



**Hopedale Unitarian Parish
2015/16 Annual Reports
for
Annual Meeting - June 5, 2016**

Reports from:

<i>Minister</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Parish Board</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Building & Facilities</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Caring Connection Committee</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Finance Committee</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Garden & Grounds</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Gathering Place</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Historical Committee</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Kitchen Committee</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Laundry Love</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Lifespan Religious Education Committee</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Music Committee</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Nancy Gannett Scholarship of the Hopedale Unitarian Parish Committee</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Nominating Committee</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Outreach and Engagement Committee</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Parish Alliance</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Partnership Committee</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Social Action Committee</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Visiting Committee</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Welcoming Congregation</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Worship Committee</i>	<i>14</i>

Minister

Annual Report, 2015-16

This was a year of great accomplishment for Hopedale Unitarian Parish. I was called as a new settled minister, we launched a new website, a new YouTube channel, a new podcast, and a new weekly email newsletter. We began involvement in various outreach ministries, including The Milford Area Humanitarian Coalition, The Community Meal, and Laundry Love. We advocated for sentencing reform with our state representative along with the End Mass Incarceration Together coalition and UU Mass Action. We organized our neighboring churches to launch Operation Turkey Sandwich, providing Thanksgiving dinner to 113 people working lonely jobs on Thanksgiving. We helped initiate a service component to the MLK Day observation. This year we began using monthly themes in worship and debuted lay worship leaders co-leading Sunday morning with the minister. We had great success with our educational efforts on the way to becoming a Welcoming Congregation and we welcomed 9 new members. Our board adopted the consent agenda meeting format, passed a wonderful right relations and conflict resolution policy, and created a Committee on Shared Ministry via bylaw addition. We took the first steps towards a more formal partnership with the Milford Church. There is a lot to celebrate this year.

This we began to carve out a mission for ourselves. There has been energy around the Community Meal involvement and Operation Turkey Sandwich, which leads me to think working on hunger in our community is part of who we are. There has been energy around the Welcoming Congregation certification process, which leads me to think being a LGBTQ safe place and ally is part of who we are. There has been a lot of energy around continued Environmental Awareness (we discovered our Social Justice Committee is actually our Green Sanctuary or Environmental Justice Team), which leads me to think being a center of environmental awareness and activism is part of who we are. These are all good things and things that are needed in our community, where there is no other openly accepting LGBTQ congregation and no other congregation taking the lead on environmental activism. Living into our mission so that we can begin to articulate it is a great accomplishment. I hope we begin to firm up and tighten this mission and our awareness of this mission in the coming year.

I believe the year ahead of us will place before us a number of decisions to make about our future direction. I believe we need to deal with the fact that we are no longer a town church, that new approaches to fundraising are needed, and that we benefit more from being an outward focused congregation than we do from being an inward focused congregation.

This used to be a large congregation, the town church of Hopedale. But now we are a small congregation and the majority (70%) of our members and active friends do not live in Hopedale. We are no longer a town church, but a regional congregation. The meeting I had this spring with some of our leaders and the leaders of the Milford UU Church made one thing abundantly clear -each of our congregations is too small to be a vibrant and active voice for liberal religion on our own. We will all be stronger together than we are as individual tiny churches. Our task in the coming years is how to see ourselves as part of a regional Unitarian Universalist presence and to work ever more closely with our neighboring UU churches so that together we can create a stronger future than any one of us will be able to create alone.

Since the end of Ballou's Hopedale community, this congregation had from its inception, benevolent benefactors, wealthy donors, and endowment gifts. This is not so much the case any longer, and the congregation is having to find its way into funding its operation more and more through pledging. We do not have the membership size to make that viable, so we will be doing an increasing amount of fund raising. Although more pledging members would help, the reality is that we would need to double if not triple membership at current giving levels until pledge income once again became a sizable portion of our

income. If put our focus solely on numerical growth, we will not have much energy left to anything else well and then our mission becomes to attract as many people as possible to help pay our bills. I truly believe any congregation's path to numerical growth lies in incarnational growth (how we make our faith and values alive in the world around us).

This year we took many steps toward being a more outward focused church. I believe the more community partnerships we make, the better for our long-term sustainability. Our involvement with our neighbors keeps the need of the community in view, the more partnerships we make, the more people can help support us when we do fundraising (as we in turn can support them).

Perhaps the biggest challenge that awaits us is creating a congregational culture with an abundance and growth mindset instead of a limited or scarcity mindset. Scarcity thinking is all too prevalent among small congregations. Scarcity sees resources as limited and thus refrains from any spending or involvement that isn't guaranteed or safe. It sounds prudent, except that nothing - nothing - in life (or congregational life) is guaranteed. A scarcity mindset sees everything as a zero sum game with not enough to go around and therefore thinks only in the immediate short term. A scarcity mindset sees intelligence as static and resources limited and so gives up easily when it encounters obstacles and therefore avoids challenges, new things, and new ideas. A scarcity mindset sees failure as shameful.

An abundance mindset sees failure as a step in the learning process and thus recasts the experience as failing forward or experifailing. An abundance mindset see intelligence and resources as something to be developed (we can always learn something new that can help us), and therefore is willing try new approaches and new ideas. An abundance mindset believes there are enough resources to go around and to accomplish our goals. An abundance mindset is courageous and thinks in the long-term. An abundance mind set starts with the goal and then figures out how to obtain the resources needed for success.

We have the opportunity before us to shift from scarcity to abundance. Instead of making draconian cuts to our budget when revenue is low, we can believe in ourselves and in each other enough to decide what we want to do and to find the resources or raise the money needed. Abundance is expansive and requires faith in ourselves and in each other. Abundance is also hard work. We have more problems than we should tolerate, but more solutions than we use. This is frequently only due to one reason: we don't want to put in the time or energy needed to address the problem.

I end this year celebrating all that we've accomplished and I am looking forward to engaging the challenges we face going forward. Details on various endeavors are below.

In faith,

Rev. Tony Lorenzen

Communication

New Website - We launched a new website in September 2015 and have been adding to it and refining it all year. It is a great resource for current members and friends as well as a wonderful gateway for seekers and people searching for a faith community. Our audio podcast and sermon videos are available directly from our site or from iTunes, Soundcloud, and YouTube.

Weekly Email - We launched a weekly email newsletter last in September 2015 and it is scheduled to be replaced by the Good Shepherd as we transition into Summer 2016. We will still print a Monthly Preview for people who prefer a monthly and/or pdf or paper publication, but it's easier for us to keep more up to date, more agile, and more responsive with our communication by using a weekly newsletter. The monthly preview will be part of the first email newsletter of each month.

Social Justice

Welcoming Congregation - The Welcoming Congregation did a fantastic job this year educating the congregation about LGBTQ issues and the ramifications of becoming a UUA recognized Welcoming Congregation. I am confident our vote on the first Sunday of November will be positive and we will submit our paperwork for certification. The monthly seminars were well attended with 25%-33% of the congregation in attendance every time.

Environmental - This year we discovered that our Social Justice Team is more of an Environmental Justice Team. The concerns of most of its members tend toward environmental awareness, and that's fitting as the team is basically made up of people who worked to get the Green Sanctuary designation.

Advocacy - Eight of us met with State Representative John Fernandes to discuss pending legislation related to race and class bias in criminal sentencing. Rep. Fernandes is retiring and not running for re-election, but he was the chair of the joint judiciary committee and therefore held a lot of power in the struggle to get some of the sentencing legislation out of committee to a vote. We talked with him about supporting a ban on solitary confinement and alternative sentencing options for first-time nonviolent offenders who are primary caregivers to dependent children. We also spoke with him about lessening mandatory sentencing laws and taking a more general restorative approach instead of a retributive approach whenever possible. I followed up this meeting by meeting with his staff on April 12 during UU Mass Action's lobby day at the state house. Rep. Fernandes was invited to and attended a play about solitary confinement that Rev. Tony helped bring to the Milford Performing Arts Center. My advocacy work also included being a visible presence at hearings about public transportation to Milford.

Worship

Lay Worship Leaders - We began using lay worship leaders in September. Lay worship leaders co-lead Sunday worship with the minister. Worship leaders greet and welcome people at the beginning of the service, ask for the offering, do one of the readings, participate in chalice lightings and extinguishing, and make invitations to coffee hour and newcomer welcome sessions. We've had over a dozen people serve as worship leaders this past year.

Scripting - We instituted scripting this year, where almost everything that is said during worship and most rituals are written out in the format of a stage play script so there is no confusion as to who says what and when and where to move and stand and sit for various elements of worship.

Monthly Themes - We are on a three-year cycle of monthly themes for worship and education. These are listed on our website in the About Us section.

Community Outreach

Milford Area Humanitarian Coalition (MAHC) - I have been a regular participant in the this local coalition. MAHC has four goals: 1. Public transportation 2. Ending Hunger in the community 3. Elder services improvement and 4. Access to health care. MAHC has been instrumental in getting the town of Milford to a vote on the funding of public busses and will run a summer lunch program from June 23-August 30 offering lunches for all those children of school age who would normally get free lunches at school. 47% of Milford students qualify for free and reduced school lunch. MAHC will serve 20,000 lunches this summer.

Operation Turkey Sandwich - HUP organized Hopedale's first ever Operation Turkey Sandwich, gathering dozens of people from the town's three churches to make brown bag lunches containing Thanksgiving dinner (Turkey sandwich, potato chips, apple pie) and deliver them to people working lonely and forgotten jobs on Thanksgiving Day. See our website for photos. We made and delivered 113 Thanksgiving lunches and next year the goal is 250. We received food donations from The Little White Market, Depot Street Tavern, Simple Church of Grafton, and Pizza Palace. Pies were made by members of Union Congregational and members of Sacred Heart donated 5 roast turkeys. This was so successful we will try to turn it into an annual event.

MLK Day of Service - This year, at my suggestion, we added a community service component to the town's annual MLK celebration. Next year

Community Meal - This year we began our participation in the Milford Community Meal and through increasing involvement, hope to be able to offer one more meal per month to the schedule by the end of the year, either on our own as a congregation or in cooperation with another congregation.

Laundry Love - This year we began involvement with Laundry Love, a ministry of Trinity Episcopal Church in Milford that pays for all the laundromat services from 5-9 pm twice month for all patrons who visit the participating laundromat.

Share the Plate - This we year began to "Share the Plate" each month by selecting a non-profit organization or group in the community doing good work in alignment with our UU values and donating to them all the non-pledged offerings received in the collection plates on Sunday. Recipients this year included Laundry Love, The Community Meal, Ascentria Care Alliance (refugee resettlement), Community Harvest, Justice as Healing for Families, and Network La Red.

Cooperation with Hopedale Churches - I met regularly with Rev. Sarah Hubbell of the Union Congregational Church and Fr. Bill Konicki of the Sacred Heart Catholic Church. All three churches worked together on the Operation Turkey Sandwich, MLK Day of Service, Hopedale High School Graduation service, and look forward to further collaborations.

Partnership with Milford UU Church - Three congregational leaders met with me and the board and employees of the Milford UU Church in May. We discussed how we might work together more closely in the year ahead. Milford members expressed a willingness to join us for Sunday mornings and I (along with our three representatives) agreed to support their educational and community efforts. We all agreed to foster cooperation so that we have a stronger voice and presence and larger UU community. We will host a joint leadership retreat for the boards in late August or early September.

Membership - We welcomed 9 new members in April: Tracy Anderson, Robert Anderson, Steve Bisson, Cindy Meeske, Danielle Lizotte, Ann Ruel, Carol Matzner, Janet Davis, and Jocelyn Davis.

Church Governance - This year the board adopted a Consent Agenda, whereby each regular monthly report is submitted in advance to be read the board so that these reports can be passed by “consent” at the meeting and meeting time need not be spent hearing or reading individual reports.

This year we proposed a bylaw change creating a Committee on Shared Ministries in accordance with my call (hire) letter:

2.9. Committee on Ministry

The Minister will work with the Board and congregation to create, develop, empower, and equip a Committee on Ministry (CoM) according to the guidelines and purposes for CoM outlined in the UUA document "Joint Recommendations for Ministerial Agreements."

2.2. Leadership Goals

Within the first year of ministry, the Minister, Parish Board, and Committee on Ministry, with the assistance of an outside facilitator, will engage in a retreat for the purpose of arriving at specific understandings about the sharing of power and responsibility, goals for the coming year, and a plan for periodic review and renewal of the ministry of the congregation.

Policies - We began a comprehensive review of major church policies this year. A new right relations policy, that includes guidelines for conflict resolution, was created by a team of Kate Correa, Pat Giles, and Richard Johnson. This was a major accomplishment and the board passed it unanimously. We are working on a safe church policy and restructuring our rental policy. Our invest policy was also reviewed.

Finances

Consolidation - Hopedale Unitarian Parish continued its consolidation of finances by rolling various investment accounts into one account with the UUA.

Pledging Down - I am disappointed by the congregation’s response to the pledge drive this year. Our only goal was to have 100% participation - that all our members would make some pledge donation, however small. Sadly, dozens of members pledge nothing. Nothing.

Fundraising Task Force - The low pledge response led to the development of a fundraising task force. I am confident this task force will raise sufficient funds to meet our budgetary shortfall due to loss or pledge income. As Ralph Nader said, which I think applies to our fundraising here at HUP, “We have more problems than we should tolerate and more solutions than we use.” I fully expect a range of new fundraisers next year will have a great positive impact. Ideas on the table include a Goods and Services Auction, Concert/Coffeehouses, Faithify (UU ministry project) crowd funding, and UUA grants, including a Veatch Grant. I also look forward to exploring an income generating entrepreneurial ministry. The only thing stopping us is having enough people willing to join in the effort to make these things happen.

Pastoral Care - This year saw many members and friends pass away. My time here began with the death of Lou Grant and during the year we also held funerals for Sandy Lovejoy, Patricia Colley, and Gordon Marquis. I also officiated at the funeral of longtime member of the Milford UU Church, Harriett Gattoni.

Several members (and the pastor) had deaths in their families early in the church year. The Caring Connection continued to provide meals for some members.

Religious Education - This year we moved toward more “whole congregation worship” (the new term for intergenerational or multigenerational worship). DRE Kelly Sarazen and I faced a problem of very inconsistent and widely varying attendance from Sunday to Sunday and in the absence of a strong commitment to attend on a regular basis, our options were limited. We decided upon a one-room schoolhouse approach that was affirmed by a series of meetings with parents and interested adults in March. This year our Coming of Age students worked with two other congregations (Marlborough and Northborough) and we introduced the concept of the Our Whole Lives human sexuality curriculum, so that we can include it as a regular offering, also in cooperation with other congregations, first for junior high/ coming of age and then high school and younger ages. We began discussions about what Lifespan Faith Development includes and plans are underway for major spiritual development programs for adults beginning in the fall.

Parish Board

Annual Report, 2015-16

Submitted June 5, 2016

The Parish Board met monthly, and in addition to regularly scheduled meetings, held several special meetings to address specific issues.

Priority was given by the Board to establishing a proper footing for the ministerial start-up of our settled minister, Reverend Tony Lorenzen. Thus, the creation of a Committee on Ministry, to assist our new minister, was a top priority.

The Board addressed numerous policy issues throughout the year, including a conflict of interest policy, safe church policy, hiring policy, policy regarding payment of church members, grievance policy, right relations policy, and church rental policy. The Board created a share-the-plate program, and searched for ways to reduce duplicative efforts among church groups.

The Board formally thanked each member of the Accessibility Task Force, which had been created by the Board, for their efforts in holding church membership meetings and hosting presentations, and for the Task Force’s final recommendations. The Board adopted a resolution to upgrade the center entrance of the church (the entrance at the intersection of the church and parish hall) to permit acceptable access, and to renovate the church bathrooms to be gender neutral and accessible.

The Board approved the Finance Committee’s recommendation to consolidate specific church investments into the UUA Common Endowment Fund. The Board discussed creation of a capital campaign effort to fund church improvements, and authorized funds for maintenance and repair of the church stain glass windows.

Building & Facilities

Annual Report, 2015-16

Routine maintenance was ongoing. Electrical work to fix the outside lights, and install emergency lighting and light sockets took a large part of our budget. Boiler maintenance and repair were necessary to bring us through a cold winter. Hartford Steam Boiler HSB installed sensors in January, but during a cold snap, the temperature inside the church went down to 42° F and did not trigger the sensors, so they need to be recalibrated. Plumbing expenses included repairs to the kitchen sink and removal of the garbage disposal. Extermination of mice by Milford Exterminating kept the pests under control. Bat Guys Wildlife Service looked at the bat issue, but to remove them would be prohibitively expensive. A handyman and carpenter from Cornwall Cabinet & Furniture repaired the sanctuary door, basement stair-steps, and the trash enclosure. George A. Bernard Company performed slate repair on the roof of the side aisles. Blackstone Valley Lock & Safe fixed a doorknob and lock on the sanctuary outside doors. A stove technician inspected and cleaned the oven. The ovens need new thermostats to provide even heating. A-Tech who services Southbend oven/stoves has informed us that they are not able to locate replacement thermostats as the parts are obsolete.

An ongoing project is painting of window frames by DJF Paint to precede repair of historic window glass.

We had a budget overrun and requested a budget of 10,000 to cover roof maintenance, boiler maintenance, plumbing and electrical, carpentry, supplies, exterminators, fire box fees and inspection, and unanticipated expenses in the new fiscal year.

Respectfully submitted,
Marcia Matthews

Caring Connection Committee

Annual Report, 2015-16

The Caring Connection Committee includes coordinators: Mona Gross, Alice Jacobson and Laura Aldridge. This year, as always, the committee was busy fielding requests for assistance from parish members throughout the year. We are very grateful to all of our Caring Connection volunteers who assisted providing rides to church or doctor's appointments, calling and sending cards to members who were in hospital or recovering at home, and generally helping out whenever there was a need. This year we provided several rounds of meals for a parishioner and rides when needed.

We look forward to continuing the good work in the 2016-2017 church year with the support of all parish members.

We welcome anyone who would like to be a member of our committee and encourage everyone to let us know when you or someone you know needs some help.

Respectfully submitted,
The Caring Connection Committee

Finance Committee

Annual Report, 2015-16

The finance committee met monthly this year. We had new members on the committee in addition to a new minister, so we spent time during the first few meetings reviewing and explaining church investments and budget.

We wrote a procedure for formats of budget requests and spending requests against budget which has been implemented.

We interviewed several investment groups and then assessed their strengths and weaknesses and recommended to the Board that Mayflower, Milford National, and RBC investments be consolidated and into an account with UUA Common Endowment Fund. We prepared documents to open this account.

We worked to develop a theme and goal for the annual pledge drive.

We worked on a budget and presented a work in progress at the budget hearing. We recommended further cuts to the Board to operate with a balanced budget.

We discussed the roles of the Finance Committee, the Treasurer, and Collector. We made a recommendation to the Board for bylaw changes to reflect the roles.

Submitted by

The Finance Committee

Kathleen Schleper, chair

Fred Oldfield, Tony Alves, Tina Mustachio

Garden & Grounds

Annual Report, 2015-16

Committee members include Michele Alves, Marcia Matthews, Patrick Giles, Maryhelen Hibben and Chris Grilly.

Our members have volunteered a lot of time over the past year in keeping the flower beds and vegetable garden weeded, watered and neat. We have added a small fence around the vegetable garden as well as a trellis for climbing plants. The compost bin has been successfully added near the trash collection area and the kitchen committee has been diligent in adding vegetable scraps from the coffee hour to the bin.

One major grounds change of note was the removal of Reverend Cummings' remains from the grounds to be interred with his wife's remains at a different location.

Submitted by

Chris Grilly

Gathering Place

Annual Report, 2015-16

No report submitted - Inactive this year

Historical Committee

Annual Report, 2015-16

No report submitted

Kitchen Committee

Annual Report, 2015-16

The kitchen committee included Alice and Tommy Jacobson, Tony and Michele Alves, and Chris Grilly with support from many others throughout the year.

The kitchen crew provided basic refreshments on Sunday- including coffee, tea, juice, water, crackers and cheese and snacks for children. Kitchen crew also maintained supplies such as napkins, sugar, cream, coffee and tea. We signed various people up to provide additional baked goods and fruit, as well as, helping to set up, clean up and serve. Committees were signed up at times, as well as, individuals and families. Seasonal variations and special occasions were included in weekly offerings. We also provided placards to identify items with nuts and dairy and designate items that were Vegan or Gluten Free.

The kitchen crew maintained the cleanliness of the kitchen each week, cleaning up after coffee hour and washing dishes and linens. We also kept food and other perishable items rotated out as they expired or were left unclaimed in the refrigerator. Kitchen crew also adapted to challenges of the aging kitchen appliances- working with the removal of the garbage disposal and the uneven heating of the church ovens.

We found that much of our coffee hour needs could be donated and have agreed to reduce our coffee hour budget for the coming year.

We would welcome any new members to the Kitchen crew. In addition, all are welcome to volunteer during coffee hour at any time - helping with set up, clean up and serving. Food donations are always welcome. Kitchen crew folks are available to answer any questions or train new volunteers on how to manage the kitchen and coordinate coffee hour.

Coffee hour is a collaborative, community endeavor to be shared and enjoyed by all.

Laundry Love

Annual Report, 2015-16

I have only just recently taken on the role of liaison for Hopedale Unitarian Parish to the Laundry Love (LL) ministry, a ministry out of Trinity Episcopal Church in Milford. This ministry helps those who are facing difficult decisions, whether to pay a bill, buy food, or do laundry, by paying for laundry and hanging out while the machines tumble. As liaison, I pick up HUP's donations of quarters, detergent, and fabric softener, and bring them to LL, which takes place two nights per month. The good news is that as this ministry approaches the one year mark, the word has gotten out and many people are being served by LL, including a women's shelter in Milford. The bad news, after the initial fundraising, the funds for the program are dwindling, so more fundraising is definitely needed. As always, volunteers and donations are welcomed.

Submitted by Janet Davis

Lifespan Religious Education Committee

Annual Report, 2015-16

This year has been one full of transitions, changes, and collaboration. There have been so many great moments at HUP this year I don't even know where to begin. I'm grateful and proud to work at Hopedale Unitarian Parish and beyond lucky to work with our awesome staff.

Recap of the year

- Children's Worship Services
- Chosen Child program
- Easter egg hunt
- Halloween potluck and costume parade
- Whole Congregation Worship Services
- Valentine secret pal
- Ice Cream Social

Approximately 30 children and youth registered for RE this year with an average Sunday attendance of 12 kids. Over the course of the year we altered the Religious Education program to be a one room school house style. This style worked well with our monthly themes and allowed more flexibility with curriculum. Lessons could more easily be altered to fit that day's attendance and age of kids.

This year we also had more whole congregation worship services. This was done intentionally to bring the kids into the worship services and to connect the monthly themes for both the adults and children of the congregation. The more the children are in worship services the more they will feel a part of the congregation.

Another new addition to our year was our family service on Christmas Eve. It was very well attended by both HUP families and visitors and gave people another option for worshipping with us on Christmas Eve while having time to go visit family afterwards or go home and get the kids to bed.

One of my favorite activities this year was collaborating with Northborough and Marlborough Hudson in our Coming of Age program this year. We had four youth from 8th to 10th grade participating from Hopedale and they were joined by one 8th grader from Northborough and two 9th graders from Marlborough Hudson. We met twice a month in Northborough for classes and had 3 social action/justice field trips throughout the year. On Martin Luther King Day we went into Boston to visit Arlington Street Church and King's Chapel. On the way out of town we stopped at First Church in Chestnut Hill which is a Unitarian congregation in the Christian tradition. It was a great trip and nice opportunity for the youth from the different congregations to bond before their overnight trips. Their first overnight was sleeping outside in cardboard boxes for the night; it was quite cold that night too, but they stayed out all night and learned a lot. Probably the best experience for all of us was our New York trip where we worked with the Youth Services Opportunity Projects. I, for one, was blown away by the people with met and worked with and it's an experience I won't soon forget. I want to thank the Correa, Gehm and Alves families for sharing your kids with me this year. I would also like to thank Ben Spear, Deanna Mustachio, Richard Johnson and Michele Alves for mentoring our youth this year.

I meet with my Director of Religious Educators cluster on a semi monthly base. There we shared ideas, worshiped together and were there to support each other. It's a great group of Religious Educators and I look forward to more collaboration in the future.

Goals for Next Year

- Our Whole Lives
- Youth Group
- Whole Congregation Worship Services
- Social Justice Projects
- Continued Collaboration with neighboring congregations
- Expanding Religious Education into the summer

Looking ahead to next year there are some exciting things coming. We will be offering Our Whole Lives. Once registration is complete in the fall I will be able to see if we will be offering Junior and/or Senior High Our Whole Lives. We will try to collaborate with neighboring congregations, just like we did with Coming of Age. I've already begun preliminary planning with our neighboring congregations. After the completion of a successful Coming of Age year, and with new youth attending Hopedale Unitarian Parish, I will be forming a formal youth group that I hope will meet at least twice a month, at a mutually convenient time. We will continue our collaborations and join other youth groups at CONS (youth sponsored and lead worship and overnights).

We will continue to use monthly themes in both worship and religious education, making everyone's experience more cohesive. There will continue to be more whole congregation worship services and more projects allowing the children and adults to work together. As registration unfolds there could be some more changes in the structure of religious education, including the timing of classes. As we offer summer services this summer, and people get more used to the changes, I'm hoping that we will be able to offer special summer programs for the kids. We may even consider inviting other congregations to join us.

All in all it was a great year and I'm looking forward to everything that comes next year. Thank you all again for your continued support, enthusiasm, and ideas.

Respectfully Submitted
Kelly Sarazen, Director of Religious Education

Music Committee *Annual Report, 2015-16*

Members: Karen Gehm, Carol Devendorf, Glen Flodin, Peg Theriault, Maryhelen Hibben

Report not submitted

Nancy Gannett Scholarship of the Hopedale Unitarian Parish Committee *Annual Report, 2015-16*

The Scholarship Committee is responsible for awarding the Nancy Gannett Scholarship, established by Bill and Nancy Gannett in memory of their daughter Nancy. The Scholarship Committee members for 2015-2016 have included Bris Gannett, Mark DeWolf, Pat Giles, Kathy Haynes, and Kathleen

Hopedale Unitarian Parish
2015-2016 Annual Reports
May 18, 2016

Schleper. We met to discuss the present criteria for awarding the scholarship relative to the original intent of the scholarship, and plan to continue to do so in the early Fall of 2016. In addition, the committee is in the process of considering this year's applications for the scholarship.

Pat Giles, on behalf of the Scholarship Committee.

Nominating Committee

Annual Report, 2015-16

The Hopedale Unitarian Parish's Nominating Committee currently has three members: Fred Oldfield, Rite Earl and Tony Alves, Chair.

Per by-law changes made on March 8, 2015, the Nominating Committee is only required to prepare the slate of nominees for the three committees identified in the by-laws, Parish Board, Finance Committee, and Nominating Committee, plus the position of Collector and Treasurer. We present this slate at the annual meeting for the congregation to approve.

For 2016-2017, we had two positions to fill on the Parish Board, one position to fill on the Finance Committee, and one position to fill on Nominating Committee.

Submitted by: Tony Alves, Chair

Outreach and Engagement Committee

Annual Report, 2015-16

The Outreach and Engagement Committee (the Committee) maintains a "Welcome Table" at the entrance to the sanctuary. The table has brochures and pamphlets for visitors and members to review and name badges for visitors. Name badges are generated for all newcomers that submit an information insert from the Order of Service.

During a recent service, four new members were welcomed to Hopedale Unitarian Parish by Rev. Rev. Lorenzen and the Congregation. A total of nine new members of signed the book. A Pathways to Membership class was held. We also had a Newcomers Potluck.

The Committee is responsible for all marketing, advertising, and social media other than the website. One of the significant challenges that the General Assembly (GA) for 2014 made to Congregations as part of their "Love Reaches Out" theme was to develop a better web presence. During the fall of 2015, the Committee, Rev. Lorenzen, and Val Clement worked on the launch of the new HUP website which went live in early 2016. The new HUP website serves as a central communication point for all events and news about the Parish. Audio recordings of recent sermons can be found on the website.

The Committee on Outreach and Engagement will be responsible for the following:

- All platforms of social media including the HUP Website, the Facebook page, Twitter account, and other forms of social media

- Advertising on Facebook and in local print media
- Press Releases to local print media
- Maintenance of the Welcome Table
- Staffing of Ushers for Sunday Services
- Working with Minister to establish a formal “Path to Membership” program.
- Additional responsibilities as needed to support the primary mission of Outreach to the HUP Community and the greater Hopedale Community and to support engagement of the HUP Community toward membership and retention

Parish Alliance

Annual Report, 2015-16

Report not submitted

Partnership Committee

Annual Report, 2015-16

Report not submitted

Social Action Committee

Annual Report, 2015-16

The Social Action Committee has continued our successful monthly red wagon collections for the Daily Bread Food Pantry in Milford. We collect and donate an average of 10 bags of food and toiletries and approximately \$50 cash per month.

Last year, we researched the Welcoming Congregation process and made recommendations and progress toward forming a Welcoming congregation Committee. That committee has been very active this year, and the Social Action Committee has continued to support its work during this process.

We have been involved in helping to coordinate efforts such as Laundry Love, the Community Meal program, and the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service. As part of this church-wide effort to be more visible and involved in the community and in local social justice initiatives, we obtained a selection of yellow Standing on the Side of Love t-shirts with financial help from the Ladies Alliance. These shirts have been made available to anyone in the congregation who would like one and have been worn at these community service and justice events. We also continue our efforts to live out our Green Sanctuary mission, with expanded efforts at keeping the church environmentally friendly such as using reusable hand towels in the bathrooms and more composting. We helped plan the annual Earth Day worship service, at which we gave away reusable produce bags and tips for being more green at home. We also have been having discussions about our mission and focus as a committee. As part of those discussions, we have been considering changing the committee’s name to the Environmental Justice Committee.

Visiting Committee

Annual Report, 2015-16

The Visiting Committee works with the minister to attend to the pastoral needs of the church. The Committee regularly visits with members who reside in nursing homes or rehab facilities, sends birthday and holiday cards, and as appropriate delivers small gifts or flowers. The Committee strives to maintain intergenerational contact between inactive elders and current active members. This past year, we have been fortunate. Only a few members have been home-bound, and no one has resided in a nursing home or rehab facility. Holiday and birthday cards were sent to those members confined to their homes.

Respectfully submitted by Sharyn Johnson, Tina Perry, Peg Theriault

Welcoming Congregation

Annual Report, 2015-16

This past year the Welcoming Congregation team has consisted of Maryhelen Hibben, Patrick Giles, Tony Alves, Michele Alves, Marcia Matthews, Kathleen Schleper, Alice Jacobsen, Chris Grilly and Rebecca Chan - our committee.

The main focus of the committee has been the presentation of workshops on various topics. These workshops have been well-attended when they have occurred after Sunday service. During many of them, our committee has provided a potluck lunch as well. These workshops have ranged on a variety of topics, including the intersection of all types of oppression. One event in particular was well-received – a talk with local youth about their (and peer) experiences with their in-school groups (SAGA/GSA). Members of our committee have engaged in numerous community events throughout the year, including a visit to the new transgender chorus as well as a trip to the cinema to see a movie.

Here is a full list of the workshops that have been put on.

- 1) Introductions and Expectations
- 2) What We Know and How We Learned It
- 3) The Common Elements of Oppression
- 4) Gender Socialization and Homophobia
- 5) Racism & Homophobia
- 6) Talk With Local Youth

Other ongoing groups include movie nights which have been led by Maryhelen in the Parish lounge and Alice, who has held several book groups .

Upcoming events that our committee has planned include sponsoring Robyn Ochs on May 22nd, as a community event and to participate in the Boston Gay Pride Parade on June 11th.

Worship Committee

Annual Report, 2015-16

This year Rev. Tony introduced monthly themes, worship leaders, and a scripting system. We also changed the way we meet and plan services. We now meet monthly and in addition to discussing any

worship related business, we do two things: we brainstorm for ideas for two months ahead and then tighten up details for the monthly coming up. The team is open to anyone who wants to join us. One of our goals is to offer a worship service every Sunday of the year. This coming year we will offer a Summer Conversation series on the topic of service to others.

Lay Worship Leaders - We began using lay worship leaders in September. Lay worship leaders co-lead Sunday worship with the minister. Worship leaders greet and welcome people at the beginning of the service, ask for the offer, do one of the readings, participate in chalice lightings and extinguishing, and make invitations to coffee hour and newcomer welcome sessions. We've had over a dozen people serve as worship leaders this past year.

Scripting - We instituted scripting this year, where almost everything that is said during worship and most rituals are written out in the format of a stage play script so there is no confusion as to who says what and when and where to move and stand and sit for various elements of worship.

Monthly Themes - We are on a three year cycle of monthly themes for worship and education. These are listed on our website in the About Us section.