# North Universalist Chapel Society
## 2017 Annual Report

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Looking back at the monthly board meeting agenda items for 2017, we can trace a year full of significant developments for the North Chapel, several of them quite strategic. Officially, this was the year when we completed the “interim phase” that was launched with Daniel Jantos’ retirement in June 2015. We believe it’s fair to say that the North Chapel community mined all of the richness that is to be had from an interim experience: strengthening our capabilities and bonds; clarifying our values and priorities; learning and growing together; and preparing ourselves to welcome a new minister with open minds and open hearts. And welcome we did! Rev. Dr. Leon Dunkley—Leon—is now among us, and one of us. Ah, yes.

So many people have contributed so much time and so much talent to bring the North Chapel to a new year that offers bright potential and new challenges. We say a deep thank you to everyone, for all you’ve done and for all you shall continue to do.

Here is what had the board’s attention throughout 2017.

• **Supporting Geraldine in her new role as Outreach and SE coordinator.** At the Board’s February retreat, we worked with Geraldine to continue developing an action plan for how she could fulfill her new responsibilities, with an emphasis on community outreach and collaboration.

• **Launching the mini-Campaign for the North Chapel.** A small task force of volunteers (Jack Nelson, Peggy
Kannenstine, Mary Hawkins, Chris Bartlett, Anne Dean, Chris Lloyd, Vassie Sinopoulis, and Michael Stoner, along with Ann Wynia, Susan Inui and Denise Lyons) designed and executed a successful mini-capital campaign with a goal of raising $300,000 to restore, renovate, and weatherize the North Chapel. By year’s end, we had raised approximately $275,000.

• **Naming Daniel Jantos minister emeritus.** This was put forth as a motion from the board at last year’s Annual Meeting and received unanimous support from all in attendance. With technical and artistic assistance from Gina Auriema, a permanent and public portrayal of this honor was created and is now on display on the wall outside the minister’s office.

• **Collaborating with the Search Committee.** The board helped the Search Committee to prepare documentation needed to attract candidates; engaged with the committee, as requested, throughout its decision-making process; and, through Susan Inui, participated on the contract negotiating team. We also identified and recruited five people to serve as Leon’s Transition Team: Mike Bachman, Pierre Fournier, Renee Grainger, Veronica Delay, and Pru Schuler.

• **Holding a Board-Minister Retreat.** In October, Leon and the Board spent a lively and productive afternoon together at Artistree, focused on: building our working relationship; assessing the state of affairs of the North
Chapel; and beginning to dream together about possibilities. We worked hard and laughed a lot!

- **Engaging with the Facilities Task Force:** Thanks to the leadership and diligence of Michael Stoner, Gina Auriema, and Anne Dean, and assistance from other volunteers, especially Jack Nelson, and with professional input from architect Robert Black, a very thorough and well-conceived plan for building restoration and renovation was conceived and implemented. Last spring, the board approved this plan and work began on a significant excavation and drainage project during the fall.

- **Celebrating the Completion of our Ten-year Commitment to Life and Hope:** The board was pleased to join the North Chapel community in celebrating this major accomplishment. During these years, our community supported the children who lived in the North Universalist Chapel cottage in the L&H village. Each year, as a result of an evening performance, dinner, and raffle event, plus the offering collected during the Thanksgiving service, the North Chapel exceeded its financial commitment. We will always be grateful for the personal passion and engagement of Chris and Barbara Bartlett, which cemented the ongoing relationship we shared with L&H, the children, and Venerable (now Somnieng).

- **Welcoming two provisional members to the board,** whose official membership will be voted upon at the

- **Defining roles and responsibilities for a new Resource Development Committee.** At its October retreat, the board established for itself the priority of reimagining a new committee structure for resource development and constituting a new committee, with assistance from the Nominating Committee. By year’s end, we had in place a clear definition of the roles and responsibilities of this new committee, having also received input on this from the Finance Committee. In 2018, the board shall continue to emphasize a heightened community effort to strengthen the planning and execution of various streams of fundraising activities in addition, to the annual Canvass.

North Chapel Board: Chris Bartlett, Anne Dean, Susan Inui, Denise Lyons, Anne Macksoud, Deborah Rice, and, provisionally Marcia Peterson and Richard Waddell. Ann Wynia, Treasurer.
North Universalist Chapel Society
Woodstock, Vermont
Annual Meeting - January 29, 2017

1. Opening of the Meeting: Kevin Geiger, Moderator of 2016 Annual Meeting

2. Welcome - Board of Trustees represented by Denise Lyons and Susan Inui welcomed the members and friends present and read a quote by Jack Kornfield emphasizing interdependence.

3. Election of 2017 Moderator: Nominating Committee member Mary Jeanne Taylor nominated Kevin Geiger to be the moderator for the 2017 North Chapel Annual Meeting. Neil Marinello moved that the nominations be closed. Lynn Peterson seconded. The motion to nominate Kevin Geiger was passed.

4. Election of 2017 Clerk: Nominating Committee member Mary Jeanne Taylor nominated Hope Yeager. Hope was voted in as Clerk.

5. Election of Treasurer: Mary Jeanne Taylor nominated Ann Wynia to be Treasurer. The membership voted to continue Ann Wynia as Treasurer.


7. Finance and Funds Committee Nominee: Mary Jeanne Taylor nominated Moira Notargiacomo to join the Finance and Funds Committee. The membership voted in favor of Moira's joining the committee.

8. Board of Trustees Nominees - Nominating Committee. Mary Jeanne Taylor nominated Susan Inui, Denise Lyons, and Anne Macksoud for their 2nd three year terms as members of the Board of Trustees. Also, Mary Jeanne Taylor nominated Judy Williamson to join the Board of Trustees for her first three year term.

9. Nominating Committee Nominee - The Board. Susan Inui on behalf of the Board of Trustees nominated Hope Yeager for the Nominating Committee. The membership voted in favor of Hope joining the Nominating Committee.

10. Budget 2017
   A. 2017 Pledge Drive report: Rick Fiske gave an update on the progress of the 2017 Pledge Drive. Susan Inui gave an explanation of how the pledge drive goal was reached.
   B. Finance and Trustee of Funds Committee Report: Jim Swift reported on the projected expenses in 2017 and how the $30,000 surplus from 2016 will be folded in slowly over the course of two years.
   C. Vote to approve the 2017 budget. Neil Marinello made a motion to approve the budget. Lynn Peterson seconded the motion. Lynn Peterson asked what amount the Annual Book Sale brought in. Ann Wynia said it brought in around $3,000.
Lynn expressed gratitude for the money raised through the Book Sale and the Classical Music Series. The membership voted in favor of the motion to approve the budget.

11. Vote on change to ByLaws, Article VII, Section 9 amendment: “The Board of Trustees shall not obligate the Society for an amount in excess of $7500, except by vote of the Society.” Joby Thompson moved to accept the amendment. Peggy Kannenstine seconded the motion. Jim Swift said that it was the recommendation of the Finance and Funds Committee that the amount be raised to $7500 because the amount had not been raised in quite a long time. The membership voted in favor of the motion.

12. Vote on naming Reverend Daniel Jantos, Minister Emeritus: Anne Marinello gave an explanation of the “devoted and competent” service which gives a past minister the possible recognition as a Minister Emeritus. She explained how Daniel was our longest serving full time minister and served our congregation in many ways (personal, spiritual, and professional). The Board of Trustees is unanimous in supporting this motion. Anne Marinello moved that Daniel Jantos be named as Minister Emeritus of the North Chapel. Peggy Kannenstine seconded the motion. Pierre Fournier asked what are the privileges of being a Minister Emeritus. Susan Inui explained that a plaque noting Daniel’s service will be placed in the hallway by the minister’s office along with a photograph. Also Daniel will be allowed to attend and vote at the UUA’s General Assembly.

13. Our Future in Focus Update

A. Key accomplishments: Denise Lyons gave an overview of the Planning Process the congregation went through two years ago. She spoke on how the Board of Trustees continues to hold the priorities from the Planning Process in their current considerations. (The following categories are based on the priorities identified by the Planning Process.)

Celebrate: The North Chapel accomplished the tasks of the Interim Period mostly without the help of a minister present. Interim Period tasks included:

i. Claim and honor North Chapel’s past
ii. Recognize North Chapel’s unique identity
iii. Finding Gwen Groff
iv. Increase Geraldine’s responsibilities
v. Amazing Grays
vi. Sunday services
vii. Pizza Nights
viii. Minister Search is launched.

Broaden: North Chapel is welcoming to all and takes into account families and their needs.

i. Blue Mugs for visitors to be identified at Coffee Hour
ii. Outside greeter added to the indoor greeter
iii. Community bulletin board in the Social Hall
iv. Redesign Quest
v. Geraldine posts sermons online and updated the membership database, joined Chamber of Commerce, posts on Facebook as well as weekly emails
vi. Welcoming and Engagement Committee formed
vii. Addition of downstairs chapel and includes Friday evening services and Buddhist practice sessions (Eightfold Path).

Akhanka pointed out that we have not yet met the UUA's requirements to be an official Welcoming Congregation.

Deezen:

i. Welcoming and Engagement Committee’s Peace Flag project
ii. Use of the chapel space weekly for Evensong
iii. Choir
iv. Circles of Trust
v. Amazing Grays
vi. Clearness Committee
vii. Oneness Blessing
viii. Walking Group
ix. Circle Dinners

Commitment to Climate Crisis:

i. decreased the use of the sanctuary to decrease the use of the heating fuel.

ii. fuel efficiency is a part of the consideration of new building use projects
iii. Permaculture Garden project.

Organize:

i. Community conversations
ii. Committee Cafes including Best Practices
iii. UUA workshops
iv. work with Doug Zelinsky from regional UUA office
v. capital building needs Task Force

Kathy Fiske asked that the Choir should be added to the Celebrate and Broaden categories because they are such a gift to the congregation.

B. Facilities for the Future: Denise explained that the North Chapel Facilities Task Force gave a report to the Board on how space needs and existing spaces are not always in harmony. Michael Stoner, Anne Dean, and Gina Auriema are overseeing the Facilities Task Force moving forward. Anne Dean asked that Susan Inui and Denise Lyons receive a standing ovation in recognition of all of their support.

An architect, Robert Black, has been hired to help assess the physical plant's needs. He pointed out the moisture problem which will only get worse. Also an engineer has been hired, Sabrina Duk from Stevens and Associates in Brattleboro, who also pointed out the extent of the moisture problem. The Task Force is working on furnishing the chapel, becoming carbon neutral, insulating the spaces where renovation work is going to be done. Projected costs of these updates are being assessed and information gathered. There is an $18,000 possible grant from Preservation Trust of Vermont. The congregation would need to match that with another $18,000. There will be an update coming from the Task Force about the total costs of the improvements.

14. Search Committee Update: Marcia Peterson, Matt Friedman, Veronica Delay, Angel Rubino, and Richard Schramm came forward to update the membership on the Ministerial Search process. Marcia reported that they now have four candidates that they
are excited about. There will be a time period of neutral pulpits. By the end of March they will have narrowed it down to one, two, or three possible finalists. Pierre Fournier asked if the Search Committee could share any kind of general information about the four candidates who are being considered. Marcia said that between the four they run the gamut from old to young, gay, straight, married, and single. They live currently in Florida, Washington state, Washington DC.

Anne Dean asked if these are people who expressed interest in us. Marcia said, yes, these are all applicants who indicated an interest in the North Chapel. Mary Blanton asked if a non-UUA applicant will still be considered. Marcia said they have talked about it but they are very excited about the current candidates. Renee Granger asked if the Search Committee has had a chance to interact with members of congregations of these candidates and Marcia said yes. Carol Egbert asked if the Search Committee feels that this process is different enough than the Interim Minister search and Marcia said yes. Anne Dean asked how a non-UUA person would know that we are looking for a minister. Marcia said that the search has been posted on the North Chapel website and in the Quest. J asked if the new minister would be the only person giving the reflections. Matt Friedman said no, the standing practice of the minister giving three out of four reflections per month would continue.

The Search Committee is confident in the North Chapel's ability to stand on its own so if none of the candidates seem suitable that they won't recommend anyone. Carol Egbert asked if the Search Committee could ask the candidates what they see as the role of children. Richard Schramm encouraged the congregation to submit ideas, concerns, questions to the Search Committee. Patsy Matthews asked if all four candidates would be coming to the North Chapel. Marcia said, no, the Search Committee would narrow it down to one candidate before inviting them to come. Anne Macksoud thanked the Search Committee for their time and their hard work in the search process.

15. Expressions of Gratitude: Anne Macksoud presented thanks to Jenny Gelfan for chairing the Music and Worship Committee during the time of transitions through an Interim Minister coming and going. Jenny said that it has been a team effort. Deb Rice presented thanks to Anne Marinello for her six years of service on the Board of Trustees. Anne spoke about her gratitude for all of the great work and learning during the time she served on the Board.

16. Unsung Hero: Denise Lyons presented the 2017 Unsung Hero Award to Richard Schramm. She listed his contributions to the North Chapel's community through his work on the Social Justice committee, participant in the Planning Process, his work offering reflections or service coordinator on some Sunday services, running Amazing Grays, serving as a member of the Ministerial Search Committee, organizing the Clearness Committee sessions, among others!

17. Susan asked those present to stand and join hands. She read closing words.

18. Kevin asked for a motion to adjourn. Joby Thompson moved to adjourn. The membership voted to adjourn at 1:30 p.m.
Appendices to North Chapel Annual Meeting Minutes, 2017

1. Anne Marinello’s motion to name Reverend Daniel Jantos a Minister Emeritus of the North Chapel. (Click Here)
2. Our Future in Focus summary poster. (Click Here)
3. North Chapel Facilities Task Force Report, 2016. (Click Here)
Proposed Change to Bylaws Language

Article VII Section 10

The Board of Trustees shall meet once every month and at any other times at the call of the Chairperson or at the request of any three Trustees. The Board of Trustees shall designate a portion of the November and June meetings for Executive Session, to discuss staff matters and other items. The BOT may meet in Executive Session at other times during the year, at the request of the Chairperson or of any three Trustees.

No motions can be made and voted upon during Executive Session.
ANNUAL REPORT OF FINANCE COMMITTEE

1. Reserve Fund. NUCS Reserve Funds are divided between Vermont Community Foundation and Wells Fargo. Both funds, as would be expected, did very well during 2017. The Vermont Community Foundation fund ended the year at $106,001 and the Wells Fargo fund ended the year at $79,412. The Finance Committee recommends that we keep the current funds in place. The Committee believes that it is appropriate for NUCS to withdraw up to 5% of these funds as part of the operating budget.

2. 2017 Budget. At the end of the year, income exceeded expenses by approximately $14,000. This was in large part due to savings on repair and maintenance items and a significant increase in fundraising income (the Christmas wreath program was an important factor in the increase in the fundraising income).

3. 2018 Budget. As expected, the 2018 budget is substantially higher than the 2017 budget. The original 2017 proposed budget contained expenses of $208,973. The 2018 proposed budget lists expenses of $236,075. The increase is directly attributable to having a full-time minister and the church administrator. The difference between anticipated income and anticipated expenses is a deficit of approximately $34,000. The deficit for 2018 is covered by the $14,000 carry-over from 2017, a grant from the Byrne Foundation, and from savings in 2016 from the prior interim minister’s early withdrawal from the job.

It is important to emphasize, that in 2019 income will have to increase by over 20% to avoid the necessity of cuts in expenses. The Finance Committee has discussed this issue with the Trustees who are taking positive action to increase revenues.

4. Planned Giving. The Finance Committee intends on sponsoring a meeting for the Society to discuss opportunities for planned giving either through estate planning devices or trusts.

Respectfully submitted,
North Universalist Chapel Society
P&L Operating Income & Expense
January through December 2017
Cash Basis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ordinary Income/Expense Income</th>
<th>Jan - Dec 17</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>% of Budget</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted Income</td>
<td>199,401</td>
<td>193,500</td>
<td>103%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Income</td>
<td>199,401</td>
<td>193,500</td>
<td>103%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross Profit</td>
<td>199,401</td>
<td>193,500</td>
<td>103%</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expense</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parsonage</td>
<td>6,260</td>
<td>8,200</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Benefits</td>
<td>6,010</td>
<td>5,885</td>
<td>102%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Expense</td>
<td>27,192</td>
<td>39,800</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payroll Expenses</td>
<td>73,891</td>
<td>76,243</td>
<td>97%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spiritual Exploration</td>
<td>2,219</td>
<td>2,440</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>1,463</td>
<td>1,400</td>
<td>105%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership</td>
<td>2,721</td>
<td>3,550</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worship</td>
<td>1,029</td>
<td>2,600</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minister Expenses</td>
<td>45,701</td>
<td>46,875</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Expenses</td>
<td>19,725</td>
<td>21,980</td>
<td>90%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Expense</td>
<td>186,211</td>
<td>208,973</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Net Ordinary Income           | 13,191     | (15,473)| (85)%      |
| Net Income                    | 13,191     | (15,473)| (85)%      |
# North Universalist Chapel Society
## Balance Sheet
### As of December 31, 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSETS</th>
<th>Dec 31, 17</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current Assets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checking/Savings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People's Checking</td>
<td>242,523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jantos Fund</td>
<td>7,556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VT Community Foundation</td>
<td>106,001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wells Fargo Reserve</td>
<td>79,412</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Checking/Savings</td>
<td>435,491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounts Receivable</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accounts Receivable</td>
<td>(29,994)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Accounts Receivable</td>
<td>(29,994)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Current Assets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undeposited Funds</td>
<td>(5,480)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Other Current Assets</td>
<td>(5,480)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Current Assets</td>
<td>400,017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL ASSETS</td>
<td>400,017</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liabilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Liabilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Current Liabilities</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payroll Liabilities</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Other Current Liabilities</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Current Liabilities</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Liabilities</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted Fund Balance</td>
<td>236,689</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Income</td>
<td>163,116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Equity</td>
<td>399,805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</td>
<td>400,017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sing in the sanctuary. Swim in the river. Make fresh, wood-fired pizza and share it with friends. I have only three goals for ministry at this point.

First of all, I want to sing in the sanctuary. I hope that others will join me there. Singing in the sanctuary is easy so long as Diane Mellinger is around. Thanks to Diane, the sanctuary is so regularly filled with excellent music. We are lucky. I am lucky—lucky to work with an artist who is as sensitive and as responsive as she is. Yet, this is not what I mean say that I want to sing in the sanctuary. “Singing in the sanctuary” is a code. It is a kind of poetry for something that is more mundane. “Singing in the sanctuary” means utilizing a joy-based mode of spiritual growth. There are so many challenges in this world, so many challenges right here in Woodstock—especially when the bitter cold sets in. I long for a way to do the work of the church courageously, non-anxiously and with joy in the heart. The joy-based way will keep us healthy so that we can face the magnitude of the challenges before us without the fear of being overwhelmed. We may be overwhelmed—for the needs are enormous—but we will not be afraid.

Secondly, I want to swim in the river. I hope that others will join me there. “Swimming in the river” is also a code, a kind of poetry for something that is more mundane. “Swimming in the river” means wading in the water. It means becoming dissatisfied with the presence of injustice. It means honoring the flowing waters of goodness and peace. Martin Luther King said,

No, no, we are not satisfied and will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like water and righteousness like a mighty stream.

Justice is the river in which deep faith learns to swim. For ten years, one of the justice efforts of this church has been a project called Life & Hope. As that project sunsets, new opportunities rise before us. Yet, what we need to do is far from clear.

How shall we explore our new way forward together? This is an interesting moment in the life of the church. It is marked by a series of transitions:

1. The departure of Daniel Jantos, a beloved minister who enjoyed a long-term successful ministry,
2. the arrival and departure of Wendy Pantoja, an interim minister with whom there was considerable difficulty,
3. the calling and coming Installation of the new settled minister,
4. a successful capital drive for building maintenance,
5. the coming transition in the leadership of the Board and
6. future challenges—unknown and unnamed.
Institutionally speaking, North Chapel is in a deep state of flux and yet, we still maintain a healthy Sunday Worship schedule. We still provide spiritual exploration and life-span religious education for all of our members, young and old. We still yearn to put our faith into action and to be of use. The opportunity before is to discover how the work of doing justice can become a spiritual exercise. When justice work is a spiritual exercise, it doesn’t so easily overwhelm us. Instead of burning us out, it sets us on fire. Instead of breaking the heart, it heals the soul.

We would do well to study the concept of justice. We could offer what we learn to the larger community. In fact, this process has already begun. In the third week of January, North Chapel and Shir Shalom (the Woodstock Area Jewish Community Congregation) were called upon to meet with a group of middle schoolers here in Woodstock. The young students had been discussing the concept of religious freedom in their social studies class. They had encountered an interesting article on NPR:

Quebec Enacts 'Religious Neutrality Law' To Curb Full-Face Veils In Public
October 19, 20173:49 AM ET
SCOTT NEUMAN
Twitter
Quebec has approved a law that would require citizens of the Canadian province to uncover their faces while giving or receiving any public service — a rule critics say is aimed at Muslim women who wear the niqab or burqa.¹

It’s wonderful to know that young folks here at are interested in things that happen so far away, interested in things that have global implications. For 90 minutes, we discuss the merits of the concept of religious freedom. At the end of the event, it felt like we were just getting started.

Surely, we at North Chapel are as fascinated by life as the middle schoolers. What if we took some time to explore the very concept of justice? Instead of diving headlong into a “replacement initiative” that could follow Life & Hope, what if we took the time to discern how best to respond to our times. We could create a strategy through which we could remain ethically engaged in the short term while we reflect on where it is that we choose to go from here. Choosing takes time and if we honor that need, we might find a way to be of deeper service.

Thirdly and lastly I want to make fresh, wood-fired pizza and share it with friends. I hope that others will join me in so doing. “Making fresh, wood-fired pizza and share it with friends” is also a code. It means that we make a practice of being of service to the larger world. Perhaps, we understand this effort as continuing on from the justice work that we undertake. Perhaps, we understand it as how we are already of service to the community—not only through initiatives that were begun here at North Chapel (i.e. Bookstock, Sustainable Woodstock, Change the World Kids, the Interfaith Housing Coalition, etc.) but through the flower of kindness in ways that are entirely new.

North Chapel is blossoming. A beautiful new way is opening for us. Our coming together on Sunday morning is truly a holy thing. Our joy and struggle to know and

understand one another is its natural outgrowth. We are powerfully connected in the area. Through the SE program and the OWL program (Geraldine Fowler), we are connected with the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Upper Valley in Norwich. Geraldine and I have also established a strong connection with WISE-Upper Valley, the domestic and sexual violence response program and with the Norman Williams Public Library. We hope to add to and expand on the programmatic arm of that institution and have met with the leaders of the Library to those ends. In August of 2017, North Chapel responded promptly and publicly to the violence in Charlottesville, VA. In October, we responded promptly and publicly to the tragedy in Las Vegas, NV—each time, sending the sign to the community that North Chapel is a sacred house, that North Chapel is a sanctuary in which we are safe enough to share our grief and begin to heal.

North Chapel is becoming increasingly connected on the denominational level. We have had a presence at Star Island, to be sure, and also at General Assembly. Before beginning in Vermont, I attended GA in New Orleans. Like Reverend Daniel Jantos before me, I participated in the North New England Chapter of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association. At the end of January, I attended the CENTER Institute, a national gathering of minister of liberal faith. I am exploring the concept of entrepreneurial ministry. Every three years, The Unitarian Universalist Minister’s Association (UCMA), offers the CENTER—Institute for Excellence in Ministry. Ministers from across the country will gather between January 22nd and January 26th at the Innisbrook Resort, Golf & Conference Center in Palm Harbor, Florida. The program will be as follows:

An Introduction to Entrepreneurial Ministry
Can you envision a new form of religious community for the 21st Century, one that might attract the un-churched or those who describe themselves as “spiritual but not religious”? Are you entertaining dangerous ideas about leading that kind of change but aren’t really sure what’s involved? You’re not alone. The landscape of religious innovation is heating up fast and opportunities for real change are emerging. We’ll take a brief look at the range of experiments already underway and what we can learn from them. We’ll ask you to discern your own call to religious entrepreneurship and we’ll introduce the key elements involved in your innovation to your congregation or a start-up. You’ll learn the principles of design thinking like empathetic discovery, rapid prototyping and creating a “minimum viable product.” You’ll explore the value of carefully identifying who you want to attract, developing a unique “value proposition” for them and identifying the essential components that will make your new venture successful. Finally, we’ll connect you to some critical resources for
implementing your idea. Our goal: Help you decide whether this is something you really want to do and help you get started. Worst case, you’ll learn some cool new concepts!

The course will be led by Rev. Brock Leach (a UU minister working to advance social justice and social entrepreneurship, Rev. Sue Phillips (formerly, the UUA’s Regional Lead for New England and Rev. Cameron Trimble (the Executive Director, CEO of the Center for Progressive Renewal and Convergence).

This is a nascent idea. There will be more information to follow.

In the Annual Report of 2014, Rev. Jantos was concerned about a transition in society that was informing the wellbeing of the church. He was particularly concerned with the symbols and codes of public and he wrote,

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 and family.

Since the 1980s and 90s (and, indeed, since 2014), these symbols and codes have only become more powerful and more dangerous. The importance of places like North Universalist Chapel Society cannot be underestimated.

Our public, political has become so vulgar and profane that I cannot use its language—not with the middle schoolers who I met last week, not with the justice workers of the Upper Valley and not with the members of North Universalist Chapel Society. One of the questions that circulate among Unitarian Universalist ministers asks whether our churches function as beacons or as bunkers. Ideally, there is a mix of both. At North Chapel, there is a mix of both. I am, everyday, amazed by the gentleness and care that seems to emanate from North Chapel. I am as often amazed by the number of people in the Woodstock area who feel deeply connected to North Chapel, even though they are not members and have not been on site for years. We do see them at Christmastime or at other times of transition—at weddings, at the births of children, for memorial services…at any number of rites of passage that are meaningful to us.

Over the course of the next few months, we will be reviewing the current “process” of membership and will be developing a “pathway” to membership that is more intentional than the current process. In the near term, we will be planning a series of dinners to deepen work of belonging here at North Chapel. On the horizon theologically are a series of workshops or adult learning classes:

1. The Theology of Healing
   a. Compassion
b. Empathy  
c. Honesty  
d. Forgiveness

2. Theories of Conflict and Consensus  
3. Theology on Tap  
4. The Spiritual Justice Seminar

…to name but a few.

In mid-winter, North Chapel is blossoming. We are the gentle petals of a beautiful flower—one and all. May we amplify this beauty in the world.
Nominating Committee Annual Report

The Nominating Committee has the responsibility of nominating a slate of candidates for the following positions:

Kevin Geiger to serve as Moderator for the Society for 2018;
Hope Yeager to serve as Secretary for the Society for 2018;
Ann Wynia to serve as Treasurer of the Society for 2018;
Marcia Peterson and Richard Waddell to begin serving three-year terms on the North Chapel Board of Trustees;
Peggy Kannenstine to serve a second three-year term on the Finance/Trustee of Funds Committee.

Congregants attending Annual Meeting on January 28, 2018 will be asked to vote on these nominations.

In addition, this year we assisted in recruiting the Canvass Committee and will continue to help recruit the newly forming Resource Development Committee.

The current Nominating Committee consists of:

Neil Marinello, outgoing chair and retiring at the end of his term as of Annual Meeting, January 28, 2018
Mary Jean Taylor, in coming chair (term ends 1/20)
Irene Hanslin, (term ends 1/19)
Hope Yeager, (term ends 2021)

Submitted by,

Neil Marinello
The Jantos Fund Annual Report 2017

The Jantos fund is designated for the discretionary use of the minister of the North Chapel Universalist Society, working in consultation with a small advisory group appointed by the North Chapel Board of Trustees, to provide emergency or transitional support to individuals and families in the greater Woodstock community. Priority will be given to supporting members or friends of the North Chapel.

The funds are to be used to provide onetime, short term assistance to individuals facing hardship (e.g. temporary homelessness; needing to escape an abusive family situation; unexpected inability to pay for heat or utilities; requiring emergency counseling or support; etc.). Funds may also be used to support specific individuals or organizations for needs aligned closely to the North Chapel’s vision of social justice.

Over the course of the last year, we have helped six families and one social justice response. The total amount of these requests being $2,616.48. Requests range from help with auto repairs, gas money, car insurance, back rent, winter tires and heating fuel. The fund also helped sponsor a social justice visit to Puerto Rico following the devastation left by Hurricane Maria. We have collaborated with local churches such as Our Lady of the Snows and St. James and organizations such as Kings Daughters and the Community Wellness Coordinators to better assist those in our community.

Respectfully submitted by Geraldine Fowler
The work of the Music and Worship Committee is constantly evolving, never ending, due to the creative nature of the work in an environment where change is the primary ruling variable. The first eight months of the year had the Committee supplying a guest reflector for every Sunday and also coordinating the necessary Service Coordinators each week. The last four months of the year have been spent in creating a good working relationship with our new minister Leon Dunkley. This has been an interesting and rewarding experience inasmuch as Leon is proving to be a dedicated professional who is very willing to fully collaborate with us, listen to us and engage us with his own creativity and sensitivity. The Committee continues to be responsible for supplying guest reflectors during the one Sunday each month when Leon is off and during the periods of his vacation and professional training breaks and of course we continue to schedule the weekly Service Coordinators. The guiding dynamic of the Committee is to hold to our Mission Statement which is “To ensure that the preparation and delivery of the Sunday services are of the highest available quality, that they connect with both the head and the heart, that they contribute to the spiritual well-being of all people present and that they reflect our church values as outlined in our seven principles.”

We are deeply grateful to those generous souls who share themselves with us as guest reflectors and with those members who are willing to step into the role of Service Coordinator each week.

In that same spirit we are also grateful to our Music Director Diane Mellinger for her excellent work in bringing beautiful and meaningful music to our Sunday services in her capacity as Choir Director, Organist, Pianist, Accompanist, Arranger and booking agent for those Sundays when she isn’t on hand. The following is a brief music summary of the year from Diane:

The all volunteer choir, with 29 active singers, continued to provide lovely music for most services (on break during the summer). Other guest
musicians who provided music at services during the year are Pierre Fournier, David Ross (Classical Guitarist), Kathleen Dolan, Mark Van Gulden, Alicia Breer, Amy McElroy, Rowley Hazard, Western Wind, Lutie Saul, Sandi Anderson, Bridgewater Community Chorus and Eugene Friesen.

Membership on the Committee at the end of the year in addition to the Minister and the Music Director are Don Ransom, chair, Jessica Stout, recording secretary, Kathy Astemborski, Mary Blanton, Shoshana Belisle, Anne Marinello.

Respectfully submitted,

Don Ransom, Chair

January 9th 2018
Membership Committee - Annual Report 2017

We have 205 members listed with 151 active. Twenty eight people joined the membership list this year.

The latest directory was published last January.

We held 3 Circle Dinners last winter and 3 "new members" meetings with lunch in the spring, culminated by a morning to celebrate them in early June. Ann provides name tags for each as well as for those who come but have not yet joined.

As usual, we greet every Sunday, and once a year, call those we have not seen in church for awhile to check up on them.

Jenny Gelfan is now interviewing new members for writing a highlight in the Quest. We appreciate Linda Galveo and Moira Notargiacomo for doing this in the past.

We coordinate with Welcoming and Engagement so there is no overlap in our ideas and responsibilities.

Sherry Belisle, chair
Pru Schuler
Fran Lancaster
Ann Wynia
Joanna Garbisch
Joan Harvey
Communications Committee Annual Report 2017

Communications Committee currently consists of Marcia Peterson, Deb Rice, Laurie Marshall, Geraldine Fowler, Gail Owens and Wendy Smith. The Communications Committee met a handful of times over the 2017 period.

The Communications Committee goal is to support and improve the way information is shared with North Chapel Members and friends by collaborating with Geraldine Fowler, Church Administrator, who prepares and produces most of the North Chapels communications such as: the monthly Quest, and weekly In Touch, the Order of Service for each week, maintains a data base of members’ email addresses in Constant Contact and the church database in Filemake, sends out special announcements from the Board (and others with special content from board representative), post weekly reflections online on the North Chapel Website, administers various facebook pages on behalf of the North Chapel these include a page for the North Chapel, the Winter Farmers Market and a private group for SE Families, posting weekly information on the area listserves such as Pomfret, Woodstock and Upper Valley. Geraldine also serves as secretary for the committee by consensus.

The North Chapel continues to be a Woodstock Chamber of Commerce Member, and our events are now also listed on the Chamber Website and various other event calendars in the area.

The rest of the committee act as a sounding board and a brainstorming group. The group also advises and participates in updates, and monitoring the website content for updating. This year we continued to create, modify and update some of the tabs on the home page, and established links between pages for easier navigation.

Wendy Smith continues to beautifully manage the bulletin board in the social hall. Thank you Wendy!!

Communications Committee helped to promote various events happening at the North Chapel this year including 2 Eugene Friesen concerts (one in summer and one in the winter) and Western Wind Concert.

Pizza: The Communications Committee loosely assisted Deb Rice with Pizza Night. We designed and had a Pizza Night Sign printed that was hung up each Wednesday during the Summer.

Deb found a new A frame sign that can be used for events. The Committee designed and created a sign that can be used for concerts. Deb also designed interchangeable panels allowing various concert information to be displayed and updated.

Deb Rice also created an easel notice board in the Narthex of the building. This is to be used as a way to communicate special events and notices, the new A frame sign has interchangeable panels allowing various concert information to be displayed and updated.

Respectfully submitted by Geraldine Fowler (Communications Committee Secretary)
Buildings & Grounds  
The Year in Review - 2017

Mission Statement: To maintain through daily practice, preservation and improvement, the physical plant and grounds of our church and parsonage.

Members: Gina Auriema, Chair  Vassie Sinopoulos, Secretary Jack Nelson, Don Ransom, George Wohlgemuth, Ralph Lancaster, and Jenny Gelfan

This year we welcomed two new members - Ralph Lancaster and Jenny Gelfan

Our year always begins with the taking down of Christmas. Decorating the Sanctuary and then pulling it all down after the season is one of Buildings & Grounds yearly responsibilities.

At this time we also set our priorities for maintenance and preservation of our facility. The two projects that we set to accomplish were: (a) replace the carpeting - runner, etc. in the Sanctuary and (b) to replace the wall to wall carpet in the Social Hall Foyer. The new carpet didn’t get put in because it was determined that it should be part of the larger renovation project. We also got quotes for sanding and refinishing the sanctuary floor. This too may become part of the FOF restoration project. Quotes came in between $9,000-$16,000, depending on whether or not moving the pews was included in cost.

In addition to these priorities in the main building, we were challenged by the fact that the chimney in the parsonage was determined to be unsafe. Unfortunately, by the time we got a second opinion and found the best solution, it was spring and the Sexton’s had endured the winter without use of the wood stove. (but with a stack of dry wood for next winter!)

The final solution came from Top Hat Chimney, West Fairlee, VT. They determined that the most cost effective solution was to replace the old Vigilant Wood Stove which has an 8 inch flu vent with a new stove that accommodates a 6 inch flu. This would allow for the two vents (one from furnace) to fit the existing chimney.

A new wood stove was purchased for the parsonage and installed in the summer.

In February, it should be noted, we had two large snow storms which made cleaning a greater challenge given that CTWK cabin fever dinners were in full swing and we had three large memorial services scheduled. Special thanks to our Sextons for their diligence.

This year, the monies received from the VT/Quebec UU Convention Grant went towards purchasing audio visual equipment for the parlors. Now we can show films/documentaries and have movie night!

Special emphasis was put on spring clean up this year in anticipation of Candidate Week! With the help of George Wohlgemuth’s professional team and equipment, we repaired the damage done by the plow and cleaned up the lawn and gardens. Painting of the pizza oven pavilion was finished to give it a nice complete look.
Throughout the year we engaged in other regular maintenance projects including; Power washing front of Sanctuary, flower boxes, signage for front of church, replace a heating zone valve, repairing toilets, putting up insulation between bathroom and organ, working on rental policy, overseeing rentals, oversight of lawn care, cleaning of grease trap in kitchen, co-sponsor composting workshop at library, changing lightbulbs, cleaning out parlors and SE rooms, organizing stuff, getting rid of superfluous stuff, loads of trips to dump, recycle center, listen center, etc. and generally trying to keep our facility tidy and looking good.

Our participation in FOF renovation project required quite a bit of thought, time and energy as we gathered bids from contractors for renovation of lower level chapel and SE room and hallway. Working with Michael Stoner to facilitate moving forward with this project has been a priority of Buildings & Grounds since we clearly share the same goals.

In the fall we prepared for the second phase of the excavation work and installation of a drainage system to mitigate the moisture problem we have in the lower level of our facility. This was part II of the first phase of FOF Campaign.

The excavation began in November and was completed just as the ground began to freeze.

In December it was time to visit the farmer who grows the Christmas trees, get permission to cut another one, organize the team to cut and haul it to church and decorate it. Leon’s first year with us for the tree cutting ceremony!

Full circle, another year begins

Submitted by
Gina Auriema
MISSION STATEMENT: The mission of the Welcoming and Engagement Committee is to develop an ongoing welcoming and engagement process rooted in kindness, inclusivity and relationship building, directed toward the creation and support of a loving community.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP: Current committee members are Barbara Bartlett (chair), Moira Notargiacomo (assuming leadership in Barbara’s absence), Polly Forcier (Secretary), Laurie Marshall, Zoe Potter, Joby Thompson and Pru Schuler. (Rick and Kathy Fiske stepped off the committee during the year. We thank them for their many wonderful contributions.)

ACTIVITIES: We have met monthly to continue to expand and improve the way that visitors and interested new people are welcomed into the sanctuary and church community. The following are examples of welcoming activities we have initiated over the past year in the hope that many small changes will result in expanding what is already a very friendly and open congregation:

• The number of Welcomers at the church door has expanded to include more participants.

• A column for the Quest, written by Linda Galveo, Moira Notargiacomo, and Jenny Gelfan, introduces new members to the community.

• Particularly following the influx of new members this past June, we continue our efforts to help people feel comfortable at coffee hour and other church activities.

• We have expanded our hosting of potluck lunches and try to encourage a culture of welcoming within the community.

In July we participated in a very productive (hopefully annual) committee retreat. We finalized our Committee Constitution and revised it with clear guidelines regarding how we will operate. We also set priorities for the coming year, and decided that the focus of committee work would be to create activities and processes that will encourage engagement and a sense of belonging to a loving community.

Specific goals for the year ahead are:
1. Improve communication about what’s happening at the North Chapel and how people can become involved.

2. Create and maintain an ongoing list of activities and events and determine how to make it available to everyone.

3. Support Leon in his role as minister, especially in regard to new membership.

4. Support other committees in reaching their objectives, engaging in closer communication in order to do this.

We are delighted that Leon has been participating in many of our meetings, and his shared experiences from other churches is helping us to understand what might attract people to the North Chapel and how we can follow up in determining how to meet their needs.

Under Leon’s valuable direction our committee, partnering with the Membership Committee, is undertaking to organize small group dinners with new members. We are also beginning to work with him on creating a “Pathway to Membership” which will make it clear to all about what it means to be a member of NUCS and how to become one.

As always, we invite ideas and input from all members of our community.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Bartlett

As always, we invite the ideas and participation of all members of the church community.
Spiritual Exploration Report Annual Report 2017

NORTH CHAPEL SPIRITUAL EXPLORATION... WHERE WE INTRODUCE CHILDREN TO THE UU PRINCIPALS THROUGH YOGA, MINDFULNESS, CREATIVE ARTS, MUSIC, COMMUNITY SERVICE AND CONNECTION TO THE NATURAL WORLD.

We have enjoyed yet another great year in Spiritual Exploration for Children and Families.

In 2017 we began the year with 6 regular teachers leading Sunday SE. While we are able to split the group up between those in Kindergarten to 3rd grade and another group of children in 4th grade through 6th grade, we have not needed to do this due to the number of children and the age of the children. It has been best this year to mostly keep the group together. Our teachers include Geraldine Fowler (SE Coordinator), Ben Fox, Murray Ngoima, Angel Rubino, Jessica Stout, Michael Zsoldos and Change The World Kids. Thank you to Amy Wheeler who has also stepped in to help on a number of occasions.

Sunday Programing:

In addition to our regular Sunday morning programing, other highlights include:

• Easter Service -We had about 10 children join our Annual Easter Egg Hunt - may families were away for this weekend. Thanks to the many people who contributed eggs, candy and goodies we had a huge number of eggs and a very successful egg hunt. Once the hunt was over the children enjoyed time either playing outside with bubbles, on the playground or went into side to sort through their goodies.

• SE Children helped to plan and harvest the CTWK garden at ArtisTree and donated those proceeds to the Woodstock Food Shelf and Root Cellar.

• We visited the Buddhist Tea House and learned about Buddhism and meditation with the help of Angel Rubino.

• We have helped with the CTWK Holiday Hearts Program bringing holiday joy to local families in need.

• Anne Dean’s joined us one Sunday and helped the children make tea out of plants from our Permaculture Garden. Our Tea making party was completed by tea party with holiday cookies!

• The children worked closely with Michael Zsoldos to prepare a musical piece for our “Step Up Day”. The children performed “Spirit of Life” where some children sang, some children played an instrument and others created an art piece to display while the song was played/sung. Michael also directed our Children’s Choir for the Christmas Eve Service which also included 2 children playing the saxophone, one flute, one clarinet and one child on percussion!

• In order to have all families who wished to participate in the CHaD Hero’s “Ran4Ryland”, we committed to fundraise for the registration fees and fundraising minimums. We had a total of 26 North Chapel participants (11 adults and 15 children). Registration costs for the North Chapel were $625 and a fundraising minimum of $800 needed to be met – therefore a total of $1500 was needed for all to participate. We managed to meet that goal and exceed it by $200
that was additionally donated to Run4Ryland Team. To fundraise the children organized a Bake Sale and a Pancake Breakfast. Both were extremely successful and lots of fun and predominantly run by the children. A great learning experience.

- We had two children graduate from our SE and join CTWK.

**Family Participation**

- Continued to have a nice following of children and families to the Community Pizza Nights at during the summer.

- We have a dedicated SE Family table at the CTWK Cabin Fever Dinners (by donation). This has turned out to be a great time for families to get together and enjoy a meal.

- We hosted a Mother Up! A Parents Exchange for Change event where we had a small turnout but a chance to make new and strengthen connections with community members. A delicious, farm-fresh home-cooked meal was served and fun, enriching activities were available for the kids while the parents enjoyed a fruitful discussion! This gathering was followed by a visit to the Vermont State House for the Mother Up Lobby Day! We had a number of children and parents attend and got to meet various state representatives.

- Following our 4 week trial preschool story & yoga time last year, we continued our partnership with the NWPL and in the Fall started a weekly Preschool Story Time led by Angel Rubino. Attendance was smaller for the first couple of weeks but has since really gathered quiet the following with many many compliments received.

- Two Potluck Dinners were held at The Maliks house with a great turn out of children and parents attending.

**For the Parents**

- Our weekly walking group continued creating a beautiful time of community. Over the winter this walking group moved into more of a “spiritual fitness” group and we starting to attend a weekly guided meditation at ArtisTree and a free yoga class for parents/caregivers at the North Chapel. The mediation and yoga class both offered free childcare.

- A SE Book Group was formed that has begun to meet Monthly and has a good, consistent following.

- In January 2018 we will begin to offer a monthly “Divorce and Separation Support Group”

**Other Outreach:**

After-school Programming and Snacks at the NWPL: Geraldine is working closely with the NWPL to establish a regular presence at the library and to assist with enriching and interesting after school activities. We also see a need to feed some of the children who go to the library so we are working on creating a food program that will be supported by the North Chapel, NWPL and the Food Shelf along with other businesses in the area who may be willing and interested.
Vermont Family Based Approach: Geraldine continued to be a part of the VFBA coalition. The North Chapel was commended for the good work being done in promoting family wellness through our various programs such as yoga and childcare and offering free child care during Guided Imagery.

(All health is tied to emotional and behavioral health. To improve population health, we need innovative approaches to healthcare that target emotional and behavioral health. The Vermont Family Based Approach (VFBA) is a healthcare paradigm that aims to improve population health by improving emotional and behavioral health. Because the family is a powerful health-promoting social institution, the VFBA also aims to shift the delivery of healthcare to the family level. This article introduces the VFBA, and presents the main empirical findings that informed the approach in the context of the early childhood period.)


Our Whole Lives (Grades 4-6): North Chapel Collaborated with the Norwich UU to hold OWL classes for grades 4-6 in the fall of 2017. North Chapel had 3 children attending. At least 2 other children are participating that do not have a home church but found out about OWL through the posting North Chapel made on the community listserves. Sparrow (DRE of Norwich) asked Geraldine to co-lead the OWL session. We meet weekly on Sundays for 10 weeks. There were over 15 children signed up for the OWL class between the Norwich UU, the NC UU, Norwich Congo Church and some children not associated with a church.

Stafford Commons Summer Series: We began talking to Ottaquechee Community Wellness Coordinator and admin folks of Twin Pines Housing about offering a Summer Series at Stafford Commons. We hoped this would come to fruition Summer 2017 but unfortunately it did not. We will try to get something going in the summer of 2018.

Strengthening Families: In my years working with families and children there are three programs that stick out to me. Strengthening Families, Search Institute’s Developmental Assets and Bridges Out of Poverty.

Other: Geraldine also is the secretary of the board of the Prosper Valley School Trust, is in communication with the Ottaquechee Health Foundation about creating a collaborative Mindfulness Program for children and families, volunteered at the Family Place Gingerbread Festival and helped to form the UU Ladies of the Upper Valley Group that will meet regularly and is an admin on the private facebook group.

Strengthening Families: In my years working with families and children there are three programs that stick out to me. Strengthening Families, Search Institute’s Developmental Assets and Bridges Out of Poverty. While all are great, I would like to share some information on “Strengthening Families” framework. I find myself more and more often these days turning to what I have learned in the “Strengthening Families” training and realizing more and more how my position here at the North Chapel lends itself to creating this type of overarching reach to include more than just the child in our “Spiritual Exploration”. We have been working on Family SE and creating ways for the families to come together be this through intergenerational events, meals such as Potluck at the Maliks or SE table at CTWK Dinners and also for parents to take time for self-care eg. book group, walking group, meditation and such. I find my role very often moves to a “pastoral care” role, where I am able to use this Strengthening Families framework. I have included a brief overview for your perusal.
Star Island: In July of 2017, Geraldine and her children (Aidan and Alexis) were once again able to attend the LRE (Lifespan Religious Education) Week at STAR Island. Angel and her son Quinn were also able to attend. It was an incredible week of exploring, learning, inspiring, and empowering ourselves in the work that we do.

We continue to work on ideas. Looking at challenges and successes and continue to implement quality programming for our children and families. Some ideas that we are working on include:

- Parents Night Out!
- Expanding our outreach efforts and preschool program
- Establishing a SE for Children and Families Committee
- and much more!

We thank the North Chapel Board and the North Chapel Community for its continued support of the SE program.

Respectfully submitted by Geraldine Fowler. (Spiritual Exploration and Outreach Coordinator)
ABOUT STRENGTHENING FAMILIES™ AND THE PROTECTIVE FACTORS FRAMEWORK

Strengthening Families™ is a research-informed approach to increase family strengths, enhance child development and reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect. It is based on engaging families, programs and communities in building five key protective factors:

**Parental resilience:** Managing stress and functioning well when faced with challenges, adversity and trauma

**Social connections:** Positive relationships that provide emotional, informational, instrumental and spiritual support

**Knowledge of parenting and child development:** Understanding child development and parenting strategies that support physical, cognitive, language, social and emotional development

**Concrete support in times of need:** Access to concrete support and services that address a family’s needs and help minimize stress caused by challenges

**Social and emotional competence of children:** Family and child interactions that help children develop the ability to communicate clearly, recognize and regulate their emotions and establish and maintain relationships

At its heart, Strengthening Families is about how families are supported to build key protective factors that enable children to thrive. The five protective factors at the foundation of Strengthening Families also offer a framework for changes at the systems, policy and practice level – locally, statewide and nationally.

Using the Strengthening Families framework, more than 30 states are shifting policy and practice to help programs and providers working with children and families to take everyday actions that support parents to build their protective factors. States apply the Strengthening Families approach in early childhood, child welfare, child abuse prevention and other child and family serving systems.

The “Pathway to Improved Outcomes for Children and Families” on the next page articulates the core functions of Strengthening Families implementation which drive changes in program and worker practice to support families to build protective factors and improve outcomes. The lower graphic shows the everyday actions that can help families build each of the protective factors.

What is the Protective Factors Framework?

Protective factors are characteristics or strengths of individuals, families, communities or societies that act to mitigate risks and promote positive well-being and healthy development. Most often, we see them as attributes that help families to successfully navigate difficult situations.

A protective factors framework is an organized set of strengths-based ideas that are used to guide programs, services, supports and interventions aimed at preventing child maltreatment and promoting healthy outcomes.

The Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework from the Center for the Study of Social Policy distills extensive research in child and family development into a core set of five protective factors that everyone can understand and recognize in their own lives.

For more information, visit [www.strengtheningfamilies.net](http://www.strengtheningfamilies.net).
The Pathway to Improved Outcomes for Children and Families

Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors Framework Logic Model

Core Functions
- State, system, agency, program and community leaders work across systems to:
  - Build parent partnerships
  - Deepen knowledge and understanding
  - Shift practice, policy and systems
  - Ensure accountability

Program Practice
- Programs that serve children and families:
  - Shift organization culture to value and build upon families’ strengths
  - Make policy changes to support changes in worker practice
  - Implement everyday actions that support families in building protective factors

Worker Practice
- Individual workers:
  - Have knowledge of protective factors and skills to help families build them
  - Change their approach to relationships with parents
  - Implement everyday actions that support families in building protective factors

Protective Factors
- Families are supported to build:
  - Parental resilience
  - Social connections
  - Knowledge of parenting and child development
  - Concrete support in times of need
  - Social and emotional competence of children

Results
- Strengthened families
- Optimal child development
- Reduced likelihood of child abuse and neglect

Everyday Actions That Help Build Protective Factors

Protective Factors
- Parental Resilience
- Social Connections
- Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development
- Concrete Support in Times of Need
- Social and Emotional Competence of Children

Results
- Strengthened Families
- Optimal Child Development
- Reduced Likelihood of Child Abuse and Neglect
Building Renovation Task Force:
Report for 2017

All told, 2017 was an important year for making decisions about what we need to do in our building to help our space better meet the expectations and needs of our community. It was also a time to identify and to begin to remedy challenges that have affected the structure of our historic building and could create additional, more serious, problems in the future if left unaddressed.

Planning we undertook in 2016 and 2017 formed the basis for the Campaign for the North Chapel. Thanks to the generosity of many members of our community, we were able to begin work that will help us to preserve our building for future generations, as we have benefitted from the foresight and generosity of past generations.

The work on this initiative would not have been possible without contributions from Gina Auriema, Anne Dean, Veronica Delay, Geraldine Fowler, Norwood Long, Jack Nelson, Angel Rubino, Ann Wynia, and Robert Black, architect — along with significant input from many other members of the North Chapel community.

Plan and budget for renovation

Our time early in the year was focused on completing a plan for renovations to the North Chapel, including sketches for interior changes and a projected budget for the work that needs to be done. Since the community began discussing renovations to the building back in 2015, the SE program has expanded. We also became aware of the inflow of water into the building, which raises health issues and concerns about damage to its structure, needs to be addressed. Finally, we recognized that we should anticipate that other challenges may emerge during demolition and renovation and we need to be prepared to address them.

The workplan we developed is divided into four phases:

- exterior work to remedy the inflow of water into the building at the northeast corner and interior work needed to clean up any damage that has occurred;
- interior renovation of the Chapel and SE Rooms, including dealing with moisture issues and insulating and weatherproofing these areas;
- repairing the roof over the Offices and Parlors, including flashing and damaged siding;
- and insulating and weatherproofing the Offices and Parlors and reconfiguring the space there to make it better serve community goals.

The resulting plan was presented to the Board for discussion and approval. It was a foundation for the Campaign for the North Chapel initiated in spring and conducted over the summer and fall. Thanks to the generosity of many members of our community, we raised most of the funds needed to begin the renovations.

Excavation

The work outlined in our plan commenced in earnest in fall. Tom Havill, who completed the excavation on the West Lawn in 2016, excavated in the rear of the church: digging trenches; laying pipes for drainage; installing a moisture barrier around the foundation walls; installing
two dry wells; and hooking up the drainage pipes to the dry wells. He also regraded the lawn so that it slopes away from the building and he lowered the grade behind the church so it is below the level of the crawl space underneath the Chapel. In total, this means that water will now be directed away from the building, rather than flowing into the foundation or the crawl space under the Chapel, helping to solve persistent moisture problems.

Tom’s work will be completed in the spring when he will finish landscaping and plant new grass. We’ll redo the sidewalk leading into the Social Hall and lower level of the church.

**Renovation of lower level (Chapel/SE Rooms)**

In summer, we developed an outline of the renovation project in the Chapel and SE Rooms: notes about demolition in these spaces; a more refined sketch of the construction required; and notes about construction and finishes. We shared these plans with a number of contractors who expressed interest in working with us on the project. One highly respected local firm has responded with a bid and is prepared to begin work on the project soon. The board is now considering their proposal.

**Insulation and weatherproofing**

We put together an RFP for insulating the building: blowing insulation into wall cavities in uninsulated walls in the offices and parlors and the organ addition; foaming underneath the Chapel and Geraldine’s office; and insulating the ceiling over the Sanctuary and the offices and parlors. We received two responses and are working on refining these estimates.

**Roof Repair**

At the 2017 Annual Meeting, the North Chapel community approved the expenditure required for repairing the roof over the offices and parlors. In fall, we received a proposal for this work for a total of $38,205. The board contracted with Jancewicz & Son to replace the roof and repair flashing and damaged clapboard in spring, 2018.

In October, we submitted a grant proposal for a 2018 Vermont Historic Preservation Grant to cover some of our costs. Our application was approved! That means we will receive $18,897 toward the cost of this project.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Stoner

11 January 2017