeking. The Board identified the goal and appointed a small group to explore the potential of a Healthy Congregations focus for our church. Since December, this group has met to become trained in family and organizational systems, design adaptive leadership integration pathways for First Universalist, promote Healthy Congregation "Tips" through the weekly newsletter, and has also responded to individual events to support healthy resolution of concerns and changes.

We have drafted Bylaws for the congregation's review and approval at the June 2016 Annual Meeting.

We are passionate about the work ahead. We envision a future where First Universalist will be, collectively and calmly, able to direct a much greater measure of its gifts toward the work of our mission instead of towards our own internal development. We will have healthy systems, with the mechanisms and skills to handle divergent views more constructively and with a loving attitude.

Love calls us to be our best selves: in relationships, in families, in organizations... so that we can do our best work wherever we are.

Submitted by  
Sue Ellen Bordwell, Ellen Kornetsky, Tom Carlisle,  
Sarah Witte, Steve Thomas, and Jane Cleaves

## Administrative Assistant

### Update on our Administrative Assistant Position

Having read what our wonderful new Program Assistant has been up to, you might wonder about what our Administrative Assistant position is all about.

Here's a quick look. We will be hiring a new Admin Assistant to begin work in the church offices in late summer, and you should contact him or her if:

- You're a lay volunteer helping to pull together the order of worship
- You need to get into the building, or want to drop by when the building is open
- You need some help reaching other staff members, or Rev. Jennifer
- You have a question about your pledge to the budget or to the Here For Good campaign (which may also need input from the Treasurer or HfG Team, but the Admin Assistant is a good place to start!)
- You're on the Stewardship Committee and have a question about our church finances
- You're serving as a point person on a Council or Committee and would like a report about revenue or expenditures

Our Admin Assistant will keep regular office hours, will be a friendly face in the office and voice on the telephone, and will answer emails with regards to finances, rentals, and the weekly order of worship. Stay tuned for more information in Channels late in August.

## The Seven Unitarian Universalist Principles

The inherent worth and dignity of every person.

Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations.

Acceptance of one another and encouragement  
of spiritual growth in our congregations.

A free and responsible search for truth and meaning.

The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process  
within our congregations and society at large.

The goal of world community with  
peace, liberty, and justice for all.

Respect for the interdependent web  
of all existence of which we are a part.