

*Unitarian Universalist  
Church in Meriden*



*Annual Report  
Fiscal Year  
2017 – 2018*

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May 29, 2018

Dear Members of UUCM,

The Annual Meeting of the Unitarian Universalist Church in Meriden is hereby called for Sunday June 10 at 12 noon at the Meetinghouse immediately after the service.

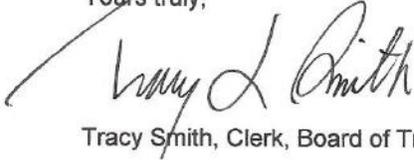
Sandwiches and beverages will be served.

Items on the agenda include the following:

- the budget for fiscal year 2018-19
- election of officers and at-large member: Nominees as of today:  
Treasurer: Trish Schneider  
Vice President: open  
At-Large Member: Kathy Lindberg
- Discussion regarding signs on building
- Any other business that shall come before the meeting

Members of at least 30 days by June 10 are eligible to vote. Please plan to attend this important meeting.

Yours truly,



Tracy Smith, Clerk, Board of Trustees

### ***Minutes of the Annual Meeting***

June 10, 2018

### ***Minutes of the Emergency Board of Trustee Meeting***

September 24, 2017

Ms. Donna Stimpson, President of the Board of Trustees (BOT) of the Unitarian Universalist Church in Meriden opened the August meeting of the Board at 4:04 pm on September 24, 2017.

Members in attendance were:

<b>President</b>	Donna Stimpson	Present
<b>Vice President</b>	Trish Schneider	Present via Phone
<b>Clerk</b>	Tracy Smith	Present
<b>Treasurer</b>	Cori Theriault	Present
<b>Finance Chair</b>	Sandy Duffy	Present
<b>Property Chair</b>	Randy Heath	Present
<b>Trustee-At-Large</b>	Jane Dioguardi	Present
<b>Trustee-At-Large</b>	Michael Milardo	Present
<b>Trustee-At-Large</b>	Ann Smith	Present

Rev. Dr. Jan Carlsson-Bull, 22 congregants, and three (3) guests were also present.

Donna called this meeting to discuss an urgent condition where the Ramos family here in Meriden is scheduled to be deported on September 29<sup>th</sup>. They have roots in the community; they have lived in the community for over 25 years, and they have two teenage children (who are US citizens). This meeting was called to discuss whether the BOT will recommend using this sanctuary for these two Ramos individuals who are at risk.

Rev. Jan explained this meeting is a Board meeting and NOT a congregational meeting, due to our Bylaws requirement of having a 10-day notice for a congregational meeting. The BOT will be looking to the congregants present for guidance and a feeling of direction.

The Rev. Paul Fleck, Pastor of the First and Somerfield Methodist Church in Hamden, introduced Alok Bhatt, organizer of the Connecticut Immigrant Rights Alliance, who gave the group some background on the Ramos family and their history battling ICE since 2005. Local enforcement officials have great latitude in policy with enforcement in their jurisdictions; the current change in enforcement priority with the Ramos family is unknown.

Rev. Paul explained the basics in providing sanctuary by a House of Worship. A handout: “How to be a Sanctuary Congregation” is attached to these minutes. Rev. Paul indicated there are supporting congregations to help in maintaining the well-being and personal needs of the individuals in sanctuary. Rev. Paul did emphasize that the duration of providing sanctuary is open-ended; Rev. Jan added there are other congregations in the area which will be invited to offer support in the case UUCM takes on Sanctuary Space responsibilities.

Sarah Forman from the Unitarian Universalist Society of New Haven/Hamden spoke of the willingness of their congregation to help support a Sanctuary Space provider.

Rev. Paul fielded a number of questions from those in attendance.

Randy made the motion; Michael seconded the motion:

Donna called for a vote by the members of the BOT: to recommend to the membership that the UUCM offer Sanctuary Space to the Ramos family: the vote was unanimously affirmative with all nine board members participating.

A question was fielded from the floor to recommend to the congregation that UUCM become a Sanctuary Congregation.

Sandy made the motion; Randy provided the second. Donna called for a voice vote; eight members voted yes with one abstention.

Another motion was made to allow and accept the Ramos family into sanctuary immediately; motion made by Ann, seconded by Michael. BOT voted unanimously affirmative – the motion carried.

Donna thanked the BOT members, the congregants, and our guests for their overwhelming support on this pressing issue for the UUCM.

Donna asked that this issue NOT be discussed by electronic means with individuals not present today due to possible electronic monitoring (face-to-face is OK), and NOT to discuss in any form with non-members of the UUCM for the safety of the Ramos family.

Meeting adjourned at 5:55 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Tracy Smith  
Clerk, Board of Trustees

***Minutes of the Special Congregational Meeting***  
**October 15, 2017**

Ms. Donna Stimpson, President of the Board of Trustees of the Unitarian Universalist Church in Meriden opened the Special Congregational Meeting at 12:20 pm on October 15, 2017.

Board of Trustees Members in attendance were:

<b>President</b>	Donna Stimpson	Present
<b>Vice President</b>	Trish Schneider	Present
<b>Clerk</b>	Tracy Smith	Present
<b>Treasurer</b>	Cori Theriault	Present
<b>Finance Chair</b>	Sandy Duffy	Present
<b>Property Chair</b>	Randy Heath	Absent
<b>Trustee-At-Large</b>	Jane Dioguardi	Present
<b>Trustee-At-Large</b>	Michael Milardo	Present
<b>Trustee-At-Large</b>	Ann Smith	Present

Rev. Dr. Jan Carlsson-Bull gave the gathering opening words of support. Jeff May was appointed parliamentarian. The Clerk asked for a count of members to determine a quorum: 35 congregants being present, a quorum was achieved.

Rev. Jan Carlsson-Bull called the congregation into covenant. The Clerk read the Call to Congregational Meeting mailed on October 5, 2015.

Nancy Burton introduced the Chalice Sanctuary Team:

Nancy Burton, Chair	Rev. Jan Carlsson-Bull
Steve Volpini	Sandy Duffy
Donna Stimpson	Michael Milardo
Diane Szymaszek	Bob Reutenauer
Richard Gault	Molly Nolan
Alice Sherard	

Background: Nancy explained that the impetus to become a Sanctuary Congregation came when a local family here in Meriden were facing deportation. Time was of the essence. Nancy explained that the vote by the Board of Trustees to become a Sanctuary Congregation is sanctioned by the Bylaws, but this special meeting was called in a spirit of openness. Details of being a Sanctuary Congregation (as opposed to 'harboring' an individual) were explained. Meeting attendees were given two documents which are included in these minutes by reference. Membership in the Chalice Sanctuary Team is open to any member of the church. The next meeting will be this Tuesday at 11am.

A motion was made by Diane Szymaszek to support the Board of Trustees' decision to become a Sanctuary Congregation; seconded by Tracy Smith.

Discussion ensued. Alok Bhatt, an activist/organizer with the Connecticut Immigrant Rights Alliance (CIRA), fielded questions from the congregants on a variety of subjects.

Steve Volpini amended the motion to call for the Board of Trustees to provide written guidance on the process – Cindy Ferguson seconded.

The amendment was voted on by a show of hands: the motion carries on the Amendment.

The question was called to end discussion on the main motion: the motion carried.

The motion was read again and a call for a vote was recorded. The vote was taken by paper ballot. By a vote of 34 'yes' to 1 'no' vote (with no abstentions), the **main motion was approved as amended.**

With no other business brought forward, the Rev. Jan Carlsson-Bull gave the Meeting Summation and Congregational Covenant.

Meeting adjourned at 1:35 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Tracy Smith  
Clerk, Board of Trustees

### ***Special Congregational Meeting Minutes***

**December 3, 2017**

Ms. Donna Stimpson, President of the Board of Trustees of the Unitarian Universalist Church in Meriden, opened the Special Congregational Meeting at 12:02 pm on December 3, 2017.

Board of Trustees Members in attendance were:

<b>President</b>	Donna Stimpson	Present
<b>Vice President</b>	Trish Schneider	Present
<b>Clerk</b>	Tracy Smith	Present

<b>Treasurer</b>	Cori Theriault	Present
<b>Finance Chair</b>	Sandy Duffy	Present
<b>Property Chair</b>	Randy Heath	Absent
<b>Trustee-At-Large</b>	Jane Dioguardi	Present
<b>Trustee-At-Large</b>	Michael Milardo	Present
<b>Trustee-At-Large</b>	Ann Smith	Present

Donna Stimpson called the congregation into covenant. A count of members was taken to determine a quorum: 25 congregants being present, a quorum was achieved.

The Clerk read the Call to Congregational Meeting mailed on November 25, 2015.

Cori led the discussion regarding changes to the October 19<sup>th</sup> budget as outlined in the Call to meeting. Questions, comments, and discussion from the congregation ensued.

Jeff May made a motion to accept the call to meeting – Richard Gault seconded.

A vote to accept the revised budget as presented. Motion carries on a raise of hands.

Paul Kline made the motion to adjourn; Jeff May seconded. Motion to adjourn approved on a voice vote.

Meeting adjourned at 12:18 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Tracy Smith  
Clerk, Board of Trustees

### ***Annual Report of the President Donna Stimpson***

Several highlights from the past year come easily to my mind. Rev. Dr. Jan Carlsson-Bull continued to ensure that our worship services are a rich and rewarding experience. Rev. Jan has been on sabbatical for two months (April and May) and will return in early June. The Worship Associates program continued deepening the contribution of members in lay ministry, especially during Rev. Jan’s sabbatical. The Leadership Development Team provided excellent education and trainings, and held a Board of Trustees retreat to orient new Board members.

We made some small headway in figuring out how to enact our congregational mission: *Practicing Loving Community, Advancing Justice, Nurturing Spiritual Growth*. Our social justice focus expanded as we became more involved in the immigrant rights movement and became a Sanctuary Church in October, 2017. We have learned much as a new sanctuary church as well as from our sanctuary guests, who have become our friends over the past seven months. We are hopeful that they will be able to stay in the United States. We continued to be a spiritual center of anti-racist, anti-poverty,

environmental and health care justice, and LGBTIQ and other civil rights struggles in Central Connecticut. Some of us participated in Women's Marches in Washington, D.C. and Hartford, Black Lives Matter rallies, as well as Immigration Rights events. In a critical fundraising complement to the congregation's stewardship pledges, we had much success in the Holiday Fair, the hosting of concerts, our Daffodil Festival concession, service auction, and the spring tag sale.

There is still the difficulty of balancing our expenses and income. We would love to do more but are limited by finances. We are experiencing the decision made two years ago to eliminate the professional Director of Education position, and to have our minister at two-thirds time. The return to a lay-led church school is ongoing, and as expected, we see challenges and opportunities ahead.

We start the new fiscal year with a balanced budget!! Kudos to the Treasurer and the members of Stewardship and Finance who all wrestled with the budget--on a regular basis for the past several years. We come together as a community of faith and commitment at this 2018 Annual Congregational Meeting. Some of the ways I hope to further our mission in the coming year are to:

- 1) Hold Cottage meetings to listen to you, the members
- 2) Foster Strategic Goals for the Board of Trustees, Committees, and Teams
- 3) Conduct quarterly meetings with the newly created Past Presidents' Advisory Council
- 4) Adopt a Congregational Behavioral Covenant on how we work together
- 5) Promote transparency and communication with the membership.

Join me in making this next year full of wonder!

### ***Annual Report of the Minister Rev. Dr. Jan Carlsson-Bull***

**Joys**



**Challenges**



**Dreams**



Every month I conclude my report to our Board of Trustees with Joys & Challenges. For this my Annual Report to our entire congregation, I add Dreams, for dreams emerge from a community with faith in our possibilities, and dreams are realized through strategic commitment and mindful planning. Yes, we can! *Si, se puede!*

Such is our life together and such is the structure of my report to you.

What are the **joys** that I witness and experience over the course of this past year, which is not quite past?

- **Our mission!** *Practicing loving community, advancing justice, nurturing spiritual growth.* We are called by our mission. Increasingly we incorporate our mission into our worship, our gatherings, our communications printed and spoken, and the ministries that we share.
- **Covenant** as our focus for worship and more throughout this year. We are connected by our covenant. While we have yet to update the current congregational covenant, the core of it is love—resilient, tough, relentless, courageous, enduring love. We are connected in *love beyond belief*.
- **Ministries of love and justice.** Our ministries are multiple, but I return to that observation of Cornel West that “Justice is love in public.” You *get* the difference between justice and charity. Solidarity, being *with* folks among us who are downwind of oppression is quite different than giving *to*. The former carries the wisdom that we’re all in this together, as we are. Our shared ministry of sanctuary embodies this, as does our ministry of anti-racism, and gender inclusiveness.
- **Being a learning congregation.** This implies humility, which is a challenge for UUs. Commonly we who are Unitarian Universalist succumb to the “we’re so cool” myth in our theology, our approach to religious education, our worship, etc. While we at UU Meriden are not immune to this liability, as long as humility and humor are in our midst, there is hope!
- **Experimental worship.** Over this past year, our Worship Associates and I have intentionally tried varied approaches to worship and sought to be increasingly mindful about how we do intergenerational worship. When we worship together across generations, we are seeking to *engage* our youngsters. Feel free to ask me for examples of this and other elements of this report, lest the length of what I write go around the bend.
- **Resilience** We seek to be ever resilient as we continue our sanctuary ministry, honor our mission with the resources that are more limited than we would prefer, and try to respond rather than react to our challenges.
- **Filling our wells and sharing the water.** My description of the essence of Small Group Ministry, but in so many ways this is what we do through worship, justice ministries, religious education, and more.
- **Grass-roots buds that blossom.** Prime examples are the **Buddhanature Gathering Group**, the **Women’s Sacred Singing Circle**, and **Gifted Promises** (those six \$50 challenges that I distributed at our worship on March 4, with the promise on the part of those of who took the challenge to use this seed funding to create a venture on behalf of the larger congregation or community and tell your story at our June 10<sup>th</sup> worship).
- **My sabbatical.** This is the two-phase venture that I mapped out in my message of February 4 and the brochure mailed to every member. If you missed seeing these items, I can send them upon request. I hope that you have read the blogs I have posted during my sabbatical thus far. You will find them at <http://pastor.uumeriden.org/>. Phase 1 of my sabbatical concludes upon my return June 5. Phase 2 runs from the last week of October through November. I am ever grateful to this congregation for honoring these periods of reflection, renewal, and pilgrimage.
- **Each of you for all you do and all you are!**

What are the **challenges** that I witness and experience?

- **Living into the full possibility of our mission.** Ours is not an easy faith to live by. Ours is not an easy mission to honor. *Practicing* is key. We're about *practicing* loving community, because it takes so much practice. So too, we seek to *advance* justice and *nurture* spiritual growth, all in the fulcrum of covenant.
- **Enough time, enough commitment, enough funds.** I don't know anyone who is not "busy." Yet "busy" is one of those words I try to avoid—such as when one of you gives me a call or steps into my study and begins with, "I know you're so busy, Jan, but..." May I never be too busy to listen to you and be with you. We are all challenged to find the time and make the time for the particular niche of our respective ministries that allow us be a congregation of love and justice. May we equally find the wherewithal for our ministry of money. Let's transform the tendency to avoid the "m" word with hearing and heeding "ministry" before "money." Might we have more than enough time, commitment, and funds to be all we can be.
- **Clarity of organizational structure and individual commitment.** This is a work in process, addressed by our Leadership Development Team, Board of Trustees, Leadership Council, Committee on Shared Ministry, Governance Task Force, and me. Clarity of goals, strategic planning around what we seek to do by when and by whom, and a system of accountability are critical factors in achieving this. As we proceed, we're challenged to identify what is collaborative behavior and what is a blurring of roles.
- **Pledging by a needed deadline and honoring our pledges.** While 30% of our membership has not yet pledged as of this writing, 70% have. The glass is more than half full. Let's fill it up!
- **Visitors who visit again a few times and drift way, folks who join and drop out.** How to reveal congregational life as a magnetic force that holds the wherewithal to be more than we could be without it? We cannot talk about membership growth without talking about membership engagement. How to welcome the stranger, so that the stranger becomes a friend? How to understand that not everyone who visits will find what they seek or even knew what they seek? How not to water down what membership means but to hold up the prospect of a fuller richer life because of it?
- **Anxiety in the social/political climate that describes this slice of history.** We live in "interesting times." We live in a new and unwelcome ICE Age. We live in a nation still careening into its fault line of racism. Many of us strain against the forces of a broken health care system, underfunded disrespected public education, gerrymandering along race and class lines, and more. How challenged we are to resist and persist. The #MeToo movement, the recently launched Poor People's Campaign (resurrected from 50 years ago), the opioid epidemic and a non-profit such as Roadway to Hope, and the need to renew and restore are all challenges in which we are mired and with which we are graced.

What are my **dreams** for our congregational life in the year ahead?

- A focused attention on **living our mission in every dimension of our lives together**.
- A new **congregational covenant** forged through our vision of how we can BE in loving community.
- **Leadership positions filled with enthusiasm, commitment, and readiness for mutual accountability.**
- **Deeper connection and collaboration across congregations** including the consideration of what a multi-campus congregation might look like.
- **Honoring conflict** through healing circles, not necessarily facilitated by the minister.
- **Openness to experimental worship with a focus on intergenerational worship.**
- **Engaging our children and youth.**
- **A vibrant ministry of lifespan religious exploration, with folks eager to teach and participate.**
- **Openness to diverse stances of belief and non-belief (and disbelief).**
- **Generosity of time, talent, and treasure, balanced with every person giving our fair share of each.**
- **Deep commitment to justice—racial justice, eco justice, LGBTIQQA justice, immigrant justice, justice from the inside out and the outside in, and justice making as ongoing spiritual practice.**
- **Fun, with no agendas.**
- **Sustained sense of humor.**

**Please consider what I offer in this report as an invitation to conversation and possibility. I continue to take joy in being your minister and walking this journey with you through our joys and challenges on into our dreams!**

***Annual Report of the Committee on Shared Ministry***  
***Tim O'Brien***

The members of the Committee on Shared Ministry (COSM) are Bob Reutenauer, Pat Stark, Cindy Ferguson, and Tim O'Brien, who is the chair. Cindy Ferguson needed to resign from the committee in March due to her new job's work hours requirements. The COSM appreciates her contribution since its inception in 2016 and wishes her the best of luck in her new job.

The focus of the COSM is on the spiritual health of the entire ministry of the congregation as a reflection of mission fulfillment. Our overall goal is to make people more aware of the mission of the church when they participate in church activities and in their lives.

This year we wanted to do an assessment of the goals of the congregation as established by the Board of Trustees. Regretfully, for various reasons, we were not able to meet our goal.

The Committee on Shared Ministry worked as the Sabbatical Committee for Rev. Jan's two-part sabbatical, which takes place this church year and next. The committee collaborated with Rev. Jan to

plan and create the Sabbatical Brochure that outlines her undertaking to seek “truth, healing and reconciliation” and her pilgrimage to Vietnam in the autumn.

The COSM’s goal in the future will be to become a stronger presence in the congregation and to work harder to fulfill the focus of the committee. We will seek guidance from Rev. Jan and will reach out to the Board of Trustees to collaborate on the process.

Respectfully submitted,  
Tim O’Brien

### ***Annual Report of the Adult Religious Exploration Committee Trish Schneider***

Adult RE goals for the 2017-18 fiscal year were:

- to work with members of the congregation and committees to provide opportunities for learning and community beyond Sunday worship
- to explore ways to bring 21st century technology into the Adult RE program to meet the needs of members of UUCM
- to reach beyond our walls to find opportunities to work with the UU Church of Greater Bridgeport on Adult RE

Adult RE collaborated with members of the congregation to offer the following programs in 2017-18:

- TED Talks, Buddhanature Gathering Group, Wednesday Worship, Hands-On Saturdays, Women’s Sacred Singing Circle
- Special events: Women’s Singing Circle Workshop, Dances of Universal Peace, Cooking Together, and Creating a Personal Altar
- The Women’s Sacred Singing Circle was a new offering this year. Adult RE has created an Adult RE event planning Toolbox. The hope is to empower members to share their knowledge and gifts.

ARE was less successful with the last two goals. Budget cuts limited the ability to experiment with doing a webinar-style workshop. We didn’t find a project to work on with the UU Church of Greater Bridgeport.

We worked to increase our visibility by publicizing events in the following ways: an Adult RE Table during Sunday Coffee Hour; posting Adult RE events on UUCM’s Facebook page and on the Adult RE page on the UUCM website.

Trish Schneider would like to thank the people who have played vital roles in organizing events, serving on the team, leading workshops, and more over the past year. Special thanks to: Sumala McKeown, Bobby Pearston, Molly Nolan, Barbara Kline, Bob Reutenauer, Diane Szymaszek, Alice Sherard, Lynne Growsky, Angie Swanger, Eva Betjemann, and Pam Mulready.

Next year's Goals:

- Adult RE will continue to work with members of the congregation and committees to provide opportunities for learning and community beyond Sunday worship.
- We will explore ways to bring 21st century technology into the Adult RE program to meet the needs of members of UUCM.
- We will reach beyond our walls to find opportunities to work with other UU congregations on Adult RE.

Respectfully submitted,  
Trish Schneider

### ***Annual Report of the Children & Youth Religious Education Committee Megumi Yamamoto***

It has been a challenging and inspiring time for CYRE, as we faced our first year without a professional Director of Religious Education. The enthusiasm and support of our committee members, teachers, assistants, substitutes, and the congregation in general has been wonderful.

I would like to thank the committee members: Richard Gault, Jennifer Hadley, Molly Nolan, and James Dawson and Jane Dioguardi (our newest volunteers!). Liz Hall and Molly Nolan's wisdom was invaluable to the successful transition to a completely volunteer-run church school. Ann Smith was an active liaison to the Board and great supporter of our work.

We had incredible teachers this year who spent so much time not only in classrooms with the children, but also planning their learning beforehand. I feel so lucky to work with this amazing team of women — Jeannie Jalbert, Karen Silva, Chaucey Perreault, and Jen Skindaras. I'd like to thank Jeannie and Karen in particular: they taught their own classes, stepped in at other times, and gave me so much positive energy. Our youth group was small but active, and that's due to their leaders, Deirdre Theriault and Cindy Ferguson. They listened to and motivated our older teens, while encouraging their involvement in our congregational life. They also were a lot of fun!

I'd also like to thank our teenage assistants, Samira Mayers and Dani Gomez. They did everything from giving one-on-one attention to kids who needed support, to chaperoning innumerable trips to the bathroom and helping come up with creative ideas on rainy days!

A group of dedicated volunteers helped us with substituting, being that extra adult we needed to follow the safety policy, visiting and sharing their gifts, donating supplies, and in many other ways. These people said yes when asked to do all kinds of things: Pat Stark (our faithful substitute all year long), John Sepples, Liz Hall, Kate Miller, Jennifer Hadley, Victoria Walters, James Dawson, Rev. Jan Carlsson-Bull, Trish Schneider, Asher Fritz, and many others I'm probably forgetting to name but who deserve a huge thank you.

Our theme for the year was LOVE! Our younger group (pre-K to 3rd grade) and their teachers, Karen and Jen, explored the "Love Surrounds Us" curriculum, and our older kids (4th-8th grade) along with

their teachers, Jeannie and Chaucey, used “Love Connects Us.” These helpful resources were provided through the UUA.

Jen Skindaras almost single-handedly ran our summer program, following the Dr. Seuss curriculum we’ve used before, but also being flexible and making time for fun with the children who attended.

Special projects included: Stone Soup--once again directed by Jennifer Hadley (who also revised it to reflect the current issues around refugees), the Solnit Project with Kate Miller (creating goodie bags and centerpieces for the children’s psychiatric hospital in Middletown), Easter Egg Hunt, and our own Love fundraiser. Chaucey introduced a very special guest, Mr. Mike, who did yoga with us! The Youth Group created an Acts of Kindness tree for the sanctuary and helped with the Daffodil Festival booth, as well as taking part in the organization for the statewide March for Our Lives. The CYRE Committee was also responsible for the Kids Zone activity area offered during the holiday fair.

Unfortunately, we were unable to staff some important programs this year. Both Coming of Age and Our Whole Lives have been put on hold until next year, with the hope of more volunteers so we can run them. We missed some of our favorite special activities, like Mystery Pals, for the same reason. We also did not have staffing for our nursery, which is very problematic because although we didn’t have any babies or toddlers who regularly attended, we want to be able to offer this service to families who are visiting us — it’s the kind of thing that could help them make the decision to return!

The Worship Associates, co-coordinated by Barbara Kline, worked closely with us to make sure that our youngest community members had a meaningful worship experience, and as always, Reverend Jan was especially helpful in facilitating bridges between upstairs and downstairs.

We hope that the conversation about how we want to “do church” for all ages continues. If anyone wants a copy of the interesting whitepaper, “The Death of Sunday School,” which is being talked about all over the UU world, just let me know! It might be time to rethink when and how we worship and learn.

I’d like to give a special shout-out to Trish Schneider, who not only mentored me in my new role (and cheered me up when I got frustrated) and enabled us to add to the new Website, but also helped immensely with the reorganization of the office!

Looking back at this year, I’m proud of what we’ve accomplished and excited about the possibilities for next year. Oftentimes at the end of meetings or emails, I remind those involved with CYRE that this is sacred work that they are doing. I feel fortunate to walk alongside them.

Respectfully submitted,  
Megumi Yamamoto

***Annual Report of the FUNdraining Committee***  
***Donna Stimpson***

Each year the church's budget is made based on the pledges. FUNdraising is a congregational commitment to help raise the funds to realize our mission **Practicing Loving Community, Advancing Justice, Nurturing Spiritual Growth** and to support the many ministries we hold dear.

The FUNdraising Team raises money to fill the gap and had a goal of raising \$15,400 to meet our church obligations to our staff, maintain our church and property, and provide services to our congregation. The church raised approximately \$19,830!! These figures will be updated with one more month of the rental income and Drumming Circle. UUCM did not participate in the Meriden-Markham Airport Fly-In which was re-scheduled three times (conflict with tag sale) or the Gallery 53 event. We greatly overestimated the Stop and Shop Cash for Causes sales. We did better than expected on the Tag Sale and Daffodil Festival. We did meet our goal!!!! The FUNdraising Team has done a remarkable job raising funds. We experimented with new ways to raise funds and will build on our successes. The following is a summary of the FUNdraising Projects that raised the funds this year:

<b>Fundraising Project (7/1/2017 - 5/17/2018)</b>	<b>Raise Estimate</b>	<b>Actual Amount Raised (Net)</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Renting Space at UUMC*	\$5,375.00	\$6,423.71	+\$1,048.71 (119.5%)
Drum Circle*	\$800.00	\$648.00	-\$152.00 (-19.0%)
<b>Sub-total:( as of 5/17/2018)</b>	<b>\$6,175.00</b>	<b>\$7,071.71</b>	<b>+896.71 (+14.5%)</b>
Miles of Pennies Collection:	\$180.00	\$162.96	-\$17.04 (-9.5%)
Holiday Fair	\$1,250.00	\$3,325.95	+\$2,075.95 (166%) Replaced Gallery 53 Event
Pumpkin Patch	\$0.00	\$0.00	Discontinued
1 Paint Night with Diane	\$250.00	\$300.00	+\$50.00 (+20%)
UUCM Service/Item Auction	\$4,000.00	\$5,080.00	+\$1,080.00 (+27%)
Spring Tag Sale	\$925.00	\$1,220.50	Not include Saver's payment for tag sale leftovers
Daffodil Festival	\$1,500.00	\$2,118.03	Not include sale of extra food & anticipated lime marmalade sales.
Stop & Shop Cash for Causes	\$600.00	\$302.50	-\$295.75 (-49.6%)
The Coffee Grinders & Rocky Lawrence Concert	\$425.00 + \$100.00 (food)	\$250.00	The musicians expected \$300.00 which cut into net. -\$175.00 (-41.2%)
Meriden-Markham Airport Fly-In	0.00	\$0.00	Planned for same day as Tag Sale (Raise \$250.00)
<b>Sub-Total Fundraising:</b>	<b>\$9,230.00</b>	<b>\$12,759.94</b>	<b>+\$3,529.94 (+38.2%)</b>
<b>Goal Total:</b>	<b>\$15,405.00</b>	<b>\$19,831.65</b>	<b>+\$4,426.65 (+28.7%)</b>

\*as of May 23, 2018

This is the first year we had a Holiday Fair at the church instead of participating in the event at Gallery 53, and we did great!! This is the second full year we've raised funds through Stop and Shop Cash for

Causes, and we overestimated sales. (Last year we raised \$600.00). We need congregants to buy the cards. UUCM sells Stop and Shop gift cards, and five percent (5%) of the cash value goes to the church. Over the course of the year, we continue to hope this would be an easy way for members and friends to contribute.

**We could not do the fundraising without volunteers!!** Thanks to the following volunteers who **shared their time and talent** by helping with fundraisers throughout the year (and to anyone whose name may have been inadvertently omitted):

<b>THANKS, VOLUNTEERS!</b>		
Penny Bavsch	Janet Hiller	Linda Schiwall
Tina and Mark Caplan	Richard Kargher	Trish Schneider
Rev. Dr. Jan Carlsson-Bull	Joe Kiely	John Sepples
Jane Dioguardi	Peg Kirkpatrick	Alice Sherard
Ann Dougherty	Barbara and Paul Kline	Tracy Smith
Sandy Duffy	Kathy Lindberg	Pat Stark
Karl Eckert	Jeff May	Donna Stimpson
Ginny Evensen	Michael Milardo	Angie Swanger
Cindy Ferguson	Bob and Maureen Muir	Diane Szymaszek
Asher Fritz	Molly Nolan	Lisa Urso
Richard Gault	Tim O'Brien	Deirdre and Cori Theriault
Harriet Gottlieb	Bob Reutenauer	Megumi Yamamoto
Jennifer Hadley	Lou and Betty Rinaldi	Steve Volpini
Liz Hall	Chet Rynaski	Robert Wysocki
Randy Heath	Anita Sanders	

***Annual Report of the Communications Committee***  
***Trish Schneider***

This committee produces the church newsletter, maintains our Website, engages with social media (Facebook and Twitter), and facilitates the dissemination of church news and events. We also facilitate getting church news releases out into the wider community.

The acting committee chairperson was Trish Schneider. Members of the committee were Jeff May and Molly Nolan. The communications committee has four teams: Weekly Update, Website, Social Media, and newsletter. The communications chair keeps in touch with each team.

The UUCM website has been given a new look. Communications moved from a single webmaster to a creative team to manage and maintain the Website. Jeff May, Trish Schneider, and Diane Szymaszek are part of the Website creative team.

After being on hiatus for six months, the newsletter, "UU and You," was brought back with a new layout. Randy Heath created the template. Janet Hiller continues as copy editor. Maureen Leahy agreed to do layout and publish the newsletter. It has been mailed to members and friends rather than sent by email.

The Weekly Update template has been streamlined. Steven Nahas joined Tim O'Brien on this team. The Social Media team has continued to post on our Facebook page events and news about UU Meriden. Alice Sherard and Bob Reutenauer joined the Facebook team to handle the Congregation's Sanctuary posts and inquiries.

We set up blogs for Rev. Jan and the Social Justice Council.

Thank you to all for their service on the Communications Team and to Rev. Jan for her input.

Trish Schneider, Acting Communications Chair

### ***Annual Report of the Leadership Development Team*** ***Trish Schneider***

In July, the Board of Trustees authorized the creation of a Leadership Development Team (LDT). The purpose of the LDT is to develop and implement a year-round leadership development program that will ensure a ready pool of diverse, skilled leaders who reflect the values and mission of UU Meriden. The LDT has been working with a model of leadership development called the Five I's: Identify, Invite, Inform, Involve, and Inquire.

In year one, LDT has focused on Identify and Inform. They created a gifts and talents database to identify the interests and gifts of the UUCM members. LDT held a Ministry/Get Connected Fair to increase the visibility of the UUCM committees. Working with Adult RE, LDT curates a list of online leadership courses from the Unitarian Universalist Leadership Institute. They are planning a Board retreat for the incoming Board of Trustees in July.

#### **Nominating Committee**

The job of Nominating Committee has been added to the mission of the Leadership Development Team. Eight of the nine Board of Trustees positions will need to be filled for fiscal year 2018: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Clerk of the Board, Finance chair, Property chair, and two At-Large positions. LDT has found nominees for all the Board of Trustees positions except Property Chair. LDT chair Trish Schneider would like to thank the people who have played vital roles serving on the team: Molly Nolan, Bob Pearston, Donna Stimpson, Pam Mulready, and Bob Reutenauer.

#### **Next year's Goals:**

- Create a leadership development seminar.
- Continue to work on the gifts and talents database to identify the interests and gifts of members of UUCM.

- Continue to identify members with leadership potential by working with the Membership Committee and other committees and task forces of UUCM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Trish Schneider

***Annual Report of the Leadership Council***  
***Trish Schneider***

The Leadership Council coordinates and facilitates communication and cooperation among the committees--Finance, Fundraising, Property, Membership, Worship, Stewardship, Social Justice Council, Adult Religious Exploration (ARE), Children and Youth Religious Education (CYRE), as well as staff and ministry. In addition, the Leadership Council acts as a forum for collaborative effort on issues and projects of the congregation. The members of the Leadership Council include the chairs of the standing and ad hoc committees/teams. The LC is chaired by the Vice President of the congregation. The committee chairs are expected to attend the Leadership Council meetings.

This year, the Leadership Council held two events, a Committee Fair: Get Connected, and the Tree Trimming Celebration in December. They recommended that the Board of Trustees reinstate the monthly newsletter. The Leadership Council worked with the Leadership Development Team on the creation of the leadership development workshop.

Goals for FY 2018-19

- To increase the visibility of the Leadership Council within the congregation
- To encourage collaborative efforts between committees and teams
- To explore ways the committees can do outreach

Respectfully submitted,  
Trish Schneider

***Annual Report of the Leadership Development Team***  
***Trish Schneider***

The Leadership Development Team's purpose is to develop and implement a year-round leadership development program that will ensure a ready pool of diverse, skilled leaders who reflect the values and mission of UU Meriden. The LDT has been working with a model of leadership development called the Five I's: Identify, Invite, Inform, Involve, and Inquire.

This year, the LDT has completed the following:

- ran a retreat for the Board of Trustees with Anita Sanders as facilitator
- updated the Stewardship Charter
- updated the Committee Chair Handbook
- developed a leadership development seminar/workshop
- did a dry run of two sections of the workshop

## **Nominating Committee**

The job of Nominating Committee has been added as a mission of the Leadership Development Team. Two of the nine Board of Trustees positions need to be filled for fiscal year 2019--Vice President and Treasurer.

Trish Schneider would like to thank the people who have played vital roles serving on the team or facilitating training: Molly Nolan, Donna Stimpson, Pam Mulready, Angie Swanger, Anita Sanders, and Rev. Dr. Jan Carlsson-Bull.

## **Next year's Goals**

- Continue working on the Leadership Development workshop
- Work with other committees on creating the development of a gifts and talent database to identify the interests and gifts of members UUCM
- Continue to identify members with leadership potential by working with the Membership Committee and other committees and task forces of UUCM

Respectfully submitted,  
Trish Schneider

## ***Annual Report of the Membership Committee*** ***Molly Nolan***

The Membership Committee assists the Minister in helping visitors understand Unitarian Universalism and the Unitarian Universalist Church in Meriden. We also have some standing sub-committees/teams and functions.

Over the course of the year, we refined our path to membership. This is an ongoing project. Yet to be tackled is better tracking and support of visitors by the committee. Our goal is to share more of the responsibility for helping visitors become members and integrating members into the congregation. The Minister has primary responsibility for tracking new people. Membership is looking to take more of that responsibility to free our minister to engage other ministry tasks and initiatives. How best to do this is currently under discussion.

Membership is assisting the Leadership Development Team in tracking what programs, events, and offerings are working and which ones we need to modify or abandon.

The Membership Committee oversees two teams that have become largely self-directed and self-sustaining: Greeters and the Caring and Concern Team.

This past year we held a dinner with people relatively new to the congregation in a member's home and talked about what they found challenging in trying to find their place at UUCM. We are using the results of that meeting to direct our future efforts. We are also planning to hold several of these dinners over the course of the coming year to gather and apply the wisdom of our newer members.

We have discussed and are planning to institute a mentor/buddy program to help newer members feel at home at UUCM.

We are actively seeking new members for the Membership Committee to carry out the several initiatives we are ready to launch. For UUCM to survive and flourish, we need to help new members find their place at UUCM and support their growth into their own ministries.

Respectfully submitted,  
Molly Nolan

### ***Annual Report of the Property Committee*** ***Randall Heath***

This has been a challenging year for the Property Committee. Randy Heath took over as chair from Lou Rinaldi. Initial attempts to rouse interest in membership for the property committee failed, and the committee devolved to an *ad hoc* basis relying on Randy Heath, Donna Stimpson, Joe Kiely, and intermittent assistance from other individuals. Regular monthly committee meetings have not been held this year. I would like to change and improve this, grow the committee membership and participation, and get back to a regular meeting schedule, but this has been difficult for a number of reasons, including an aging congregation, and family and professional demands upon my own time.

Despite this, there were a number of accomplishments worth pointing out for the past year.

- Lighting fixtures in the kitchen and front room have been converted to LED fixtures, for enhanced light and lower electrical usage.
- The health inspection for the kitchen passed in February 2018, after a substantial deep cleaning. As part of this effort, some of the aging or extraneous utensils, flatware, and plates/bowls, were cleared out, and improvements to how things are stored were made. Thanks to Donna Stimpson in this area.
- The kitchen sink faucet fixture (previously plastic, which cracked and leaked) has been replaced with an all-metal fixture.
- With the assistance of Sandy Duffy and Jeff May, a water line for a new-to-us Bunn coffee maker was installed.
- A number of folding tables whose legs had broken were repaired by Joe Kiely, leaving one table for parts.
- Roof leaks were patched by Joe Kiely.
- The secondary office upstairs was cleared and converted to a bedroom for our sanctuary guests by multiple volunteers led by Donna Stimpson and Joe Kiely.
- Large-screen TV has been installed on the sanctuary north wall. This will be useful in multimedia services, group presentations, rental usage such as memorial services, film screenings, and other purposes.

The summer mowing season is upon us again, and while the budget did not allocate funds for mowing, we have engaged our previous mowers on an *ad hoc* basis at a rate of \$98 per mowing.

Respectfully submitted,  
Randall Heath

***Annual Report of the Small Group Ministry Committee***  
***Rev. Dr. Jan Carlsson-Bull***

We are completing the fourth full year of Small Group Ministry (SGM). This particular ministry is about small groups of eight to ten individuals (members and friends) meeting twice monthly with trained facilitators around matters of intimacy and ultimacy. The consistent structure of each session is designed to build trust, stretch souls, and deepen connections. Loving Community is at the core of SGM. We avoid becoming ingrown through a commitment by each group to two service ventures during the year—one for the benefit of the congregation and another, for the benefit of the larger community.

Friday evening, June 8, 2018 will mark the Fourth Annual SGM Potluck Processing/Planning Gathering. This will include facilitators and all participants. Key questions that we'll ask participants of the two groups that have met twice monthly since this past October include: What did you like? What would you change? What would you let go of? What topics do you suggest for next year's session plans?

Abundant thanks to this year's facilitators: Molly Nolan – for the newly formatted Chalice Circle group, focused on a deeper understanding of who we are as Unitarian Universalists; and Steve Volpini and Kathy Lindberg, for the 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday morning group. Participants build on a suggested behavioral covenant at the year's beginning. Facilitators build on a Facilitators' Covenant, which we introduced two years ago and which is relatively new in Small Group Ministry as it's practiced across UU congregations.

Examples of items in the Behavioral Covenant for groups are:

- We agree to practice active, caring listening.
- We agree to encourage people to speak from their own experiences and feelings rather than from what they've read or theorize.

Examples of items in the Facilitators' Covenant are:

- We agree to encourage participation in a way that everyone will be heard.
- We agree that our groups are not therapy groups and that we will refrain from addressing anyone's psychological issues.

Every session begins with chalice lighting and continues with a reading, a check-in (without feedback from other members), introduction of the topic, structured conversation on this topic, feedback on the session itself, introduction of the topic for the next session, and closing words. Session topics are suggested by participants at the potluck reflection, by facilitators during the periodic facilitator meetings, and by Rev. Jan, who is overall coordinator of SGM and seasoned in its content and process. This year's session topics

included, but were not limited to: Gratitude, Candlelight, Wishing on a Star, Sibling Rivalry, First Jobs, and Childhood Summers.

For 2018-2019, we hope to expand our facilitator base and continue with two full groups.

Small Group Ministry continues at Ashlar Village, where Jan runs a group during the afternoon of the second Tuesdays. This off-site SGM emerged from the monthly worship services Jan had done there initially. Participants number from three to seven and have warmly embraced this form of ministry, which permits in-depth conversation and a worshipful dimension. The primary difference between SGM at Ashlar Village and SGM at the church is the inclusion of service ventures for the church groups.

Through this ministry of small groups, both at UUCM and at Ashlar Village, we deepen connection with one another. We fill our wells and share the water.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rev. Dr. Jan Carlsson-Bull

***Annual Report of the Worship Associates***  
***Barbara Kline***

The Worship Associates held a day-and-a-half retreat in the summer of 2017 at Rev. Jan's home with a focus on several things. First, we welcomed a new Worship Associate, Lynne Grobsky. Megumi Yamamoto, CYRE chair, met with us to talk about having more interaction between the Worship Associates and CYRE. We established Covenant as the theme for the year, and we committed to granting more flexibility to the worship leaders on how that would be included.

This year we had 42 Sunday services at UUCM. On May 6th we attended the service at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Greater Bridgeport. Nine services fell during Rev. Jan's sabbatical, two of which welcomed visiting ministers Rev. Megan Lloyd Joiner and Rev. Josh Pawelek. We also had one service led by Anita Sanders, president of UUCGB. The rest were led by our very reliable Worship Associates. The remainder of the year's services were led by Rev. Jan. We expect to have 10 services this summer: one will be led by our youth group; Rev. Jan will lead one in July and one in August.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Barbara Kline

***Annual Report of the Social Justice Council***  
***Steve Volpini***

The Social Justice Council has discovered that when you work on justice you expand your community and grow spiritually.

Last August, we decided to focus on our anti-racism efforts and on supporting justice toward undocumented immigrants.

On September 22, seven of our church members attended a rally at the home of Franklin and Giaconda Ramos and their two sons. The family was facing deportation and the risk of separating the boys—one in college, the other still in high school—from their hard-working parents. It looked like the parents would soon need sanctuary. We called Rev. Jan, who assented to considering a home at UU Meriden. Fortunately, the Ramos family was given a stay of deportation.

On October 9, we received an urgent phone call that Sujitno Sajuti was facing deportation the next morning and wanted to go into sanctuary. Many in the congregation knew Sujitno and his wife, Dahlia, from their social justice work on immigration issues. We had to make an urgent decision. Conference calls were held, and with about five hours' notice, Sujitno and Dahlia came from their home in West Hartford to live in sanctuary at UU Meriden. The congregation soon voted overwhelmingly to make it official: We are a Sanctuary Church.

This began a long period of gathering community support, in Meriden and well beyond. Rev. Jan asked Nancy Burton to head a team of volunteers. Our thanks to Alok Bhatt and the many people who have served since October on the Chalice Sanctuary Team: Rev. Dr. Jan Carlsson-Bull, Nancy Burton, Pastor Paul Fleck, Richard Gault, Peg Kirkpatrick, Alice Sherard, Maureen Muir, Mike Milardo, Diane Szymaszek, Bob Reutenauer, Sandy Duffy, Steve Volpini. Penny Barsch is a newer member.

We embarked on a journey of education, growth, and discovery. How does a church do sanctuary? We learned how other UU sanctuary churches in Connecticut and elsewhere operate. With the leadership of Alok Bhatt, a lawyer and organizer from the Connecticut Immigration Rights Alliance (CIRA), and with the advice of Pastor Paul Fleck, another lawyer and sanctuary activist, we pulled together. There was also a press conference, a vigil, and meetings with Sujitno's lawyers and members of his mosque, and other events to help support Sujitno and Dahlia emotionally and financially. Our church has received overwhelming support from others in the faith and activist community, including enough outside financial support to cover the expenses of this work.

The church became active also in the fight to keep Nelly Cumbicos, of Meriden, from being deported and separated from her husband and her 16-year-old son. A February 5 rally led to a resolution from the Meriden City Council calling on Mayor Kevin Scarpati to write to the government demanding she get a stay. Eventually, she did. We have continued showing up at other rallies and court dates to support people facing deportation.

That's where some of the growth came in. Nelly's primary support was Shoreline Indivisible, a social action group headquartered in Guilford. We also tightened our ties with United Action Connecticut. Members of our congregation joined with others to found a new group: Meriden SUN, or Standing Up for Neighbors, which joins immigration activists from Middletown and Meriden. The outreach, activism, and education have continued for the last nine months.

As for our focus on racial equity, we decided to learn what the local experts had to say. On October 18, we hosted a roundtable discussion with the minority members of the City Council and Board of Education and representation from the local NAACP. This was ably run by Angie Swanger, our lay anti-racism leader.

The event was a success. The guests spoke from the heart and expressed frustration with the low numbers of minorities working in City Hall and as educators in our schools. They asked us to continue these forums and to show up at the City Council and Board of Education meetings to voice our support for racial diversity.

On Jan. 16, at our first foray into speaking before the City Council, we thanked the community for its support of Sujitno and Dahlia. We also urged the Council and the mayor to push for greater diversity in hiring persons of color.

Diane Szymaszek, co-chair of SJC and a respected educator, also spoke before the City Council. She is now a member of the team which will choose the next City Manager. She reports that her team is including language that considers diversity when making its choice.

We have hosted a TED Talk and a talk on racial prejudice. We screened "I Am Not Your Negro," a blistering documentary about James Baldwin, which adds perspective to the current racial narrative in America. There were two services (from attorney Alicia Kinsman and UUCM member Bob Reutenauer) devoted to the issues of tight immigration laws and the barriers to citizenship. And we are having our eyes opened by *Centering*, a book on race relations by UU ministers of color.

Further, throughout the year, we have been active in Moral Mondays, including the Poor People's Campaign, and rallies organized by D.U.E. Justice and the CT Citizens Action Group. Finally, we have forged stronger ties to our local government, broadened our circle of social justice advocates, and had our faith in humanity strengthened. It has been a good year.

Steve Volpini

### ***Annual Report of the Stewardship Committee*** ***Trish Schneider***

This year we continued to talk Stewardship all year round in an effort to support the mission and vision of the Unitarian Universalist Church in Meriden with time, treasure, and talent.

At the start of the fiscal year, we confirmed the amount of each pledge and the planned frequency of payment. To encourage everyone to pay their pledge, we mailed quarterly statements, as well as the end of the calendar year statements.

This year's theme was Tending Our Garden, focusing on sowing the seeds of love and grace of Unitarian Universalism in our community and the greater world.

We started the 2018-19 pledge campaign on March 4 and set March 25 as the deadline to have all pledges in. Rev. Jan's March 4th sermon kicked off the pledge campaign. We held a Stewardship dinner called Pizza Palooza. Throughout the campaign, several contact methods were utilized, i. e., phone calls, weekly and Sunday service bulletin announcements, email, and personal contacts.

This year's pledge campaign was an all-congregation canvass. Each member's and friend's household represents a pledge unit. We identified 77 pledge units. Ten households were not canvassed due to those families' circumstances. We therefore canvassed 67 pledge units for FY 2018-19.

As of May 14, 2018:

- 54 pledges (See chart for breakdown of pledges.)
- \$94,664.
- We continue to reach out to the remaining pledge units, hoping to reach the goal of \$95,500.

Liz Hall and Sandy Duffy, Janet Hiller and Jeff May have been helping with the Stewardship Committee since winter 2018. Trish Schneider will be stepping down as Chair at the end of this fiscal year. There is a search underway for a chair or co-chairs, plus additional individuals to join the Stewardship Team for 2018-19.

#### **UU Meriden Pledge Breakdown for FY 2018-19**

FY 2019 Pledged Ranges	Number of Pledges	% of the Pledge Units
\$0	23	30
\$25-\$499	9	12
\$500-\$999	13	17
\$1000-1999	18	23
\$2000-\$4000	7	9
\$4000-\$7300	7	9

Respectfully submitted,  
Trish Schneider

***Annual Report of the Finance Committee  
Sandy Duffy***

**APPENDIX – FY 2018-2019 BUDGET**