2015 was a momentous and eventful year for the North Chapel. Having navigated our way through important challenges and transitions, we enter this new year with a keen awareness of our capabilities—both spiritual and practical.

It was a time of cherishing our past and honoring Daniel Jantos, the minister who gave so much in his more than fifteen years of service. With smiles and tears, we thanked Daniel for the profoundly positive experience of being on the journey together, and sent him off with heartfelt good wishes for the next chapter of his life. In his stead, we kept the fire burning, with many of us gathered weekly around the pizza oven to keep alive the fun Daniel always invited.

We also set our sights on a vibrant future. A year ago, we had just released the report, *Our Future in Focus*, after months of planning activity that resulted in a clear statement of our intention to: celebrate our strengths; broaden our reach; deepen our connections; and commit to an active response to the climate crisis.

With clarity about our goals, we took action toward them.

- We established the Welcoming and Engagement Committee, chaired by Barbara Bartlett and Rick Fiske, with a mission to welcome all who come to the North Chapel and help them find whatever it is they seek here, especially through engagement with others.

- The newly formed Spiritual Exploration for Children and Families Committee took shape, with guidance from Peggy Kannenstine, Peg Brightman and Brooke Beaard, and now with leadership from Ariel Brewer, chair. This committee builds and expands on the work of the former RE Committee. Through the commitment of volunteers, parents and teachers, we are now serving children, K-3 and 4-6, in two groups and plan to offer the OWL program, taught by Ultan Doyle and Jenny Beaudin, in the coming year.

* To ensure that our physical plant supports the various programmatic goals we set, Chris Bartlett and Anne Dean chaired the Facilitating Our Future Task Force. In just three months, this efficient group did a full assessment of how space is used currently and made recommendations for improvements and adjustments that will allow our building to be more conducive to our needs and more in line with our values. Since the release of the Task Force’s report in July, we’ve moved forward on many of their suggestions:

  -- the Sanctuary is heated only for Sunday services or large-group events;

  -- the former nursery school has been transformed into a Chapel for contemplative activity;

  -- children’s groups meet in new spaces that serve their needs better;

  -- we’ve secured a matching grant from the Vermont Preservation Trust to evaluate how we can reduce moisture problems and increase energy efficiency.
closets have been cleaned, thanks to Gina Auriema!

• Anne Dean, Anne Macksoud and Sarah Hall received a $6800 grant from the UUA Social Responsibility Committee, with an additional $2000 challenge grant to be matched via Spotify. They will use these funds to create a video that will show other churches the whys and hows of putting a permaculture on their front lawn. In 2015, our garden was even more beautiful than the year before!

Karen Wolk, with expert guidance from Richard Fox, initiated some new approaches to the pledge drive, including a revised timetable, canvass conversations with community members, and more personal involvement from the board. In addition, thanks to the generosity of two North Chapel donors, the pledge drive included a challenge grant to create a Fund for the Future, which will be used primarily for building renovations and improvements.

This year we also undertook a search and recruitment process to hire an interim minister. Rev. Wendy Pantoja served the North Chapel for about five months. Although this interim ministry did not meet our expectations and brought its own set of challenges, the North Chapel community responded with resilience, heightened clarity of purpose, and a demonstrated ability to learn and grow. In December, nearly 60 people joined two community conversations for an opportunity to reflect on this time of transition. The board is grateful for the community’s support of our decision to end this ministry and the efforts of many who helped along the way, including Kathy Astemborski, Geraldine Fowler, Diane Mellinger, Don Ransom, Jess Stout, Bob Williamson, Judy Williamson, and the Music and Worship Committee.

Always, always committees keep the North Chapel humming. This year, committee members gathered bi-monthly for a Committee Café, during which they discussed committee best practices, shared information about their respective initiatives, and asked important questions about how we can continue to enhance the life of this community. At each meeting, Polly Forcier and her kitchen volunteers provided a sumptuous feast. At the end of this year, we offer deep gratitude to lay leaders who are stepping out of their current roles, having served the church so well for many years: Karen Wolk, Resource Development Chair; Chris Lloyd, Finance Chair; Jack Nelson, B&G Chair; Don Ransom, Nominating Chair.

Please join us in thanking all of the people who contribute to the life, spirit, and wellbeing of this North Chapel community. As this year shows us, we go through it and come through it together.

Our North Chapel Board Chris Bartlett, Anne Dean, Susan Inui, Denise Lyons, Anne Macksoud, Anne Marinello, Deborah Rice and Ann Wynia
North Universalist Chapel Society
Minutes of Annual Meeting, January 25, 2015

The 2015 Annual Meeting began at 12:00 p.m. in the North Chapel Social Hall following a potluck lunch. About 65 members and friends of the congregation were in attendance.

WELCOME: Mary Jeanne Taylor, President of the Board of Trustees, welcomed everyone and read a blessing for the North Chapel community. She recognized Daniel’s absence until March 2015 (although he remains with us until June 2015) and the challenges ahead of us for 2015. She also recognized all who signed the Membership Book in 2014, and read the names of the new members. She also acknowledged those we lost during this past year, and read their names: Kathy Wendling, Lou Kannerstine, Trish Compton, Betty Smith, Neil Wigglesworth, Davenport Cleveland, and Bob Lewis.

ELECTION OF MODERATOR: Anne Dean moved to elect Kevin Geiger as Moderator. Deb Hawthorn seconded the motion. Election of Kevin Geiger as Moderator passed unanimously.

ELECTION OF CLERK: Neil Marinello, from the Nominating Committee, moved to elect Judy Williamson as clerk. Moderator Kevin Geiger called for other nominations from the floor. There were none. Election of Judy Williamson as clerk passed unanimously.

ELECTION OF TREASURER: Representing the Nominating Committee, David Doolittle moved to nominate Ann Wynia for Treasurer for 2015. Moderator Kevin Geiger called for nominations from the floor. There were none. Election of Ann Wynia as Treasurer passed unanimously. Mary Jeanne Taylor (on behalf of the Board of Trustees) made an acknowledgement to Ann for all that she does for The North Chapel. She added that there is a special dedication to Ann in our Membership Book for all her work for North Chapel.

ACCEPTANCE OF ANNUAL REPORT: Moderator Kevin Geiger asked if there were any questions or corrections that need to be made to the report. Susan Inui noted that her name had been misspelled, and requested a correction. Richard Schramm made a correction regarding Rhonda Moore’s involvement with the Social Justice Committee. A motion to make the
corrections and accept the report was made by Neil Marinello and seconded by Peggy Kannenstine. Acceptance of the Annual Report was accepted unanimously.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE:

Board of Trustees: Neil Marinello of the Nominating Committee (in two separate motions) moved to nominate the following to the Board of .: Chris Bartlett and Anne Dean – both for three year terms. Moderator Kevin Geiger called for any other nominations from the floor. There were none. Election of Chris Bartlett and Anne Dean, each for a three year term, passed unanimously.

FINANCE AND FUNDS COMMITTEE: Don Ranson of the Nominating Committee put forth Joe Boyd as a nominee for the Finance and Funds Committee. Kannenstine seconded the motion. There were no other nominations. The nomination of Joe Boyd passed unanimously. Chris Lloyd noted that there is still a third vacancy that the Board of Trustees will fill, per our bylaws, Article VII, Section 5, which states: A vacancy in an office shall be filled by an appointment by The Board of Trustees for that office.

BUDGET:

Discussion: Chris Lloyd noted the $12,000.00 shortfall in 2014 that was wrapped into the 2015 budget. He described it as a manageable small deficit. His major concern was to fill the off budget expenditure hole of $19,000.00. He was very pleased with the 2015 proposed budget, noting a significant reduced expenditure with respect to the Minister’s salary and benefits. Susan Inui asked questions regarding the off budget expenditures. Ann Wynia responded to the questions. The painting of the church building and the sewer repair of the parsonage contributed to the expenditures. The budget was unanimously approved.
BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE: Deb Rice, on behalf on Denise Lyons and the Board of Trustees, read a special tribute to the Buildings and Grounds Committee for their dedication and caring to North Chapel, and their efforts with keeping everything running smoothly. She acknowledged the many behind-the-scenes efforts for which these committee members are responsible, wanting the congregation to be mindful of the work they do that often goes unnoticed; and she wanted the members of this committee to know how much we benefit from and appreciate the hard work they do week in and week out to maintain the building, beautify it, and to care so lovingly for this sacred space. She reminded everyone to be mindful of all that is working and make it a practice to say thank you to member of the B&G committee.

The members of the committee are: Cheryl Brush, Gina Auriema, Jack Nelson, Katrin Helgason, Vassie Sinopoulos, and Donna Durgin. And Deb also acknowledged our wonderful sextons, Agata and Radek Marzec, who also work with this committee for the benefit of North Chapel.

UPDATES:

a. Worship Committee: John Steinle and Anne Macksoud of the Worship Committee described efforts they participate in with providing reflectors and service coordinators for our Sunday morning worship, especially so in Daniel’s absence, and until he returns to the pulpit on March 8, 2015. They named the other members of the committee: Diane Mellinger, Jenny Gelfan, Judith Taylor and Jessica Stout. Anne invited members of the congregation to offer suggestions to the Committee for what we might like for Sunday services. Without Daniel being here, she added that we all need to help when we can.

b. Religious Education: Geraldine, our RE Coordinator, gave updates of the activities with the children – from drumming to topics on climate change. The older children have collaborated with the CTWK to do community service work. There were no questions for Geraldine.
c. The Elder Group: Richard Schramm reported for the group. He said that The Amazing Grays was a new offer made should the group wish to change their name. They have monthly meetings on Sundays following the service. There are approximately 20 to 25 people that participate. He explained the format and ideas they have discussed, and added that there is “a lot of youthful energy” in the group. Future topics that have been named for discussion include: Film – The Poetry of Aging by Anne Macksoud; a creativity workshop; an informational session; a morning or afternoon retreat; book group possibilities. There were no questions for Richard.

d. Resource Committee: Lynn Peterson reported for the committee. He has been on the Committee for 8 years. In describing their work, he said that “we (the committee) represent you (the congregation),” emphasizing that “we are your committee.” He invited feedback from the congregation regarding how they (the Resource Committee) are doing. He announced that the Pledge Drive was now at $150,000.00 – up from $140,000.00 in December. Lynn named the other members of the committee: Karen Wolk, Deb Peterson, Mary Hawkins, and Jack Nelson. He added that Richard Fox is their resource “consultant.” The committee has developed a programmatic budget, and the areas they are directing their work are: grant possibilities, as well as the possibility of obtaining matching grants. He expressed appreciation for the generosity of our church community and an appreciation for Ann Wynia and all she does for the church, as well as their committee. There were no questions for Lynn.

e. Pastoral Care Committee: Akankha Perkins spoke for the committee. She stated that the committee wants to broaden what they do; and she encouraged people to come with ideas to grow their committee. She added that they have a meeting following the service next Sunday (Feb. 1, 2015), and invited all who are interested to attend. Committee members include: Richard Schramm, Susan Inui, Polly Forcier, Neil Marinello, Deb Rice, Linda Galvao, Brenda Johnson, Daniel Jantos, and herself. There were no questions for Akankha.
f. Planning Committee: Michael Stoner spoke for the committee. He gave a recap of the planning: July 2014 the Board of Trustees came up with the notion of creating a plan, and named 14 members of the church to be a part of this process. In August 2014 the group started working and creating questions and areas of interest and concern members might have. In the fall of 2014 focus groups were formed with about 81 members participating. The committee synthesized the data collected into: how to 1) broaden, 2) deepen our experience of our community, and 3) to respond to the climate crisis. In a December 2014 meeting these ideas were taken and developed into actual steps with congregation members that included the following: how to make changes (large and small), how to make practical and actual changes. As an example he named: how to be carbon neutral by 2020 (i.e., our church to be carbon neutral by 2020). In February the Board of Trustees plans to have a retreat and review the latest of these ideas and plans. There were no questions for Michael.

g. Planning for Our Future: Susan Inui spoke on what’s next and how we will manage. She described the church as being on the threshold – where the sky is the limit. The issue at hand is searching for and obtaining an interim minister. Doing so requires that as a congregation we have a motion that our next minister will be an interim minister (per U.U.A. protocol). Susan made this motion. Peggy Kannenstine seconded the motion. The protocol was stated as the following: “It is understood, in accordance with the established policy of the Unitarian Universalist Association, that the interim minister is pledged not to become not to become a candidate for the congregation’s called ministry, and not to serve the congregation for more than two years (with a limited exception for interim ministers of religious education and interim associates and assistant ministers), and not to discuss specific prospective candidates for the called ministry of the congregation with the ministerial search committee.” “It is also understood that interim ministers both carry out the normal responsibilities of the congregational ministry, including worship and pastoral care, and also assist the congregation in addressing the following interim tasks: 1) claiming and honoring its past, and engaging and acknowledging its griefs and conflicts. 2) recognizing its unique identity and its strengths, needs, and challenges. 3) Understanding the
appropriate leadership roles of minister(s), church staff, and lay leaders; and navigating the shifts in leadership that may accompany times of transition. 4) making appropriate use of District, UUA, and other outside resources. 5) Renewing its vision, strengthening its stewardship, preparing for new growth and new professional leadership, and ready to embrace the future with anticipation and zest.” Discussion that followed included the following: 1) Karen Wolk asked and recommended that we embrace services of the UUA. She said it was very helpful in a previous congregation she had been a member of in NJ. Pierre Fournier asked for clarification regarding ministers who only do interim ministry. He asked how the hiring of an interim minister works. Susan Inui replied that the UUA has a handbook on how to go through the process. She added that three members would serve on the Interim Search Committee, and that our paperwork needs to get to the UUA by April 17, 2015. The process goes as follows: 1) By April 19, 2015 interims, which are available, must have their paperwork submitted to the UUA. 2) By May 4, 2015 we will get names of those available. 3) By May 15, 2015 congregations will place their calls. The committee will begin to do face-to-face interviews. 4) By May 29, 2015 round two of the above (interviews). 5) By June 1, 2015 round three will commence (interviews). Questions and comments were as follows: 1) Neil Marinello stated that he supported this interim process as a very good idea. 2) Mary Jeanne Taylor added that we could have two separate interims - one year each. 3) Pierre Fournier asked if after following an interim minister, the Board of Trustees immediately begins the settled minister’s search. Or does it wait six months for some self analysis by the congregation; and, perhaps then, have one to two years with interim ministers. 4) The response by Susan Inui was that the reason for an interim is to allow us to get to know who we are without Daniel, and to develop self awareness as we function without Daniel. 5) Anne Marinello asked if we could begin to fill out the application for a settled minister early. Susan Inui’s response was that we should focus on the interim period first. 6) Richard Schramm wondered if we could put together a settled minister search committee sooner verses waiting. A motion was made by Susan Inui to move that we search for an interim minister and that the Board hire this minister. Neil Mainello seconded the motion.
Mary Jeanne Taylor (outgoing Board Chair) requested that the present and future Board members stand and be recognized. She also encouraged the congregation those present to be thinking of how to celebrate Daniel’s good-bye.

Farewell and Gratitude to Friends: Anne Macksoud thanked everyone for their prayers, thoughts, and candles for Joby (Thompson) and her recovery. She also recognized Hope Yeager as someone by whom she felt so supported. She described Hope as “smart, quick, funny, loves to laugh, and a dancer.” Anne Marinello made a presentation, acknowledging Mary Jeanne Taylor’s service as Board Chair, and offered her a gift of pottery made by Veronica Delay – as thanks from the congregation. She described the Board as a group who all look forward to meeting and being with each other every month.

The Unsung Hero Award was presented by Hope Yeager to Richard Schramm. She spoke of his compassion, intelligence, ability to build relationships, and challenging us as a congregation. She added his work with coordinating and chairing committees, being a member of the Planning Committee, and his involvement with covenant groups.

The closing words were that one of the hardest jobs the Board has is that of selecting the Unsung Hero Award, as there are many to thank.

Susan Inui made a motion to adjourn. Peggy Kannenstine seconded the motion. It was unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 1:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Williamson
Clerk, North Universalist Chapel Society
North Universalist Chapel Society  
Annual 2015 Financial Report  
Ann Wynia, Treasurer

**RECEIPTS**

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**EXPENSES**

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Donations from Congregants to:

- Woodstock Food Shelf - $700 for Thanksgiving
- Life & Hope - $8209
- Claremont Food Shelf - $867.59 and Good Neighbor Health Clinic - $867.59 from Christmas Eve offering
PEOPLES' UNITED ACCT # 640322721

67 Beginning balance
68 Receipts
69 Expenses
70 **Ending balance for**

**operating budget**

RESTRICTED FUNDS

71 Withholdings
72 Minister's Fund
   Cold Relief
73 Organ Preservation
74 NYE/Cranna
75 Sabatical Savings
76 Memorial Gardens
77 Legal Funds LP
77a Pizza Oven
77b VT/Quebec grant
(78) RE Donation
(78a) Classical concert donation
(78c) Life&Hope
(78d)Gift to Wells Fargo hole
(78e) Permaculture UU grant
(78f) GF contribution Star Island
(78g) 2016 pledges
78h) VT Preservation Grant(FOF)
(78h) Retired 2014 deficit
79 Spiritual Practice Exploration

TOTAL CHECKING ACCOUNT

INVESTMENT - Vermont Community Loan Fund - **$3760.66 at 0% Matures September 2016**
   Wells Fargo Acc't #3605-39446 Balance 12/31/15 - $ 63650.28
   Vermont Community Foundation - $ 89886.00
   Jantos Fund - $ 10290.00

EXPLANATIONS

(3) CourseMiracles-80,Wannop-200,Swift-200, Gifts above cost Xmas deco-166.35,moved from #76-$8.05
(4) Doolittle-150,Bird Count-75, Yoga-200, Greens workshop-75
(10) Total bill-423.36 less credits from M.Blanton and D.Hawthorne of $350
(24) Includes Quick Book supply estimate
(27) Point in Space for File Maker to support data base
(46) Christmas Eve Bill Board
(49) E.Freisen-250,L.Saul-100
(59) Rent at Artistree-44
(78c) $45209 sent 12/23, $8209 was from North Chapel congregation
(78h) $8600 added as match of pledge increases
$1735.18 was collected 12/24 & divided to Claremont Soup Kitchen & Good Neighbor Health Clinic

Ann L. Wynia, Treasurer
The Nominating Committee (NC) met on an as needed basis during the year. The responsibilities of the NC are to present Nominees for the Board of Trustees; Nominees for the Finance Committee; Nominees for Moderator, Treasure and Clerk for the Annual meeting and to help in the search for new members for the standing committees on an as needed basis.

For the Annual Meeting on January 24\textsuperscript{th}, 2016 the NC proposes Kevin Geiger as Moderator, Ann Wynia as Treasurer and Judy Williamson as Clerk.

For Nominees to the Finance Committee the NC proposes

1. Jim Swift

David Doolittle (January 2017), Neil Marinello (January 2018) and Irene Hanslin (January 2019) will continue to serve out their terms on the NC.

Throughout 2016 the NC will continue to seek new Nominees (2) for the Board of Trustees and an additional Nominee for the Finance Committee. We recognize that the Resource Committee is in particular need of new members.

Respectfully submitted,

Don Ransom, Outgoing Chair, January 13\textsuperscript{th}, 2016
ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

In February Lynn Peterson retired as chair of the committee. We are very grateful for Lynn’s dedicated leadership of and attention to the crucial financial needs of North Chapel through his many years of service on the committee.

With Lynn’s departure, the committee members were Karen Wolk, Chair; Deb Rice, liaison to the Board; Jack Nelson and Mary Hawkins. In September Mary resigned from the committee. With her move to Keene, Karen Wolk resigned as Chair of the committee effective December 31, 2015.

Early in the year we revised the Resource Committee job description to be the following:

The primary activity of the Resource Development Committee is implementation and oversight of the Annual Pledge Drive. The Pledge Drive goal is set by the Board of Trustees and the Resource Committee works to attain that goal. When not engaged with Pledge Drive activities, the Committee can identify, in conjunction with the Board of Trustees, Buildings and Grounds Committee and others in the congregation, possible sources of grant funding. The Committee can then write, and follow up with appropriate grant applications and any subsequent reporting to grantors.

Responsibility for other fundraising activities including the Bookstock book sale, Western Wind, the North Chapel music series, the Red Flannel Hash dinner and Life and Hope fundraising was explicitly removed from oversight by the Resource committee. We thank Lynn Peterson for continuing with the book sale and music series and Deb Rice and Polly Forcier for overseeing housing for Western Wind from which North Chapel receives revenue.

Lynn Peterson continued to assist the committee with overseeing the administrative requirements for North Chapel to receive our annual grant from the Vermont Quebec Universalist Unitarian Convention. We thank Lynn for this service as he provides understanding and continuity for this source of income.

Annual Pledge Drive

- The total Pledge Drive goal for 2016 is $184,000, including a $25,000 line item for the Funds for the Future.
- $184,000 minus $25,000 equals $159,000, which is the estimated amount of income from pledges needed for basic operating expenses in 2016.
- Pledges received as of December 22 totaled $149,752. They represent 129 people and 88 households.
- $159,000 minus $149,752 equals, as of December 22, a shortfall in pledged income for operating expenses of $9,248.
- Pledge increases and new pledges totaled $14,400. However, compared to last year, we have about $16,000 lost pledge revenue due to people moving or experiencing changed financial circumstances. Encouraging as increased and new pledges may be, the increase of $14,400 for 2016 has not fully offset this lost pledged revenue.
We were very fortunate to have two anonymous donors who matched pledge increases and new pledges made by December 6, the official end date for the Pledge Drive. Heartfelt thanks to the two donors. The matched amount of $14,400 will be added to the Funds for the Future at the end of 2016. Note this is $10,600 less than the $25,000 we had hoped to add to the Funds for the Future in 2016.

The official start of the Pledge Drive was September 1 and conclusion was December 6. This timetable began the drive earlier in the year than has been our custom in order to finish the drive before the holidays and provide more timely financial information for the creation of the 2016 budget. Although not everyone met this timetable, many in the congregation submitted pledges before Dec. 6.

With the essential participation of the members of the Board, we undertook the task of speaking with as many of the congregation as our person power allowed. We thanked members for their past support, received their ideas about congregational life, and requested their pledge for the coming year. We recommend this interpersonal outreach become an established practice as part of the annual Pledge Drive.

In addition we recommend:

- The Board of Trustees should be clearly responsible for the Annual Pledge Drive. The Board sets the Pledge Drive goal. The Resource Committee oversees the drive as conceived and outlined by the Board. Ideally the Chair of the Resource Committee should be a member of the Board who can regularly communicate pledge drive progress and request assistance from the Board as needed.
- The Board of Trustees should fully engage in the Pledge Drive concept and the need for the church to have funding sufficient to meet its program expenses. It is consistent with our spiritual purpose to solicit Members and Friends for their financial participation.
- The Pledge drive should begin in early September and conclude the first week of December. This allows solicitation activities to end before the holidays and projected revenue to be available in a timely fashion as the Board constructs the next year’s budget.
- All Board members should make their pledges by the drive launch date. This is one act that helps establish the legitimacy of a pledge drive in the life of this congregation.
- All committee chairs, as another group of church leaders, should also be expected to make their pledges at the onset of the drive.
- The Pledge Drive goal, along with the financial information that helped set the goal, should be shared with the committee chairs with the expectation that the Pledge Drive will be on each committee’s agenda throughout the drive. This will expand opportunity for communicating the financial needs of the church.
- Communication about the amount of the goal and its progress should be made often during the drive. Weekly announcements at the Sunday service, articles in the Quest and in other church communications are essential to get the message out.
- The Resource Committee needs 4 – 6 members to organize the drive, develop communications and write thank you notes to all who pledge.

Respectfully submitted by Karen Wolk, outgoing Resource Committee Chair
January 13, 2016
Summary of Music and Worship Committee activities for 2015

Mission
The core mission of the Music and Worship Committee is to ensure that the preparation and delivery of worship services are of the highest quality, that they connect with both head and heart, that they contribute to the spiritual well being of all people present and that they reflect our church’s values as outlined in our basic principles.

This last year was a year of change, and also an exciting, dynamic year. Knowing that Daniel was leaving, we included special services to help us all prepare for the transition, many ways to say "bon voyage" and to both celebrate and mark this passage.

In the spring while Daniel was still here, we held a committee retreat where we confirmed some core values and continued to ponder the nature of our services and what keeps them most alive for this community.

Last year, besides the reflections by Daniel Jantos, and those given by our interim minister Wendy Pantoja, we also had the gift of reflections by church members and visitors. Those speaking included Barbara Bartlett, Rev. Kate Braestrup, Brother Somnieng, Rev. Joan Javier-Duval, Jackie Fischer, Eugene Friesen, Ben Fox, Ryan Harb, Deanna Jones, Alan Keitt, Laurent Louis, Neil Marinello, Dr. Charles MacCormick, Dr. Dennis McCullough, Moving Spirit Dancers, Shyla Nelson, Peter Rousemaniere, Rachel Shae, Richard Schramm, John Steinle, Steve Swayne and Mike Backman, Judith Taylor, Telos Whitfield, and Hope Yeager. Music and movement as well as words uplifted us. Reflections were augmented by the presence and voices of many capable service coordinators.

We continued the tradition of making space in each service for more of our community to be heard. Taking off from the series of sharing "inspirations in our lives," we asked the question "what anchors us" and listened to deeply meaningful stories. We continue to invite and cherish these personal contributions.

We continue to hear from the entire church community that people most want to hear what our own members share with us. We welcome visitors to our committee meetings.

We also are grateful for the other spiritual offerings that take place outside the service, including the weekly Oneness Blessing facilitate by Anne Dean, meditation facilitated by Charity Gray, and Friday's' Evensong facilitated by Veronica Delay. And for the abundance of musical events that grace our sanctuary outside the worship service.

At the spring retreat, Anne Macksoud finished her tenure as chairman, and Jenny Gelfan and Hope Yeager became chair and secretary.
Music summary for 2015
The music program at the North Chapel continues to be a vibrant and essential
collection to the Sunday services. We have 29 members in the adult choir, and sing
almost every Sunday from September through the end of June, including the early
Christmas Eve service. Music for summer services in July and August is provided by
Diane and various guest musicians, both from within the church and from the outside
community. When Diane is away, various pianists substitute. In 2015 we are grateful for
contributions from the following guestmusicians: Shyla Nelson, Sarah Saul, Kathleen
Dolan, Mark Van Gulden, Don Ransom, Rowland Hazard, Pierre Fournier, Luette Saul,
Lydia Spitzer, and the Traver/Clark family. - Diane Mellinger

Special thanks to our committee members
Kathy Astemborski
Hugh Belton
Carol Egbert
Ben Fox
Jenny Gelfan
Anne Macksoud
Diane Mellinger
Jessica Horak
Don Ransom
Judith Taylor
Hope Yeager

Respectfully submitted,
Jenny Gelfan
ANNUAL REPORT 2015 MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

We have 205 members listed this year, 136 of whom are active.

Those who joined the list this year are Geraldine Fowler, Ben Fox, and Deeja Pavelle. Those who have passed on are Elizabeth Bond, Susan Pedicord and Denny Martin.

We are responsible for recruiting altar decorators and we schedule the coffee hour contributors. Weekly creative decor for the altar always touches the North Chapel community and we appreciate the talents and time that this takes. We are grateful to Don Ransom and Susan Inui for scheduling the many ushers for Christmas Eve.

Once a year, we go through the directory to call those whom we haven't seen for a while to ask them how they are doing and if they have any concerns or questions.

The new member meetings in the spring were very successful. We produce Recognition Sunday, the first one in June every year. We also recruit and schedule the Circle Dinners. We welcome ideas for other social activities.

Sherry Belisle, Joanna Garbisch, Joan Harvey, Fran Lancaster, Pru Schuler, Ann Wynia
The Communications Committee tries to support and improve the way information is shared with North Chapel Members and friends by collaborating with Geraldine Fowler, office manager, who actually produces the monthly Quest, and weekly In Touch, the Order of Service for each week on the office computer. She serves as secretary for the committee by consensus. Geraldine maintains a data base of members’ email addresses in Constant Contact. She can access a report of which people have actually opened the emails. She is also able to send out special announcements from the Board. She produces paper copies of the Quest for bulk mailing. In case the number of recipients of paper copies drops below a certain threshold, it may become more costly to mail these out. The rest of the committee advises and participates in updates, such as the reformating of the In Touch weekly newsletter.

This committee has responsibility for overseeing the North Chapel web site, created originally with help from Neil Stannard and Dave Sullivan. This year we modified some of the tabs on the home page, and established links between pages for easier navigation.

A major project has been archiving recordings of reflections given during Sunday services. Thanks to a new recording device in the pulpit, reflections are now automatically recorded and Geraldine routinely posts them on the web site. There were a lot of hardware issues earlier in the year, but these have been resolved with help from Norwood Long, Jack Nelson and Dave Sullivan. There are still some recordings left to transfer from iPads used before the device was available.

A new responsibility has emerged from the Focus on our Future initiative. By request of the Welcoming and Engagement committee, Communications Committee has agreed to maintain a large bulletin board in the Social Hall, intended to make it easy for newcomers to see what is happening and how they might join in with activities. Wendy Smith has offered to oversee the posting and general beautification of this board.

Because of apparent gaps in communication with members via email, this committee discussed ways to investigate what happens on the receiving end of the process, to assure that everyone receives what is being mailed out, either electronically or by paper. This might involve direct help with home computers by volunteer helpers.

Considering the recommendation from the Board to implement best practices in committee work, we have elected as officers Marcia Peterson as chair, Geraldine as secretary, and Deb Rice as liaison to the Board of Trustees. Wendy Smith, who joined in July, provides photos of events and does internet research. Laurie Marshall was welcomed as a new volunteer in December. Dave Sullivan serves as an advisor when we run into problems. We have not yet determined a system of term limits.

We meet one hour before Committee Cafe, first Tuesdays in even number months, plus as needed by email or in person at the convenience of members.
2015

Buildings and Grounds

January – looking toward Capital Projects – remove pine trees, build a storage closet in the Narthex and insulate attic

February – no meeting

March – Quotes for insulation and pine tree removal, Act 148 to take effect so we are moving NUCS toward recycling knowledge

April – 2 sewer pumps replaced, a railing is being installed to the choir loft, trying to find a 3 sided shed for the recycling and garbage, setting up policies and procedures for use of the pizza oven

May – CleanUp Day, vent pipe in Sanctuary roof fixed, Radek screws in loose boards, scrapes and paints the Sanctuary porch, we have found a garden shed

June – Radek cleaned out the barn, Permaculture group presented their finalized plans for the back yard, Ann and Jack are now on the facilities committee, Daniel’s celebration

July – gutter finally installed above the ramp, 3 sided shed has been installed, the budget is completed

August – no meeting

September – Norwood met with B&G to instill all of his knowledge to us —pizza hut bracing, sound system, and freeze alarm in the nursery school, new oil contract has been signed

October – Vassie and Gina did a pre cleanup day and then we had a real clean up day on the 24th

November – Radek has contacted a chimney sweep to clean the chimney and installed weather stripping on doors in the Sanctuary. We agreed to buy a leaf blower for next season, valve in a thermostat has been replaced, we updated our insurance regarding the playground set and garden shed

December – the Town asked for our insurance value on the Sanctuary and parsonage, an ad hoc committee regarding updating and making more welcoming signs met with Gina and asked that B&G take this over, Don Ransom has become a new member of our committee, Anne Dean donated the Christmas tree for the Sanctuary

Buildings and Grounds cannot emphasize enough the wonderful work that the Sextons do to take care of NUCS! Thank you, Agata and Radek!
To the Members of the North Universalist Chapel Society

We are welcoming two new members this year, Mark Auriema and Jim Swift, and saying good-bye to Chris Lloyd and Laird Bradley, the latter two having served our church both as Trustees of Funds and as members of the Finance Committee.

There is good and not-so-good news with respect to the two budget years of 2015 and 2016. For 2015, as you can see from the figures, we ended the year with a small surplus which we are carrying over to 2016. This was in part due to extra pledging that occurred over the course of 2015. For 2016, we are heading into an unusual budget year. Although the 2016 canvass came close to its projected goals, it didn't meet them. Nevertheless, we expect to have more than enough revenue to get through 2016, due principally to the fact that we will not have any expenses for a minister during the second half of the year. The expectation of these considerable savings has also allowed us to direct a total of $14,800 from the canvass “challenge” contributions into our “Fund for the Future.” These funds will now be available to address long-term needs, subject, of course, to a detailed building maintenance/renovation plan that will be reviewed and approved by the North Chapel Board. The use of any surpluses that may develop in the second half of 2016 will be addressed by the Finance Committee and the Board as the year progresses.

The contract we signed with Rev. Wendy Pantoja, which is the standard UUA contract for interim ministers, requires that we give 180 days’ notice for termination, during which time we are obligated to pay full salary and benefits. Thus, we will incur these contractual expenses for Wendy until July 7, 2016.

The church’s invested funds with the Vermont Community Foundation and Wells Fargo did not grow as much as we’d hoped during the past year, but remained more or less flat until the end of 2015. Unfortunately, since the beginning of 2016, the markets have not been kind to anyone’s portfolio, and we can expect an additional 10% to 20% loss from the figures shown below because of the current bear market. And of course, it’s impossible to predict how much of that lost value will be recovered by the end of 2016. Hopefully, all of it and then some.

VCF Nonprofit Reserve Fund value as of 11/30/15: $89,737
VCF Jantos Fund value as of 11/30/15: $9,040
Wells Fargo account value as of 12/31/15: $63,650

The church is switching over from our old bookkeeping system to new QuikBooks accounting software, which will allow better oversight by the Finance Committee and an automated payroll feature, among other things.

Ann Wynia will be providing you with exact figures for the 2015 budget year as well as carefully estimated figures for our 2016 budget, which we will be asking members to consider at this meeting. I urge you all to approve this well-crafted 2016 budget.

Chris Lloyd, Chair, Finance Committee
Welcoming and Engagement Committee Annual Report 2015

Committee members: Barbara Bartlett and Rick Fiske, co-chairs, Shoshana Belisle, Kathy Fiske, Polly Forcier, Joanna Garbisch (secretary), Naomi Malik, Richard Schramm, Pru Schuler

This new committee was formed as an outgrowth Our Future in Focus and began meeting monthly in June. The committee adopted this mission statement as part of its constitution:

Our core purpose is to develop a sustainable welcoming process rooted in kindness, inclusivity and relationship building, directed toward the creation and support of a loving community.

In initial sessions we discussed the role and tasks of the Membership Committee so that we might understand how we could work together effectively and support their important role. We also talked about coordinating new initiatives that would involve both committees.

Committee members shared ideas about how we might enhance and expand our welcoming process and engage the community more fully in the life of the church. From this process we created a list of initiatives that became an initial blueprint for work we would undertake. Our approach is to be open to experimentation and to be willing to try new ideas to achieve our goals.

Thus far the committee has:

1. Developed a “Guideline for Welcoming” that can be used to assist first-time greeters in embracing those new to the church. Began a practice of having a designated greeter from the congregation be at the door each week in addition to the Membership committee who passes out the order of service. Encouraged the use of name tags for visitors and members.

2. Organized two “Meet and Greet” coffees to welcome Wendy to the church.

3. Created a new, updated Visitors Handout describing our church.

4. Made changes to coffee hour so that all the congregation is encouraged to contribute food each week. Set up a round table and chairs to accommodate those who wish to be seated (also to encourage conversation). Provided special coffee mugs to identify newcomers so we might all make an effort to be welcoming.

5. Reviewed engagement activities that currently exist at North Chapel. Invited ideas for new initiatives. Created a Round Table in the Social Hall after certain designated services to encourage discussion of reflection topics.

6. Created a Communications Board in the social hall that will be updated frequently by the Communications committee.

7. Met with Buildings and Grounds to determine where signs should be installed to help people find their way around the building and be more welcoming to newcomers.

Other initiatives are in process. We welcome input from the community and hope to continue to initiate and implement ideas that will enhance our ability to attract and engage everyone in a meaningful way.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Bartlett and Rick Fiske
The SE team has had a wonderful year continuing to offer a diverse program exploring yoga, dance, mediation, mindfulness, visualization, nature, art, drumming, UU principles and religion to children in Kindergarten through Sixth Grade.

At the start of the 2015 year we had three regular teachers including Geraldine Fowler, Anthea Levallee and Ben Fox (representing ArtisTree Community Arts Center / Purple Crayon Productions) with Geraldine Fowler serving as the SE Coordinator. In June 2015, Anthea stepped down from her role as teacher in our SE program. We want to thank Anthea for her many years of service to our church and children. She is missed and was much appreciated.

It has become apparent in recent times that our children were growing not only in age and spiritually but also in numbers. With much discussion, with the start of the 2015-2016 school year, we decided to expand our offering from a one class for grades K-4 program to two groups; K-3rd grade and another group for the 4-6th graders. Ben and Geraldine took on the majority of the classes and also welcomed Murray Ngoima and Jessica Stout to our teaching panel. We also partnered with Change the World Kids to lead one Sunday a month for the 4-6th grade group – which has been a huge success.

Splitting up the groups has allowed for a deeper, richer conversation and learning opportunity for both groups and we feel it was a great decision to make.

In September 2014 we introduced a once a month field trip to ArtisTree Community Arts Center for “Drum Circle” with Ben Fox and Geraldine Fowler. This practice has continued and in September, Murray took over from Geraldine to help lead the classes with Ben and expand to also offer additional expressive arts to the offering.

Over the last year the SE children have done a small performance for the congregation on Mother’s Day, contributed to Daniels farewell service and the children participated in the Children’s Choir for the Christmas Eve service.

The children continue to learn more about the North Chapel House at the Life and Hope Association and the children who reside there. Our children followed the health challenges of Visal closely and were saddened about his passing. They continue to have a great interest in the Life and Hope Association as well as with Climate Change and Social Justice.

Our leadership team has done a lot of research and work into getting the OWL (Our Whole Lives) Curriculum up and running at the North Chapel. Our intention is to start with the OWL series for the 4-6th graders. Ultan Doyle and his partner Jenny Beaudin agreed the lead the series and attended the OWL training in Massachusetts in November 2015. It is our goal to begin the OWL series at the end of ski season and finish by the start of summer vacation (ie. April-beginning on June 2016).
In July, Geraldine and her children (Aidan and Alexis) were able to attend the LRE (Lifespan Religious Education) Week at STAR Island where participants explored themes related to our changing world, the changing nature of church, the critical role of great collaborative teams in navigating these changes, and religious education as a growth strategy. The program featured talks and panel discussions with Carey McDonald, Patricia Infante, Starr Austin, Andrea Lerner, Patricia Hart, Cathy Seggel, and Pat Humphries & Sandy O. of Emma’s Revolution. Not only did Geraldine learn and gather tons of information from the talks and workshops, but was also able to meet and befriend many fellow UUers, SE Coordinators, Youth Leaders, Congregational Leaders, SE teachers, Church Committee members and much more where a wealth of knowledge was shared and exchanged. It was a life changing, beautiful experience!

Based on the Planning Process outcomes from 2014, it became evident that we as a congregation needed to better support families and children not only through SE programming but in other areas as well. Understanding that support/programing does not only take place on Sunday mornings. Such as pizza night including families, child care for concerts, meetings and events, programing for older children etc.

Although an SE Committee has always been in place, this committee had mostly worked to support teachers and the Sunday program. Our new Committee needed to oversee the bigger umbrella. At the start of the year Peggy Kannenstine, Peg Brightman and Brooke Beard began the process of forming an interested group and then in November, Ariel Brewer agreed to chair the committee. In January the SE Committee met and agreed to change our name to Spiritual Exploration for Children and Families. Thank you Peg, Peggy and Brooke for all your help! You are much appreciated.

We look forward to another wonderful year of exploration.

Respectfully submitted by Geraldine Fowler - Religious Exploration Coordinator