NORTH UNIVERSALIST CHAPEL SOCIETY

2014 ANNUAL REPORT

Annual Meeting

January 25, 2015

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www.northchapelvt.org

Affiliated with the Unitarian Universalist Association
North Chapel Annual Report from your Board of Trustees for 2014

Dear Ones,

With the start of each new season in the life of the North Chapel, it feels good to reflect on where we have been, even as we look forward to all that is to come.

2015 begins as last year did, with Daniel away from us for a few months; much good came from that time, and our Board believes such blessings will continue as we begin preparations for Daniel to leave us in order to join his family in Australia.

Joy and Lawrie helped us start a year of self-discovery, leading to and still continuing with the work of the Planning Committee. We learned that Pastoral Care begins & ends with ourselves and that there is a desire & need for continuing Elder Work. We continued to affirm the importance of children and families to this community with a loving & vibrant RE program. We planted a permaculture garden to model joy, beauty, and social justice. We began Committee Café to bring us together as friends and volunteers. All these good things, and many more, happen because of the people of this church; not because of a board or a minister, but because of you and what you are continually willing to give in time, talent, and loving support of a spiritual home that matters to you. Your presence here defines this North Chapel.

Within weeks, a committee of 3-4 members will begin the work to find us our Interim Minister; the scope of this work is fairly well defined by the UUA, who will provide us with a list of specially trained candidates, whose expertise is to guide a community through such a time of transition. Shortly after our Interim arrives, your Board will start to put together a committee for the Settled Minister Search; those who serve on this committee will need to be fully prepared to devote 12-14 months to this most important process.

We know this feels like a time of uncertainty, and definitely one of change, though because of how we care about one another and this place, I would ask that you embrace the coming years as a time of opportunity and hope. Daniel has helped to bring us here, in joining us to build a community of support and love, and this legacy reaches far beyond the walls of the North Chapel. We will honor Daniel and all that we have learned, by continuing as the strong church we are; by modeling social justice & stewardship of our earth, spiritual freedom & versatility, and care for our children, families, and elders.

As I leave the Board, may I tell you that there remains an amazing group of people working to support all the dreams of the North Chapel; hold them up and support them as they do, for this work comes from the purest place in their hearts and, because they love our Church.

As 2015 dawns for you, may every sunrise hold more promise, and every sunset hold more peace, and may the North Chapel continue to be a place where you want to bring your light to share with all of us.

With gratitude for all you are, all you do, all you give...and with great love & respect,

Mary Jeanne Taylor, Chair, Board of the Trustees, which also includes Susan Innui, Denise Lyons, Anne Macksoud, Anne Marinello, Elizabeth Reaves, Deborah Rice, Hope Yeager, and Treasurer, Ann Wynia
North Universalist Chapel Society, Woodstock, Vermont
Minutes of Annual Meeting, January 26, 2014

The 2014 Annual Meeting began at 12:00 p.m. in the North Chapel social hall following a pot luck lunch. About 45 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 sabbatical and the challenges as well as the potential for the NUCS community to meet those challenges during Daniel’s absence.

Mary Jeanne Taylor read the names of the eight new members who joined the North Chapel in 2013. Mary Jeanne Taylor invited any who were looking to become better known to introduce themselves. Ariel Arwen introduced herself. Valerie Pariauka, who is in the process of signing the book and becoming a member, also introduced herself.

ELECTION OF MODERATOR: Representing the Nominating Committee, David Doolittle moved to elect Kevin Geiger as Moderator for the year 2014. Seconded by Neil Marinello. Election of Kevin Geiger as Moderator passed unanimously.

ELECTION OF CLERK: Representing the Nominating Committee, David Doolittle moved to elect Joan Haley as Clerk for the year 2014. Moderator Kevin Geiger called for any other nominations from the floor. There were none. Election of Joan Haley as Clerk passed unanimously.

ELECTION OF TREASURER: Representing the Nominating Committee, David Doolittle moved to elect Ann Wynia as Treasurer for 2013. Seconded by Peggy Kannenstein. Moderator Kevin Geiger called for any other nominations from the floor. There were none. Election of Ann Wynia as Treasurer passed unanimously.

ACCEPTANCE OF ANNUAL REPORT:

Discussion: Kevin Geiger invited any questions about the Annual Report.

Carol Egbert asked about the contract with the Hand-and-Hand suppers. Lynn Peterson explained that the Board of Trustees had made the contract with Hand-in-Hand. With this agreement, the Hand-in-Hand event is now covered by NUCS insurance.


NOMINATING COMMITTEE: Mary Jeanne Taylor, Board of Trustees moved to nominate Neil Marinello and Irene Hanslin to the Nominating Committee. Moderator Kevin Geiger called for any other nominations from the floor. There were none. Election of Neil Marinello and Irene Hanslin to the Nominating Committee passed unanimously.
BOARD OF TRUSTEES: David Doolittle of the Nominating Committee MOVED to nominate the following members to the Board of Trustees. Moderator Kevin Geiger called for any other nominations from the floor. There were none. Election of the four following members passed unanimously.

Anne Macksoud
Denise Lyons
Elizabeth Reeves
Susan Inui
Ann Marinello (for another year)

These first four people are nominated for a three year term.

FINANCE COMMITTEE: David Doolittle of the Nominating Committee put forth Trish Compton as the nominee for the Finance Committee. He noted one additional member will be appointed by the Board, per our bylaws, Article VII, Section 5, which states: A vacancy in an office shall be filled by appointment of the Board of Trustees.

There was a question about Pieter Bohen who was in the annual report as part of the finance committee. Mary Jeanne Taylor explained that Pieter said he could not continue on the committee.

Neil Marinello MOVED to accept these nominations, Irene Hanslin seconded the motion. Nomination is unanimously approved

BUDGET:

Discussion:
Chris Loyd noted that in 2014 budget for the first time they did not automatically cut expenses to make a balanced budget. Instead they will be trying to make up the difference though additional fundraising and relying on the fact that additional pledges will likely come in, as they have regularly done in the past.

There was a question about why the maintenance was so high. Response was that that there was a problem with the sewer system, frozen pipes and also issues with rodents that caused damage as well.

Chris also noted that they will be taking the reserve funds to the Vermont Community Foundation (VCF) so that these funds can be professionally invested. This will help NUCS create a source of funding to meet our increasing capital and maintenance needs. It will be a draw down and replenishment account. People will also be able to make gifts to the funds. Donors could indicate their interest in planned giving and other gifts to go to NUCS and including specific projects of NUCS, Peggy Kannenstein noted she was delighted that NUCS funds will be used in this way and has had very good experiences with the VCF. Because VCF has a substantial amount of money to invest and do it very well so NUCS should be getting a higher return on investment. This will also increase NUCS ability to draw from a broader donor audience. Chris encouraged everyone to consider including NUCS in the planned giving. Ann Wynia noted that the finance committee has done a tremendous job this year. Mary Jeanne also recognized Anne’s continued good work as treasurer and her gratitude for the finance committees’ support of her work.
Neil noted a possible typo in line 2018 barn maintenance; there seemed to an addition area. Response was that they are trying to accumulate cash ahead of time so that when big maintenance expenses come up, they will have the funds available.

Budget is unanimously approved.

**UPDATES:**

a. **Sabbatical:**

Neil Marinello noted although it is a daunting task of taking care of all of NUCS business while he is away. He noted many people from the congregation will be stepping up to help cover the gaps in Daniel’s absence. There has also been a structured plan developed to help the work flow smoothly. Neil notes that we are set up as best as we can.

b. **Social Justice Committee:**

Richard Schram and Rhonda read the vision for the committee. They also did a survey to help steer the committees’ decision making and activities. They worked with Sustainable Woodstock, Change the World Kids, and gun control. They expanded the committee’s presence on NUCS website and worked to help facilitate the development of a group to support youth in our community. They want to help all of the NUCS committees’ work. Upcoming activities include a workshop for youth, a workshop on race and one on class and privilege. They would like to see more people involved with meetings, but they feel the support of the congregation and are moving forward.

c. **Communications**

Neil Stannard reported that they are upgrading the communication systems. Everyone should receive the newsletter, if not it might be going into the same folder. They want the congregation to get information from the NUCS website and newsletter. There is also a webpage where people can post their reflections. Neil invites others to participate and people to contact them with questions or suggestions.

d. **Buildings and Grounds:**

Jack Nelson reported that the elevator is broken. New projects include painting and sewer repair, which will cost about $15,000.

e. **RE Program:**

Hope Yeager said that they would like to provide more for older children, but they are short on people to help. If anyone is interested, they should contact her.

**FAREWELL AND GRATITUDE**

Mary Jeanne read a letter of gratitude recognizing Lynn’s two terms of work on the board. Lynn will be leaving the board.
UNSUNG HERO:

Ann Marinello recognized Veronica Delay for her help on Friday evenings with vespers and other work. Hope Yeager read a letter noting Charity Gray’s contributions to the church including her Wednesday morning meditations at the Chapel. Deb Rice spoke of Ann Dean’s valuable work, especially with sustainable food systems and her regular oneness blessings provided to the community.

ADJOURNMENT: Neil Marinello MOVED to adjourn the meeting. Deb Hawthorne seconded the motion. Unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 1:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Haley
Clerk, North Universalist Chapel Society
North Universalist Chapel Society  
Annual 2014 Financial Report  
Ann Wynia, Treasurer

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Balance                                      | -12,041.95| -11697 |
Ministers Report  
January, 2015

I would like to begin this annual report by stating what an incredible privilege and honor it has been to serve as the minister of the North Chapel over these past 14 years. In an expression of what I have come to know as the generous and open spirit of this community, you offered me the opportunity to do what I love to do most as a profession and as a lifestyle. It has been a process of learning for me and I thank you for all your patience and forgiveness and support. The decision to bring this collaboration to an end in 2015 was not at easy one and that, I suspect, will become even clearer for me as June approaches. It is buoyed by the awareness that there are inherent and deeply held traits in the nature of the North Chapel’s principles and role, and the character of the people, that will guarantee the North Chapel’s vital role in the larger community and its en-lightening, creative, and connective function in the lives of the members and friends.

The past decade (and maybe more) has been a time of transition in the broader religious landscape. It’s important for us to understand this as much as that is possible. In the 1980’s and 90’s religion came into a more prominent role in this country. Mega churches emerged, religious leaders took on political roles and politicians were emboldened to brandish religious credentials and connections as a basis for policy but also, clearly, as a way to re-align voting blocks and solidify a political base. This highly divisive process replaced meaningful conversation about spiritual issues, beliefs, and practices, with symbols and codes that bundled belief/identity/culture/faith/patriotism/morals/family. To a great extent, for a whole generation of people and all those, whatever the ir age, who were similarly sensitized, church became associated with a cultural/political paradigm that they were suspicious about and did not trust or identify with. Liberal churches sometimes were inclined (or forced) to “fight” back from an oppositional pole at the other end.

And yet, as we know so well at the North Chapel, the need for what the church stands for and what the church does, has never been greater. The issues of communal fragmentation, of individual isolation, of the ominous threat to so many of being vulnerable to “fall through the cracks” in a culture that has no clear safety net, have spiritual connotations. Attending to those issues is a spiritual imperative. It is a spiritual consciousness that informs our awareness of the interconnections with all living systems and our responsibility to the earth’s web of life. The condition of our earth’s living systems is a direct reflection of the state of our human soul and our spiritual welfare.

In addition, a liberal faith fosters lightness and joy in our relationships with one another. It cultivates curiosity and creativity. It imagines and is motivated by what is yet to be and not just what has been. It liberates.....and there are so many forms of being bound.....even in our lovely, small, and rural Vermont town life. This is our role and our purpose as the North Chapel and if we remain true to that purpose, we will always be vital and our gatherings will always be renewing.
Over the past year there has been an effort to be a good partner to kindred organizations in our smaller and larger community and area. The possibilities within these collaborations has not been exhausted and not even been fully explored as yet. The library, under Jen Belton’s leadership has become a center for broad communal involvement, often around topics that are central to our principles.

Artistree is a rich resource in our community, especially for our children’s program and the Kathleen and the staff are very much open to a spiritual focus in many of the activities. There is an opportunity in that collaboration to foster a dissolving of the rigid borders between life and art, religion and creativity.

Pentangle, under Alita’s leadership, is hoping to make the arts, and programming, even more accessible and appealing to young people in our community so that they can feel that this is their arts council also. We could help with that, at least by making our space (both inside and outside)readily available for that purpose. Interplay, Western Wind, and the classical music series continue to be highlights in our community’s life and a profound enrichment but will always require us to value this collaboration and express that valuation by our support and readiness.

This is also true of our involvement with Bookstock. That event has grown into a beautiful annual occasion that we should feel proud to be involved in. It has gone a long way since the original book fair here at the chapel but as glad as we might be to have had some role in creating it, we must also consider a strong commitment to sustaining a collaborative role in its continuation. This is especially true considering that we rely less and less on fundraisers but may not likely be able to completely free ourselves of some fundraising activity. Bookstock is a really valuable opportunity in this regard.

The Change the World Kids is an organization that highly values its independence but also relies on us for support in ways that we ought to consider a privilege. This in an organization that demands a little more agility in fostering the relationship but what the organization does, and what it contributes to young people in our community, makes that care completely worth while.

Two other areas of collaboration might be noted here in looking over the past year. The first has a social justice orientation. In this area, our relationship to the Life and Hope Association (LHA) is vital to their, and our, wellbeing. We have to look beyond ourselves in this globalized world and our relationship to LHA helps us, and our children, understand and be empowered to act in a way that is connective. It allows us here (in one of the richest places in the world) to make an impact there (in one of the poorest). And it is a profound impact on the lives of a number of children at a formative point of their lives and the influence they will have.

Our relationship to Sustainable Woodstock (SW) is one which will require special care and particular possibilities in the next year. We have, for some time, exercised less of a visible role in relationship to SW mostly because they wanted and needed to be adopted by the whole community and for that purpose not be too closely associated with the church. Our adoption of climate change as an issue of special significance at this time, might dictate a shift in this relationship. SW has resources and knowledge that can help us with pursuing the goal of becoming carbon neutral in our meeting spaces and facilities. Our focus on this issue creates
the possibility for exploring and modeling how organizations, like ours, can support SW’s goals. How we proceed as a result of the planning committees recommendation can be quite independent of SW but it will be a richer and more meaningful undertaking if we figure out a way to do this cooperatively. Gun sense Vt. is also an organization that does not demand much from us but the work they do is done so steadily and well, and is so important in its goals, that every effort should be made to support the organization and be aware of their requests for how that can best happen.

The other area of collaboration is with faith communities in our area. Our faith communities here in Woodstock have strong leadership and maybe that requires its own particular approach. Each one cultivates loyalties to its own particular set of beliefs and culture. But it seems hard to go beyond a courteous regard for one another towards a real, collaborative engagement, perhaps around social justice issues. The ministers in our region do not gather regularly. Some are quite resistant to any kind of interfaith, or ecumenical, activity. We do, in our community, have a full range of religious options. Nevertheless, there have been a couple of occasions this year when it has been possible to participate together. One gathering at the library that included both rabbi’s in our town, and the ministers at St. James Episcopal and Our Lady of the Snows Catholic church. The other has been involvement at the synagogue on a couple of occasions of celebrating that life of that community. The colleagues in Unitarian Universalist ministry in our area do gather regularly, often at the North Chapel, because of its central location. Those gathering foster a strong sense of connection and support.

Perhaps one other note should be included in this rather long report. Geraldine Fowler has been a delightful addition to the staff at the North Chapel. She bring efficiency to the work and a cheerful and courteous disposition to the office. She has expanded our communicative offerings to include a Facebook presence. She has fulfilled the hope of the communication committee to take on the majority of their activities and centralize all communication in the office. She has done excellent work and it is a real joy to work with her over these past six months. It has also been a great gift that she is willing to coordinate so much or our religious education program for the children. That program will likely take some careful attention in the next year, but her involvement has put it on a steady and predictable basis.

It has also been a great joy to work with Diane Mellinger, as the music director, over the whole term of this ministry. Diane provides a range of musical offerings and talents which is rare and generous. The choir remains a strongly cohesive group, much of that as a credit to Diane’s leadership and personality. “She makes the choir fun”, members always say, and “she makes us sound good”. Music is the lubricant that makes worship possible, especially when we have only a short hour in which to shift our habitual modes of operation, towards something that offers the potential for renewal. In that role the collaboration of the minister with the music director is a primary measure of what is possible and I feel a great sense of gratitude to Diane for all these years of working together. She is a treasure for the church.
We acknowledge the passing, this year, of long time members and dear friends: Kathy Wendling, Lou Kannenstine, Trish Compton, Betty Smith, Neil Wigglesworth, Davenport Cleveland, Bob Lewis.

We acknowledge the wonderful contribution of the Permaculture garden. It has transformed our front yard from something that used to be driven over by a combustible engine to now being planted, plucked and picked by people who find there tomatoes, basil, artichokes and all kinds of delightful food and flowers that absorb carbon rather than producing it. I don’t quite know how much carbon is produced by a fire in the pizza oven but it is wood rather than electricity and gas and it holds the potential for wonderful friendship and community building opportunities. Over the past summer we got to experience a little of that potential. Part of the joy was in the fact that young people found it particularly accessible and inviting and that is a good thing for the church to be fostering.

We acknowledge the incredible contributions of Mary Jeanne Taylor as our board chair over the past year. She has infused kindness and care into the work of the board. Thank you Mary Jeanne. Thank you also to Hope Yeager who served as the secretary and a very thoughtful presence in our board meeting over this past year. Thank you to the planning committee and to Denise Lyons thoughtful leadership of that process and all those who devoted so much time to making the outcome so satisfying. Thank you to Anne Macksoud in her role as the new leadership of the worship committee and the vital work they do. Thank you to Brenda Johnson for her huge contribution to the work of that committee. Thank you to Lynn Peterson for his steady and faithful work in leading the effort of resource development and all those who participate in that essential work. Thank you to Jack Nelson and the building and grounds committee. Our building has never looked better and is cared for in a way that so many of us never think about what that takes. Thank you to the membership committee and the huge effort that it took to create a new directory (with all those lovely pictures!) this year. Thank you to Richard Schramm for his leadership of the Elders circle and his help on the planning committee as well as social justice committee. Thank you to Peter Rousmeniere for his time on the social justice committee.

Thank you to all those who made the Christmas eve service so enjoyable and a pleasure, once again, to bring to the community.

Thank you to each of the board members for the joy of sharing in guiding the work and vision, as well as tending to the spirit of this church.

Thank you for everyone who brought their presence, their goodwill, and their resources to make the life and work of this church possible.

in solidarity and lasting gratitude,

Daniel
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, Treasurer and Clerk for the Annual Meeting; to recruit participants for the General Assembly and for district workshops; and to help in the search for new members for the standing committees of the community on an as needed basis. The NC assisted in adding Richard Fox and Mary Hawkins to the Resource Committee.

For the Annual Meeting on January 25, 2015 the NC proposes Kevin Geiger as Moderator, Ann Wynia as Treasurer and Judy Williamson as Clerk.

For Nominees to the Board of Trustees the NC proposes

1. Chris Bartlett
2. Anne Dean

For Nominees to the Finance Committee the NC proposes

1. Joe Boyd
2. Peggy Kannenstine

On the NC Don Ransom (2016), David Doolittle, Neal Marinello, Irene Hanslin will continue to serve out their terms.

Throughout 2015 in preparation for Annual Meeting 2016, the NC will continue to seek two new Nominees for the Board of Trustees and seek new Nominees for the Finance Committee; make efforts to engage the general membership in attending General Assembly and district workshops and to offer support to all committees on an as needed basis.

Respectfully submitted,

Don Ransom, Chair, January 8, 2015
Resource committee Annual Report 2014

Current Committee Members: Mary Hawkins, Jack Nelson, Lynn Peterson, Karen Wolk

Members who left the Committee this year: Richard Fox, John Dulmage, Rick Fiske and Neil Stannard

This has been a year of transition into new ways to increase resources for the church. We have focused on three new areas:

1. Becoming more program-oriented in our pledge drive. Many people experienced in resource work, both in and outside the UUA, tell us to focus on active, exciting programs (like religious ed, community service, etc.) that the church is pursuing rather than on the practical, material costs of heat, electricity, etc. Therefore for the first time, we have created a separate schematic Program budget in addition to a budget for our practical needs.

2. Using a more direct approach to individual donors to engage them in a more personal conversation about the church and our activities. This would help them feel more involved and help us understand both strengths and weaknesses in church programs.

3. Creating a matching fund whereby donors will be able to double their donation. A couple of church members have offered to help in this regard.

This year’s Pledge Drive is not quite complete but at the time of this Report pledges came to ~ $142,000. This is about 2% lower than last year’s pledges of $145,000. More worrisome however is that this year pledges were received from 118 people compared with 152 in 2014.

Other resources included:

Bookstock Used Book Sale - $4,055
Western Wind - $3,335
Classical Music Series - $2,140
Vermont-Quebec Grant $941
Red Flannel Hash $1,443
Raffle of Peggy Kannenstine painting $2,000

While we were saddened to lose Richard Fox, John Dulmage, Rick Fiske and Neil Stannard from our Committee, who have helped us in immeasurable ways, we have a new member with considerable experience in marketing: Mary Hawkins. We also have been working with Susan Inui and Denise Lyons from the Planning Committee to connect resource development with the church’s mission/vision and new programs. As usual, we have benefited by significant help from the Board of Trustees in thanking donors and helping organize the Annual Church dinner.

In 2015 we plan to continue to work on a Programatic Budget, directed personal fund raising and matching donation programs. We also plan to apply for grants to the UUA, NNED and the Vermont Arts Council. We also intend to investigate the advantages of applying to the state of Vermont to designate our church building as “historic”. This could enable obtaining funds for some of our capital expenses.

One of the joys in serving on the Resource Committee is to witness the extraordinary generosity of many church members as well as friends of the church. It is truly a wonderful community for which we are all very grateful.

Submitted,
Lynn Peterson
Worship and Music Committee Annual Report
2014

It has become increasingly clear during 2014, and especially while Daniel was on Sabbatical, that Sunday Worship Services are most successful and appreciated when they include participation from our own members and from members of the wider Woodstock Community. From the results of a questionnaire earlier this year and from the statements of 80 members of the congregation who responded to the the Planning Committees questions, the consensus was clear: Hearing the stories, the thoughts and the experiences of our own members is preferred above hearing from “guest ministers” who have little knowledge of the North Chapel or of the community beyond our walls. The worship committee is taking this preference seriously and is attempting to create services that are “close to home.”

To mention just some of those who have come forward this year to speak:
Carol Egbert, Hope Yeager, Peter Rousmaniere, Richard Schramm, Kathy Astemborski, Alan Keitt, Jessica Horkak, Susan Innui, Judith Taylor, Delia Clark, Brenda Johnson, Jackie Fischer, Rabbi Dov Taylor, Rabbi Eileen Haigh, Anne Dean, Michael Zsoldos, Chris Bartlett, Richard Fox, Mary Jeanne Taylor, Mike Bachman and Steve Swayne, Keri Cole, Elizabeth Reaves, marta Ceroni……there are many more, but this gives a flavor of the energy and gifts that we have in our midst. We also wish to thank Joy Davey and Lawrence Stibbards who stepped in while Daniel was away.

And this is a good time to mention a reflection of another kind: The Dancers.
Thanks to Peg Brightman and the dancers (among them two members of the worship committee – Hope Yeager and Jenny Gelfan) for providing an alternate reflection – wordless and eloquent.. Dance was not a part of our worship until Peg came. There was some concern in the beginning that it would not embraced by the community. Thise days are gone, thanks to Peg Brightman and the dancers.

That is not to say that we should not invite guest ministers to join us, for example, the fascinating (and inspiring) presentation of Marcello Gleiser, Professor of physics and astronomy at Dartmouth, was a gift to our community on a Sunday morning in July - made possible by Bookstock. We want to look for more opportunities like that.

In 2013 we concentrated on the theme of “stories,” as, perhaps, the best way to get to know one another. In 2014 we continued this theme, but also looked for ways to draw everyone into the conversation by asking the people in the benches to speak with each other on a certain subject, and then to report their “findings.” Some of these efforts worked better than others. The Worship Committee is looking carefully at the ones that were successful wioth an eye to be doing more of that kind of sharing in 2015.

Special thanks to Veronica Delay, Anne Dean and Chrity Gray who supplement and amp-lify our efforts by providing weekly opportunities for meditation and spiritual practice. And for the other spiritul opportunities that are available in our church.

At Daniel’s suggestion, and with a hope of deepening our understaning of who we are as Unitarian Universalists, several members of the Worship Committee are reading an excellent UUA Publication called Engaging Our Spiritual Diversity. We intend to use this book as guide (and ballast) as we anticipate Daniel’s departure in June. The Worship Committee is recognizing that we will need to work very hard to plan services that will not disappoint people (all of us!) who will be missing Daniel – our resident mystic, social worker, teacher, confidant, friend and Pizza Chef.
Music Summary for 2014
The choir continues to be a thriving group in our church, with 35 active members. We are also blessed with many people who contribute music on an individual basis. This year those people included: Pierre Fournier, Don Ransom, Lutie Saul, Mark Vogel, Rowland Hazard, Hannah Roberts, Mike Backman, Steve Swayne, Jenny Barry, Jay Nash, Geoff Dates, Sandi Anderson, Kathleen Dolan, Mark Van Gulden, Western Wind, Margaret Gilmore, Eugene Friesen, Leslie Stroud, Traver/Clark Family, Haas/Brown Family, Children’s Choir and Lydia Spitzer.

-- Diane Mellinger

Special thanks to our committre members:
Diane Mellinger
Hope Yeager
Hugh Belton
Jenny Gelfan
Jessica Horak
Kathy Astemborski
Judith Taylor
Carol Egbert
Brenda Johnson
John Steinle
Anne Macksoud
Membership Committee Annual Report 2014

The members of the Membership Committee are
Sherry Belisle, chair
Ann Wynia, representative for the Board
Pru Schüler
Fran Lancaster
Joanna Garbisch

We have 209 active members and 156 inactive.

Those who have joined membership in the last year are Ariel Arwin, Peter and Jennifer Bock, Dennis Furlong, Joanna Garbisch, Valerie Paruka, Nancy Randall and Elizabeth Reeves.
We have lost Charles Egbert, Trish Compton and Betty Smith as members and Lou Kannenstein and Neil Wigglesworth as friends.

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.

Once a year, we go through the directory to call those whom we haven't seen for awhile 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.

We are grateful for the addition of Jenny Gelfan assisting us in the layout and other help putting together the pictorial directory for 2015.

We are also grateful for Don Ransom and Susan Innui for their work in recruiting ushers for Christmas Eve.

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Belisle
Communications Committee Annual Report 2014

The Communications Committee evolved during 2014. Previously, with Donna as Office Manager, the CC had assumed the responsibility for most of the electronic communications. This involved updating and maintaining the North Chapel web site and compiling and publishing the weekly InTouch. While Donna provided most of the information for these venues, the actual implementation was performed by the CC.

In spring, 2014, Geraldine Fowler was hired as the North Chapel Office Manager. Geraldine was eager to assume the responsibility for all communications. As she became comfortable maintaining the web site and compiling the weekly newsletter, the Communications Committee was able to assume an advisory role. We made suggestions and discussed with Geraldine her ideas and ambitions regarding the improvement of all church communications. Geraldine has also forged ahead with a Facebook page for the North Chapel.

The Communications Committee is presently undergoing other changes. Dave Sullivan and Neil Stannard are becoming less involved due to personal reasons. While both are willing to provide assistance or advice when asked, there is presently a need for one or two other committee members. Deb Rice and Marcia Peterson are the two members who will continue as members of the committee.

One important action to be undertaken by the committee is to formulate a plan to record each Sunday service. The act of recording the service using an iPad was meant to be temporary. Due to extenuating circumstances, the recorder was never replaced as was originally planned. Now the task is to develop a procedure for recording each service and then presenting the recording to Geraldine. She will be able to clip the reflection and upload it to the web site in a timely manner. The Communications Committee, aka Neil, has been negligent in performing this task. It will be necessary to form a small group of people who understand what has to be done each Sunday to record the service. Perhaps a schedule could be drawn up so that someone will always be there to turn on the recorder and ensure that the flash drive is in place prior to 10 am. This will necessitate a short training session once a group of interested members is assembled.

Respectfully,
Neil Stannard
January

There was a very cold bathroom in the front of the Sanctuary and the closet beside it as well. The room next to Donna’s office was also very cold. Agata installed an electric heater until the weather changed.

February

Lots of extra cleaning due to Hand in Hand and the weather. Change the World Kids are doing well with their clean up.

Folks are turning up thermometers and leaving them up after they leave. We solved this by having Agata preset the thermometer before a meeting by 2 hours to keep temptation down.

The elevator needs to be run 2 or 3 times per week as preventative maintenance.

The State came to inspect the sprinkler system and we had to fix a bell that was not working properly. Jack also fixed a couple of lights in the parking lot.

Gina made a list of all of our maintenance folks for the Sanctuary and the Parsonage which will be kept in the office.

March

There was a loose wire and Vermont Life Safety came and fixed the alarm system.

Again, the snow storms, salt and Hand in Hand are making cleaning very difficult for the Sextons.

Gina and Vassie worked on the contracts for the rental of the Social Hall and Kitchen as well as a Notice for anyone using the kitchen.

April

The really tough cleaning is behind us and Hand in Hand is doing better.

The Sextons were away on vacation so everyone pitched in to help out. Natalia cleaned twice while they were away.

Gina with help cleaned out the closet next to the office.
It was unanimous that weddings no longer be allowed to throw flower petals, rice, etc – lavender and bird seed were welcome to be thrown.

May

There are two new outlets in the kitchen for the coffee pots.

Anne Macksoud came to introduce B&G to the new permaculture garden. On the whole we were delighted but there were a few issues that Anne and Daniel worked on for us.

Clean Up Day was May 7th.

June

A lovely dinner at 6 pm given by the Board of Trustees, 7 pm was our meeting and then we all met back in the Social Hall to be able to discuss anything that was of interest to the whole group or ask questions of someone on a committee who may have an immediate answer.

The storm windows were taken down and thermostats turned off.

The permaculture garden has been planted and is coming along beautifully.

Gina extended the strips on the Sanctuary steps as Peggy had requested.

Our first quote for taking down the pine tree is Chippers - $2100 – more to follow.

The quote for paving the driveway from Blaktop - $30,000. We will look at 3 quotes to grade and put a thin coat of hard pak over the whole driveway instead.

Jack received a quote from Springfield Fence to install a 10’ X 8’ cedar fence around the dumpster - $2500 to $3000.

July

Radek rebuilt the bench that was in honor of Howard and Alice Gould.

Radek repainted the porch floor when the painters finished. He painted the ramp with sand in it to help with the icing.

Donna and Geraldine completed the Woodstock Nursery School lease.

The lift that we leased for the painters was needed for the whole month so that became an extra $2000. Jack ordered loam/soil to be delivered to fill in the ruts caused by the lift.

A spigot that was needed for the permaculture garden had to be fixed for $356.

Jack purchased an oil contract for $3.269/gallon.

Gina brought a composting bucket for the kitchen. We will start composting for the garden.
August

Carpenters have installed a new floor in the bathroom of the Parsonage. Radek will install new vinyl on the floor.

Exterior painting of the Sanctuary is complete and looks great!

A composter has been left by the dead branch pile. Gina installed a sign in the kitchen to make sure we all know what to put in the composter.

Discussion regarding memorials and how to have them without destroying the backyard.

September

Radek cleaned the grease trap since it was blocked and it is now working well.

The Sextons are away and Natalia came on Fridays.

The valve on the water fountain is frozen so we will have to live with the fountain the way it is presently.

Vassie and Gina had the driveway filled in with stone. 4 ruts were dug out with gravel on the water bar on the far side of the driveway.

Pine Tree removal quote - $2100 from Timber Tenders.

October

Programming thermostats, changing batteries and installing storm windows.

Parsonage bathroom is now complete except for the woodwork which Radek will finish.

Robin Kempson has fixed the railings and the door closer. We are still waiting on the gutter over the ramp and the faucet plate.

Ann Wynia sent in the finished lead paint paperwork to the State for the Nursery School.

Gina is now liaison for the Nursery School while Donna is on leave from B&G.

Melanson Roofing checked all the roofs for $2100. In the Sanctuary – the copper top is in good shape and the roof over the portico is in fair shape (maybe 5 or 6 years). The Parsonage roof needed 2 men for 2 days and the roof will be fine for the next 5 or 6 years. Melanson did the work for $872.

Area over the Narthex – according to the Fire Marshall all “stuff” has to be removed. As of spring cleaning anything left up there will be put in the dumpster.

B&G is looking for new members.
November

Clean Up Day was on the 8th from 9 to 1.

We will be trying to replace lights in the Sanctuary with LED lights.

Due to code issues, Jack does not want anything at the top of the stairs in the Narthex. We discussed building an 8' X 10' wall in front of the cabinet and installing a door and adding shelving.

The septic alarm went off twice. We are living on borrowed time.

Capital Projects for 2015

Remove the Pine Tree, build a cupboard in the Narthex and insulating the Sanctuary roof.

December


The sewer line work was completed in one day.

The Nursery School complained that they are coming in the morning and finding their rooms in disarray. Gina will be communicating with the teacher and Ann. Their contract allows for only the Sunday School to use that space on Sunday morning.

The Budget for 2015 for the Sanctuary is $5000 and $1000 for the Parsonage.

Decorations for the Sanctuary went up on the 13th.

Buildings and Grounds is still looking for new members.
Social Justice Action Committee Annual Report for 2014

Prepared by Peter Rousmaniere 1/4/15

In its third year of formal existence, the SJA Committee addressed a wide range of issues and ended the year with the expectation that the Board will in 2015 take on social justice more proactively with regard to climate change. This will provide an excellent opportunity in 2015 to assess the precise future role of the SJA Committee within the context of the North Chapel’s long-standing and extensive commitment to social justice.

Initiatives on race and privilege; focus on youth

During the winter of 2014 the committee was involved in numerous issues, including but not limited to gun control (commemoration of the anniversary of the Newtown CT catastrophe), the Woodstock Job Bank, and workshops.

In coordination with a town-wide celebration of Louis Armstrong on the weekend of February 22-23, a workshop organized by Denise Lyons and led by Janet Davis of St. Louis was held on Saturday and a program for the Sunday service was delivered, both on Race in America. That was followed with a workshop on Class and Privilege on March 15-16. Rita Hardiman, of Somerville MA, who was recruited by Richard Schramm, led the workshop.

A 4/17 showing of “Inequality for All” film featuring Robert Reich, arranged by Jackie Fischer, Richard Schramm, and Ron Miller, brought out 30 people for an informative evening.

During the year, Jackie Fischer kept the committee informed of some youth-related programs in town, including a 3/22 Youth Summit at Farm and Wilderness. The intent is to hold a Youth Summit every year with the support of the Ottauquechee Community Partnership. The SJ Committee in 2015 can consider how it might be most helpful in supporting the Youth Summit and other youth-related activities. The planning process in the fall revealed a high level of interest by North Chapel members in youth and inter-generational programs.
Peter Rousmaniere briefed the committee in April about his interest in inducing the Town and Rotary do discontinue its practice since the 1940s to light a cross on the top of Mt Tom during the Christian holy week. Neither the committee nor the North Chapel took a position on the issue. His work will continue into 2015.

**Focusing on how the North Chapel best engages in social justice**

In May and June, the committee turned towards advancing the way in which social justice is a fabric of the North Chapel’s daily living. We asked the board to give greater recognition of alliances with other organizations in town, as alliances are vital for social justice action but are often not fully appreciated. The committee came to a consensus on the following three approaches:

- **First,** we strive to be aware and responsive in responding to social justice concerns and projects going on around the North Chapel. (We saw the quick response by the North Chapel to the proposed construction of a permaculture garden as a model for us).

- **Second,** we will strive to go beyond individual and separate education and/or marketing efforts to focus more on identifying and clarifying the relationships: among similar projects; across different projects; and, across different approaches (linking workshops, Sunday services, fundraising activities, promotion); and between projects within and outside the North Chapel.

- **Third,** we strive to apply a “social justice lens” to projects outside of our committee’s domain. This means we will look more closely at the values that underlie our committee’s efforts (e.g. fairness and justice) and take steps to see that these values are honored in all of the work of the North Chapel whenever and wherever possible.
Food Justice

During the summer, Richard retired from chairmanship and Peter Rousmaniere assumed the chair; at the end of 2014 he resigned without a replacement.

In the summer months, the committee launched an initiative on Food Justice, a topic that had been increasing in importance to the committee and the North Chapel. The Church was already making a monthly collection of food to give to the Woodstock Food Shelf.

Food Justice embraces Food security; Equality in distribution; Nutritionally adequate food at a fair price; Conditions of workers producing food; Farm to plate local consumption and Farm to school; Healthy children, Healthy communities, and Healthy agriculture; and, the sacred aspect of Sharing food.

From August through the balance of the year, the committee focused on building a closer relationship with the Woodstock Food Shelf and perhaps other food shelves. This initiative did not get far due to some complications in making connections with the Food Shelf. Committee member Wendy Smith began to volunteer at the Food Shelf.

The other initiative, undertaken initially by Peter Rousmaniere and Lauran Wilder of Hand in Hand, was to assess the feasibility of an ambitious plan to provide many food shelves and other local organizations with perishable goods through a dedicated regional distribution program. Peter’s research led to finding viable examples of this type of program. In December Food Shelf people expressed interest in pursuing the idea in 2015.

The year closed with the Planning Committee issuing a report that among its recommendations was that the North Chapel concentrate its public identification with social justice under the banner of climate change.

Social Justice has been a foundation stone of the North Chapel community for many years and will continue to be going into 2015.
The Finance Committee and the Treasurer will be presenting their 2015 budget at the annual meeting this January 25 and we will of course be asking for approval of the budget at that time. We hope as well to have a better fix on the 2014 operations shortfall. The shortfall developed for several reasons during the second half of 2014 and we were unable to cut enough from the expense side to eliminate the deficit. The Finance Committee expects to provide up-to-date figures as well on the 2014 budget deficit at the annual meeting, with the hope that ways can be found to narrow significantly the gap by then.

We are able to report on the assets under the church's control. As many of you know, we divided our reserve funds at Wells Fargo in half and transferred $90,000 to a new reserve fund at the Vermont Community Foundation in July. It has generally been a very good year for both portfolios. The fund balances were:

Vermont Community Foundation nonprofit reserve fund: $92,473 (as of 11/30/14). The VCF does its full 2014 calculation of net investment income for nonprofit reserve funds during the month of January, so this figure will likely be higher on February 1.

Wells Fargo portfolio as of 12/31/14: $79,433

With respect to our "off-budget" expenditures during the past year, that is, expense items we agreed NOT to include in the 2014 operations budget, the total spent was approximately $19,000, most of which was paid from the Wells Fargo account. It is expected that this "hole" will be filled in the ensuing 18 months through a variety of fundraising initiatives, which can be described and discussed in more detail at the annual meeting.

The North Chapel is, as of 2014, a duly registered nonprofit corporation with the State of Vermont. Vermont banks now require this in order to open accounts or make changes to existing accounts.

Chris Lloyd, Chair

The RE team has had a wonderful year offering a diverse program exploring yoga, dance, mediation, mindfulness, visualization, nature, art, drumming, UU principles and religion to children in Kindergarten through Fourth Grade.

Since September 2014 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 RE Coordinator.

In September we introduced a once a month field trip to ArtisTree Community Arts Center for “Drum Circle” with Ben Fox and Geraldine Fowler. It has been a beautiful way to bring our spirituality out into the world around us.

Over the last year the RE children have done a small performance for the congregation on Mother’s Day, participated in a couple dance routines during the service and many 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. They have a great interest in the Life and Hope Association as well as with Climate Change.

We have also started to introduce the “Tapestry of Faith” curriculum. We hope to continue to grow this offering. We have seen a great deal of interest and excitement around what we have already done.

This coming year we look forward continuing our collaboration with ArtisTree, we also look forward to collaborating with the Change The World kids to begin to introduce the 4th – 6th graders community service and social justice.

We look forward to another wonderful year of exploration.

Respectfully submitted by Geraldine Fowler - Religious Exploration Coordinator