North Universalist Chapel Society  
Woodstock, Vermont  
Annual Meeting, January 31, 2021

1. 2020 Moderator, Kevin Geiger, opened the meeting at 1:05 p.m.
2. Welcome from the Board of Trustees: Richard Waddell, Chair, and Leon Dunkley. Richard welcomed everyone and Leon called us back to a moment two years ago at his installation during the laying on of hands, remembering the quiet power of community.
3. Election of 2021 Moderator – Nominating Committee nominated Kevin Geiger and it was seconded. The vote in favor was unanimous.
4. Election of 2021 Clerk – Nominating Committee nominated Anne Macksound but she was unable to do this and Judy Williamson was nominated in her place. The vote in favor was unanimous.
5. Election of 2021 Treasurer – Hope Yeager from Nominating Committee nominated Ann Wynia. The vote in favor was unanimous.
6. Election of Board Members for a three-year term– Nominating Committee nominated Kathy Astemorski, David Parker and Richard Schramm to join the NUCS Board of Trustees (note: Richard Schramm joined the Board in November 2020 when Marcia Peterson stepped down). The vote in favor was unanimous. Chris Bartlett and Anne Dean are rotating off of the Board. Richard thanked them for their service.
7. Election of Nominating Committee members – The Board represented by Clara Gimenez, nominated Polly Forcier and Sherry Belisle. The vote in favor was unanimous.
8. Presentation of Annual Report – Peggy Kannenstine motioned to accept the report and Anne Dean seconded the motion. The vote in favor to accept the Annual Report was unanimous.
9. Presentation and Action on 2021 Budget and Other Financial Issues  
   a. 2020 Stewardship Drive report – Ann Wynia reported that pledges to date have totaled $143,000 and many people increased their pledge by 10% or more as suggested.
   b. Discussion of North Chapel’s current and future finances: Opportunities and Challenges in our changing environment – Richard and Ann spoke about the financial issues for 2021. The Social Justice allocation will be
fully used by June; the Building and Grounds budget will increase due to the need to replace the front lawn and the repairs to the kitchen, specifically the grease trap and floor tile replacement (due to grease trap overflow); the Office Administrator is budgeted for 10 hours/week; UUA dues will be increasing and we must now pay our full amount; and QuickBook expenses will increase and responsibility for handling this will be taken on by Margaret Hawkins starting in February at a fee of $30/hour. Richard and Chris addressed the demographic of our membership and the impact that has on the budget and what structural items need to be addressed in the longer term to compensate for decreasing income. This includes (1) the importance of growing the church community and identifying alternative sources of revenue, (2) the group working on rentals hopes to increase rental revenue especially when we are able to reopen the church, and (3) the Endowment Fund will be formally launched in May and that will provide some additional income. Richard commented that the RDC is focusing on other fundraising initiatives beyond what is already planned. He welcomed anyone with ideas on raising money to contact the RDC. There were no significant discussions.

c. Finance and Trustees of Funds Committee report from Jim Swift. He reviewed last year’s budget and said that in 2022 we will have a bigger challenge and will need to find ways to fill the gap. He added that the Endowment Fund hopes to raise $500,000 but this may take some time to fully accomplish this. He said the Committee is aware and appreciative of all the work that Ann has done over all the years and he thanked Chris for his efforts on planning for the future of the North Chapel.

d. Ralph Lancaster made a motion to approve the 2021 budget and it was seconded by Lynn Peterson. The vote to accept the budget was unanimous.

10. Strengthening Families, Building Community Update
   a. Key accomplishments – Geraldine Fowler reported that she was proud and happy to provide many of the programs at little or no cost to the North Chapel. These included helping over 300 families with clothing during the year. She worked as a case manager for WARF that began in April 2020 and they raised $734,000 and awarded $586,000 in grants to 658 applicants. She read a letter of thanks written by one of the recipients.
Geraldine described the work as gut wrenching and beautiful in the way the community responded to the needs of families.

11. Facilities for the Future Update – Ginny Gelfan described the work completed in 2020 and an update on plans for 2021. There was a “deep cleaning” done in 2020 and success with dealing with the long-standing problem of humidity in the church building, especially downstairs. A dehumidifier has been installed and that is working well. Every wall in the church building has been insulated except the sanctuary; the only way to do that effectively would be to blow it in and that can’t be done because of historic preservation.

12. Unsung Hero – presented by Anne Dean and Richard Waddell on behalf of the Board. This year two awards were given. Anne presented an award to Diane Mellinger for coordinating the Sunday services so beautifully for the lovely music and videos. Richard presented an award to Ann Wynia for all the work she does to help us understand our finances and to help the North Chapel. Fran Lancaster also noted that Ann was one of the longest serving treasurers—a job she has held for over 30 years. In addition to these Unsung Heroes, Richard recognized three additional people who have worked many hours for the church—Chris Bartlett, Anne Dean and Joanne Boyle. And Ann Wynia thanked Marcia Peterson for her time on the Board and for coordinating our Zoom meetings.

13. Closing – Leon thanked Richard and Kevin for their work on today’s meeting and made a tribute to Alan Perkins who passed away in 2020. In closing he read a poem that he had written titled “Ways Kindness May Name.”

14. Anne Dean made a motion to adjourn and it was seconded by Jenny Gelfan. The meeting adjourned at 2:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Hope Yeager