

NORTH UNIVERSALIST CHAPEL SOCIETY

2009 ANNUAL REPORT

**Annual Meeting
January 24, 2010**



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Affiliated with the Unitarian Universalist Association

NUCS Board of Trustees Annual Report 2009

Here we are, once again, at the time of year when we, as a congregation, look both back over the year and forward to the coming one. The reports included here from the various committees and task forces detail their workings over this last year. It is my hope that you will read them through with care and thoughtfulness.

Perhaps one of the reports will trigger an idea for something new to bring to a committees' attention. Or, perhaps, you will have a question to bring up to the Annual Meeting. Please do! Maybe a report will spark your interest in joining one of the groups that keeps the church going. If so, don't hesitate, speak to a member and pitch in!

As we look back, we thank those members of NUCS who are taking leave of their time of service on the Board of Trustees. We are very grateful for the time, energy, and great spirit with which Liz Cassell, Susan Kelly-Outten, and Michael Stoner have served as Trustees. We will miss your presence among us at Board meetings! At this meeting we will welcome the new Trustees who will be elected. We also want to notice and thank Peter Rousmaniere, who has been appointed to fill Susan's remaining term.

One thing I am aware of as I look back over the year-and even the decade-is how well we have managed during difficult times. Our church has been able to offer succor to many in need, assistance to the Life and Hope Monastery, encourage the Change the World Kids and their good works, and be a healing presence on our wider community.

At the meeting you will hear from the Growth Committee which has been doing some remarkable work during the year. Earlier this year the Board and Growth Committee held a retreat to explore their workings. And now they are looking for ideas and input from everyone so we can begin work as a whole congregation. I am looking forward to their presentation.

We are becoming a generous congregation, and one that cares about the spiritual health of all around us. We continue to be lead in all our endeavors by Daniel Jantos and his remarkable way of kindness and concern for all. We are fortunate, even blessed, in having such a minister for our church.

I also feel we are fortunate in having each one of you be part of this faith community, and I thank each of you for your presence and your goodness.

In peace,

Peggy Kannenstine
NUCS Board of Trustee Chair

North Universalist Chapel Society - Woodstock, Vermont Annual Meeting Minutes - January 25, 2009

The 2009 Annual Meeting began at 11:35 am following a pot luck lunch. About seventy members and friends of the congregation were in attendance.

WELCOME: Peggy Kannenstine, President of the Board of Trustees, welcomed and thanked everyone for coming to the Annual Meeting of 2009. She talked about the passing of our long time member and pillar of our church, Alice Gould.

ELECTION OF THE MODERATOR: Nominating Committee member Barbara Abraham made a MOTION to nominate Kevin Geiger as our moderator for the year 2009. The vote was unanimous.

ELECTION OF THE CLERK: Nominating Committee member Bob Riccio made a MOTION to elect Vassie Sinopoulos as clerk/secretary. The vote was unanimous.

ELECTION OF THE TREASURER: Nominating Committee chair Susan Inui-Kelley made a MOTION to elect Ann Wynia as treasurer and Irene Hanslin assistant to the treasurer. The vote was unanimous.

ACCEPTANCE OF THE ANNUAL REPORT: Peggy Kannenstine moved to accept the annual report and Richard Waddell seconded.

Discussion: Lynn Peterson suggested a correction on page 5 "budget for 2008" at the end of the paragraph to read "we are short \$24,715" instead of "we are missing"
The moderator called for a vote and all were in favor.

ELECTIONS TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES: Judy Williamson moved the election to the Board of Trustees of the following people: Mary Jeanne Taylor for a first 3-year term, Susan Kelley-Outten for a second 3-year term, and Peggy Kannenstine for a first 3-year term.
The moderator called for a vote on the slate. All were in favor.

AWARDS & UNSUNG HERO PRESENTATION: Peggy Kannenstine thanked outgoing board member and secretary Vassie Sinopoulos for her service on the board and presented her with a book of poetry by Mary Oliver. The unsung hero awards went to the entire Religious Exploration Committee for their hard work on the RE program. Liz Cassell, RE coordinator, thanked the entire congregation for their continuous support.

BUDGET FOR 2008:

Chris Lloyd MOVED to accept the budget as presented, seconded by Susan Inui-Kelly.

Discussion: Ann Wynia said that we started the 2008 with a budget deficit of \$24,000 and we ended with \$3,800 surplus which will be going towards the 2009. Even though the Budget Committee made very severe cuts, we still have a gap of \$17,109 for the 2009 budget. Michael Stoner commented that no one likes to make cuts but we are facing difficult economic times and some people were not able to pledge. He said that the Resource Development Committee will explore some fundraising projects but for now all we can do is have faith that we will make up the gap. The moderator called for a vote to accept the budget as presented. All voted yes. Peggy Kannenstine said that there is a challenge of matching funds and three people have already taken this opportunity to pledge. She said that the most important line in the budget is the pledge line and any additional contributions will be welcome. All we need to close the gap is 10% more. Donna van Fleet reported that the board had already increased

their pledges and invited everyone who is able to do so too. Michael Stoner said that the plan is to go ahead with the book fair and at the same time there is talk of a literary festival which will be a community event involving Pentangle, the Historical Society, the Norman Williams Public Library, and the Senior Center. Patricia Compton, who served on the Compensation Committee, said that our staff is very important and we gave them a minimum increase. Diane Mellinger, our music director, offered generously to forgo her salary increase.

BY-LAW CHANGES:

Article X. Trustees of Funds (proposed new language in italics): There shall be three Trustees of Funds who shall be elected at the Annual Meeting and shall be charged with the management of the funds of this Society which are not otherwise taken care of by the terms of trust or other conveyance, for the benefit of the Society. *The term of the Trustees of Funds shall be three years. No Trustee shall serve more than two consecutive terms. Any Trustee who has served two consecutive terms shall again be eligible to serve as Trustee after an interim of one year.*

Patricia Compton made a MOTION to accept the proposed by-law changes. Seconded by Jenny Gelfan.

Discussion: Susan Inui-Kelley explained that the change will create clear language and make the terms same as board members. The moderator called for a vote to approve the by-law changes. All were in favor.

OTHER BUSINESS: Amy Dressler, who is a member of the Growth Committee, proposed that a youth serve a one-year term on the Board of Trustees to help create a relationship and connect our Board with our youth. The suggestion was well received and the board will be exploring how to make it happen.

CLOSING MEDITATION: Daniel led us through a closing meditation.

ADJOURNMENT: Kevin Geiger made a MOTION to adjourn at 12:35 pm

Respectfully submitted by Vassie Sinopoulos, Clerk/Secretary

North Universalist Chapel Society 2009 Financial Report

	YTD	2009 Budget
RECEIPTS		
1 Loose	14,306.87	11000
2 Pledges	132,801.95	132000
3 Gifts/Donations	5,217.40	2000
4 Rentals	11,020.00	18000
5 Nursery School	5,900.00	6000
6 Fund Raising	9,506.05	9000
7 Endowment income	6,000.00	6000
8 Balance forward	3,853.05	3850
9 TOTAL RECEIPTS	188,605.32	187850
EXPENSES		
17 TOTAL CHURCH	34,778.67	36200
22 TOTAL PARSONAGE	461.75	1000
31 TOTAL ADMINISTRATION	22,987.43	23980
39 TOTAL BENEFITS	26,501.49	28270
42 TOTAL MINISTER	66,836.00	66836
44 TOTAL WORSHIP	144.22	100
47 TOTAL MUSIC	14,472.00	14722
48 Coffee	252.50	300
49 Resource Committee	458.64	500
53 TOTAL MEMBERSHIP	2,203.88	2800
60 TOTAL R.E.	14,984.47	20110
61 TOTAL EXPENSES	184,081.05	194,818
Balance	4524.27	(6968)

Morgan Stanley Smith Barney Investment Balance-- \$158140

Ann L. Wynia, Treasurer

Minister's Report 2009

It is with a deep sense of gratitude that I approach this report and its overview of the past year to try to summarize the ministry of our church throughout 2009. Our church has had very real and meaningful opportunities to be a presence in the larger community and offer its presence as a source of support and activism towards good things. There has also been such generous support towards each other and our collective goals. This is due to the diligence and commitment of so many people who have cared for the details of our church life and for the mutually supported spirit of our mission and vision.

I continue to remain convinced that we are experiencing a significant shift in the way our culture and community relates to religion and to religious institutions. There have been groups within our church (notably the board and the growth group) that have been engaging these questions very intentionally and creatively. This has helped us and will continue to help us into the future to know how best we can serve each other and discover our place in this larger community.

The building and grounds of our church and the financial health of our church have received very good attention and care throughout this year. Our physical premises look well. We have a custodian who takes excellent care of our facilities. We are ending our budget year in a position that was a little hard to imagine at the beginning of this year while the economy was appearing very weak. Still there are many who are out of work and with diminished savings or with an overall sense of uncertainty. Thank you to everyone who has shown throughout this time and in spite of our inclinations to retreat such commitment and generosity towards the church and its role.

In spite of our larger community being overall a wealthy and prosperous place, there are just beneath the surface many challenging issues. Our pastoral care committee has done so much good work in being attentive to the needs that we encounter. We continue to try to be a support to therapists, health care professionals and the local schools. We are finding ways to partner with local emergency institutions, non profits and faith groups and to build partnerships with them. In the pastoral care work we continue to identify certain populations in our community that are especially at risk and seem too easily to be out of sight. We want to be active in those areas. Among these are: women who are in transition, young people in reference to having a place within the community beyond the school, workers in need of housing and those who are struggling with various kinds of mental health, especially in the long winter season. Our pastoral care committee is a devoted and thoughtful group who bring to these issues a compassion and creativity that is refreshing and hopeful.

I think it is fair to say that we are struggling with the challenges and possibilities of changing membership patterns, especially in terms of active participation. So many of us have such busy lives and the church needs to be able to be a source of support and renewal for each other. It is easy for a few to do a lot in our church and the burden of those responsibilities can be taxing in a way is overwhelming or which contributes stress and not spiritual renewal and vitality. At the same time it seems we still struggle with creating a credible process by which new members and friends can progress through newness to a fuller propriety in a way that invites their gifts and talents and makes them feel fully embraced into the sense of belonging. Perhaps the culture as a whole is struggling with the making of strong friendships and creating strong community. But this is our work and we hope to find over the next year some ways to understand this and allow for those meaningful friendships and participations to occur here. It is one of our larger community's needs that the church could serve.

Our staff are irreplaceable. Diane continues to offer our church her skills and energy in a way that makes worship here a joy and participation in the choir one of the true gifts. We are exploring together ways to continue to make the music a large part of the worship experience and in connection to that we are very grateful to have received a gift towards the purchase of the new supplements to the Unitarian Universalist hymnal. Donna Atwood works with us in a way that is flexible with

reference to hours so that our budget constraints are taken into consideration but the work gets done. She does the work with the kind of attention to detail that keeps everything in the office and with scheduling straight. The new format of the Quest, which she has introduced is being well received and is very user friendly

A lot of effort has gone into restarting an adult religious education series. The classes so far have been well received. Learning together is one of those areas that we believe is vital to our function. We are grateful to Lynn Peterson for his shepherding this process and planning.

The religious education of our children and the overall religious life of our children is of great interest to us. Liz Cassell and Cally McCrave have done such good work in being consistent and available from Sunday to Sunday. They continue to explore ways to engage the children who move beyond the 3rd grade. This age of keen religious and spiritual interest is recognized in the religious life of all traditions. We hope we can do it in a way that makes it possible for families in our area who are so often very stretched in many directions.

Once again thank you to everyone who makes our spiritual community what it is. We have weathered together some interesting times and each one of these leaves its mark on culture. It is no coincidence that many look over the last decade and have trouble defining it. But usually there are expressions of ambivalence. The “oughts” some say and refer to a decade of terror and insecurity, of war and economic uncertainty like nothing that has been experienced since the great depression. As we go into a new decade, it may be that we are getting more of a bearing and a growing sense of determination to deal with issues of community and sustainability in a more intentional way. The church will be a part of that intention as we go forward as neighbors and friends. The possibilities do offer a compelling invitation. The process promises to be a blessing to us all. So be it.

Daniel

Nominating Committee Report 2009

In 2009 the Nominating Committee met once a month except for the two summer months and held additional meetings as needed to meet expanded work requirements. We have continued our work at the request of the Board and the Growth Committee to include making nominations for Board Trustees; to the Society for Treasure, Clerk, and Moderator; attempting to recruit participants for North East Leadership Seminar (NELS) General Assembly (GA); district workshops; and when requested for additional membership for one or more NUCS standing committees. This year we have begun meeting with our committee chairs to find out what makes our committees work, what are the challenges our committees face and how can we best work together to foster the committee process to assure the smooth running our Society.

The Nominating Committee has welcomed new members Lynn Peterson, our new board liaison, and Joby Thompson. Judy Williamson will be stepping down from her position as co-chair of the Nominating Committee and we will welcome a new member as of our February meeting. The Nominating Committee wishes to thank Judy for her kind and thoughtful leadership through the years.

We continue to foster lay leadership development through facilitating member attendance at the annual UUA General Assembly and New England Leadership School, regional, district and other training opportunities. Attendees bring back a renewed energy vital to our church community and we will continue through 2010 to work to increase our participation in these events.

For the 2009 Annual Meeting, the Nominating Committee proposes Kevin Geiger as Moderator and Donna Van Fleet as Secretary. For three year terms on the Board of Trustees, we nominate Deb Hawthorne, Donna van Fleet, and Norwood Long. In accordance with the By-Law of the Society, the Board has already welcomed our nominee Peter Rousmaniere to complete the vacancy left as Susan Kelly-Outten stepped down from the board. For Treasurer we nominate Ann Wynia and for Assistant to the Treasurer we nominate Irene Hanslin. The Trustees of Funds, Chris Lloyd and Kurt Spann will continue to serve another year in compliance with our By-Laws. The nominee for the vacant 3 year term for trustee of funds is to be announced.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Abraham, co-chair
Judy Williamson, co-chair
Susan Inui-Kelley
Lynn Peterson, Board Liaison
Joby Thompson

Growth Committee Annual Report 2009

Members: Chris Bartlett (co-chair), Trish Compton, Robert Deeley, Susan Inui-Kelley (co-chair), Daniel Jantos, Ben Kelley-Outten, Denise Lyons, Peter Rousmaniere, Pru Schuler, Michael Stoner.

Before describing the work of the Growth Committee, we should note that we had a significant turnover in our committee membership this past year. Amy Dressler, Matt Friedman, and Peggy Kannenstine all stepped down in 2009, and we thank them for their many years of committed service. During the year, we were delighted to add Trish Compton, Peter Rousmaniere, and Michael Stoner as committee members. In addition, Jill Davies agreed to join us as a facilitator and advisor. Finally, we owe a great debt of thanks to Denise Lyons who stepped down as committee chair. We thank her for the vision, leadership, and creativity she provided the committee over many years.

At the end of 2008, the Growth Committee had completed a year-long process in which it focused on a future vision for our church, and strategic priorities that we felt were needed to achieve it. Our main output from that work consisted of:

- A Committee Covenant.
- A draft aspirational vision statement for NUCS.
- A "Seven Pillar" statement of strategic priorities the church might follow to achieve the vision we described.

Our plans to communicate our findings to the board in January were delayed by postponements of the board retreat, so our work slowed down during the first half of the year. We finally presented the headlines of the seven pillars when the retreat was scheduled in June. The board engaged in some lengthy conversations about the priorities, and provided feedback which was incorporated by the committee.

In the fall, the Growth Committee shifted its focus from analysis to action. At a very productive half day retreat in November (very ably facilitated by Jill Davies), we focused on the steps required to take the long-term planning agenda forward. The committee decided to focus on three priorities, and divided into subcommittees to take responsibility for each:

- **Communication:** This priority is to communicate to the wider church community the ideas developed within the Growth Committee and reviewed by the board; engage the congregation in this conversation, and elicit members' involvement on one or more of the future agenda items. In presenting our ideas, the plan is to evolve the analytic presentation as seven pillars into a more communication friendly form which might be organized around:
 - Our church's future agenda: Spiritual, Social, and Services
 - Directed at our church's constituent stakeholders: individual members, our church congregation as a whole, and the wider community.
- **Spiritual Exploration and Growth:** At the board's urging, the committee has decided to take leadership on the issue we described as Pillar 3 in our analysis, and begin to develop proposals and initiate action around ways in which the Church can expand its offerings in spiritual exploration and growth.
- **Organizational Effectiveness:** Again, with encouragement from the board, the committee also felt it was important to take leadership on the issue identified as Pillar 4 to think through how we might organize ourselves more effectively in order to free up some of the resources and energy currently focused on the church's self-maintenance as well as to ensure there is more sense of satisfaction and reward in our organizational work.

These three agenda items will form our priorities for 2010.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Bartlett and Susan Inui-Kelley, Co-chairs

Annual Report: Fundraising 2009

This was a challenging year for NUCS, as for all nonprofits. Given the economic forecasts early in the year, we were worried about defaults on pledges and whether we could raise enough money to balance the church's budget.

Nevertheless, the NUCS community stepped up and demonstrated how important this institution is as a personal, spiritual, and community resource. We did well on completing pledges for 2009 and also initiated a Plus-10 campaign, encouraging people to contribute a small amount extra on Sunday mornings to help defray our budget deficit. This campaign was incredibly effective.

Of course, dozens of community members contributed time, money, and know-how to help our other fundraising events succeed. We thank everyone who helped move or sell books, baked food, housed guests during Western Wind, stirred red flannel hash, or did one of the myriad other tasks that contributed toward the success of our fundraising events this year.

Canvass

The key elements in this year's pledge drive included:

- Customized Pledge Forms that listed individual's prior years' giving history
- Inspirational reflections about giving alternated with light-hearted reminders to send in forms in the Friday e-news, Sunday bulletins and monthly Quests
- Festive kick-off dinner that offered an entertaining celebration of NUCS and the funding realities
- Caring follow-up contacts with those whose pledges had been expected and not received.

In order to allow the Plus-10 giving appeal to receive undivided attention, the 2010 Pledge Drive kick-off was held off until mid-November. In spite of the later start, this year's results exceeded those in 2009. At year-end, pledges were \$4,000 greater than the same time last year, and the trend continues into the new year so we're optimistic that our goal of \$130,000 in income from pledges in 2010 will be met or exceeded.

On 27 December 2009, we had received \$119,533 in 86 pledges representing 124 people. As of 12 January 2010, our total was \$125,223 in 94 pledges representing 174 people.

Book Fair

This year, the "World's Greatest Book Fair" was part of the community-wide festival Bookstock. [NUCS was well-represented on the planning committee for Bookstock, which Peter Rousmaniere, Janice Prindle, Joanna Long, Michael Stoner, Lynn Peterson, and others.] Our book sale joined with that of the Norman Williams Public Library and took over the gym at the Woodstock Elementary School. Those who've noted that past Book Fairs weren't well-publicized couldn't argue with the huge amount of advertising and publicity that brought locals and tourists to town for Bookstock. Still, not having a street presence to draw people into the Book Fair hurt us. Income was down this year--we netted \$2834 on the event. However, we are still awaiting the sale of some rare books that were donated this year, which will increase our bottom line.

Pumpkin Fest

The Pumpkin Fest was chaired by Chris and Barbara Bartlett again this year. It was once again a stellar fundraiser for participants and members of the community who attended it--and it raised \$1,508.

Western Wind

A highlight of the fall for many singers in the region is Western Wind's visit to NUCS on Columbus Day weekend. During the weekend when they are in residence at NUCS, Western Wind and those who join them for a weekend of song enrich our service with their musical contributions. And they help fund our community through rental of our facilities; contributions of attendees for lodging in the homes of NUCS volunteers who provide B&B accommodations for the weekend; and a share of concert proceeds. This year, we earned \$1,600 from rental; \$2,685 from B&B; and \$182 from concert proceeds, for a total of \$4,467.

Red Flannel Hash

Ann Wynia and Fran Lancaster were in charge of the Red Flannel Hash dinner, a NUCS tradition, that was chaired for decades by Alice Gould. This year, in a special ceremony at the dinner, the church kitchen was dedicated to Alice Gould. The dinner raised \$1,200 for NUCS.

Miscellaneous Fundraisers

Each year, NUCS holds a number of events that raise small amounts of money--which, in the aggregate, adds up quickly. Some examples this year (with amounts raised) included an organ recital in November (\$540) and a lunch for the members of the Woodstock High School Class of 1940 (\$340).

Respectfully submitted,
Michael Stoner, Resource Committee Co-chair

Worship/Music Committee Annual Report 2009

The Music and Worship Committee acts in partnership with the Minister and the Music Director to define and organize all the elements of Sunday morning services. We meet in the church library at 5:15 p.m. on the first Tuesday of each month.

The committee members at the close of the calendar year were: Don Ransom, Chair; Joanna Long, Secretary; Daniel Jantos, Minister; Diane Mellinger, Music Director; Chris Bartlett, Joanne Boyle, Carol Egbert, Jennifer Donaldson (new member), and Geoff Dates. During the year, members Neil Marinello, Hope Yeager, and Michelle van de Ven resigned from the committee for a variety of personal reasons.

Since engaging in a thoughtful and enriching November retreat, the committee has been working to create a clearer structure. In draft or close to completion are a committee covenant, statements of mission and responsibilities, and a statement on committee governance. The committee has also considered in depth the components, ordering, and meaning of Sunday services, and is producing guides for such participants as service coordinators and the new "altar minders."

Respectfully submitted,

Don Ransom, Chair

Pastoral Care Committee Annual Report 2009

Committee members include: Veronica Delay, Nancy Peterson, Judy Williamson, Jo Modisette, Patsy Mathews, and Daniel Jantos.

Ongoing duties of the committee include assisting members and friends of our congregation with meals, visits, and transportation when requested; as well as emotional support through home and hospital visits, cards and emails to those going through difficult times and transitions, physically and/or emotionally. The committee has also worked to support those experiencing losses of family members or friends.

Requests and offers of assistance have been treated in a confidential manner by committee members and service providers.

Throughout the past 12 months, the Pastoral Care Committee has been instrumental in organizing "Women in Transition" gatherings/dinners for women in our community who have experienced difficult changes and transitions in their lives. The dinners and gatherings have provided a forum of sharing and connection to individuals who have experienced isolation, disconnection, and/or major change/disruption in their lives. These dinners have been a way to connect women in our community whose lives are in transition.

The committee has also reached out to members in the congregation who have not been active over the past year, with the intention of listening and bearing witness to how our church community might be more inclusive of their needs.

The committee is currently working on providing a forum on the topic of depression for the community at large. We hope to obtain financial assistance from the OHF [Ottawaquechee Health Foundation] to help fund it. It is a work in progress for the early months of 2010.

The committee has also discussed and worked on housing needs for some individuals within the community as their needs vary and change.

Respectfully submitted,
Judy Williamson and Nancy Peterson, co-chairs

Membership Committee Annual Report 2009

The Membership Committee meets the fourth Monday of the month at 7 pm generally in the church library. Serving on this committee are: Chairperson Ann Wynia, Sherry Belisle, Susan Boston, Ginny Christy, Fran Lancaster, Rose Mroszczyk and Pru Schuler.

On-going duties of the committee include the greeting at Sunday services; the maintenance of the membership roll book, guest book, pamphlet rack, and hearing devices; the mailing of the Quest; correspondence with our guests, potential members, and our members in need; the collection of donations for the holiday flowers (Christmas and Easter); the creation of name tags; the updating of birthday and special date lists; the monthly updating of the membership roll; the scheduling of the coffee hour volunteers; and the delivery of the food shelf donations. The committee also compiles, edits, and publishes our membership directory and organizes social events such as circle dinners and Sunday potluck luncheons. The new UU classes held each spring and Recognition Sunday in June are also planned and run by the committee.

- Our major accomplishment of the past year was the production of our beautiful first picture directory. It has been well received and many thanks go to Susan Boston and Ann Wynia for their time and efforts in this endeavor.
- Circle Dinners held in January, February, and April. Participation was low and in March there were no sign-ups! We will try again this year.
- Flower donations for Christmas and Easter were particularly generous. A \$210 surplus was donated to the Memorial Garden fund.
- New member bios have returned to the Quest. Thank you to Polly Forcier!
- Three "New UU" classes were held again in May with Daniel's theology talk very well attended. A light lunch was served by the committee. Recognition Sunday followed in June with 11 new members welcomed.
- A new hearing device has been donated by Jack Nelson bringing our total up to four. Many thanks, Jack!

Finally, the most important part of this report and the work of the committee - our membership! Currently, we have 223 members with 168 active. This year we had 9 new members. We lost long time members Jeanne Bletzer, Dorothy Bush, Alice Gould, Dirk Neuhof, and George Schuler.

In ending, we ask that you please be a part of our work. Reach out and make those entering our sanctuary feel welcome and included. Be a part of the growth and development of our congregation. Join with us in this meaningful part of membership.

Respectfully submitted,
Fran Lancaster

Religious Exploration Report Annual Report 2009

This year the RE team remains committed to offering programs that will help children to explore our deep understanding of who we are in the world, what our lives and actions mean, and how we are connected to the past and future of humanity. The 2009 program has remained strong with consistent leadership. In addition to directing the program **Liz Cassell** is a weekly leader with teammate **Cally McCrave**. Frederica Graham is no longer a leader as she is currently teaching at a Hanover Quaker church. **Valerie Sanderson** remains our dedicated childcare provider in the nursery.

RE follows a pillar approach to curriculum. The whole group (K-7) focuses on one pillar (theme) for a season. There are six pillars :UU Identity, World Religions, Judeo/Christian Heritage, Putting Our Faith in Action, The Web of Life, Peace and Justice and Social Action of which we explore one a season.

Participation in the RE program has been growing. This year we began strong and grew in numbers with an **enrollment of 30 children and an average of 12** (last year was 9) students per week, maximum was 16 K-7 students. Nursery averages at 6 children but can be as large as 9. We welcome two families new to NUCS: Lilia (1st grade) and Declan (pre-K) McCullough and their mom, Andrea as well as Andrew (4th grade) and Ryan (pre-K) Seiple and their parents Matt and Wendy Seiple.

Program Highlights

To kick off the season we lead a hike and self exploration through into woods for journal writing and more. The older children plan on repeating our exploration in January and late May. This past Autumn our pillar focus was **UU Identity** as well as a bit of social justice. In November the children focused on the sixth principle with their Cambodian Orphanage fundraiser collecting over \$50 in coins to send to the orphans of Life and Hope for a new sewing machine. Inspired by 350.org we have sent over four boxes of yogurt containers to TerraFirma for reuse- taking them out of our waste stream. December was filled with music as Lee Moonan and Chiviz Mota explored Mexican tradition of caroling and Diane Mellinger led a fun Christmas children's choir of 13 children. Silence and awe was witnessed by those who participated in the solstice labyrinth.

For the winter of 2010 we will focus on the **Judeo/Christian Heritage** pillar. The plan is to introduce children to the stories of people from the Bible who have acted with courage and wisdom in their attempts to lead their lives fully and make the world a better place for others. We will show how the lives of these people confirm the principles which we, as UUs, strive to promote. We'll encourage the children to lead their own lives fully and to use their own positive strengths as they interact with the world around them as they grow both spiritually and ethically. The class will explore connections between biblical events and UU principles, between biblical ideas and their own lives. This curriculum has a literature based approach where we focus on stories with hands on activities to support the story. Older kids help younger ones with the activities. We'll explore in a one room schoolhouse for the 14 week session ending Easter weekend.

Spring 2010 will be based on the **7th principle: The interdependent web of life**. We will be outside as much as possible digging and exploring the earth, nature, and the importance of being a steward. Upcoming projects for 2010 include exploring two or three overnight intensives for children 5th-7th grade.

Respectfully submitted by Liz Cassell, Director of Religious Exploration

Buildings and Grounds Committee Annual Report 2009

HIGHLIGHTS:

1. The chair backs in the social hall were all replaced while still under warranty. Much sturdier.
2. The front railing area finished off, de-rusted, and new section fabricated for the steps.
3. The front yard area had some major landscaping done during spring clean-up, with more landscaping in the back done during fall clean-up.
4. The church emergency lights replaced.
5. The long troublesome roof leak in the hall near the office finally fixed by Vern Handy (he crawled around up under the roof until he tracked it down.)
6. Two new cook stoves installed in the kitchen. Half of the cost for the stoves has been donated already.
7. Five faulty heating valves have recently been replaced, leaving only two more to complete the replacement of all the shoddy valves that were installed during the major renovation work that was done about eight years ago.

COMING SOON:

We have new high efficiency lights ready to be installed in the sanctuary ceiling.

Ann Wynia's son-in-law has offered to do some stonework in the back of the church in the coming year, with an anonymous donor providing the materials for the work.

COMING EVENTUALLY:

A new roof for the porch on the back of the parsonage has been strongly suggested by our insurance company. We could patch it, or do a serious job in conjunction with the replacement of the whole barn roof and the slate roof on the parsonage, both of which are nearing the end of their natural lifespan. This larger solution is probably going to have to involve another capital campaign. It also raises the question of making the barn into some kind of usable space for the church. WHAT DO WE WANT/NEED???

COMING MAYBE:

Charles Egbert has done some drawings for a fairly straightforward expansion of the choir loft to accommodate our growth. It would involve adding a new row, by moving the front wall forward slightly, and narrowing the current rows a bit.

DESCENT FROM OLYMPUS: Just over a year ago "Zeus" Lary with his wife Terry arrived as our new sexton much to our delight. He has been enormously helpful, pleasant and competent.

Thanks to all of you who have helped out during the last year in so many ways,

David Doolittle, Jack Nelson, Bill Sturtevant, Irene Hanslin, Cheryl Brush, Donna Durgin, Vassie Sinopoulos, Katrin Helgason

Memorial Garden Committee Report 2009

A series of working weekends in late summer and early fall resulted in the construction of a new support base for the cupola in a spot 30 feet to the east and nearer the river than its old location at the end of the driveway. Through the use of a Bethel Mills crane truck, the old copper-covered belfry roof was then airlifted to its new location. The old base has disappeared, although rumor has it that it now holds chickens at the Jantos farm. The new base, designed by Charles Egbert, is built using roughsawn hemlock with a floor of patterned bricks in sand, and incorporates full length benches on the sides. Veronica Delay has designed a center tile showing a chalice, which will be installed in the Spring when the bricks have been through the winter and have settled. Daniel Jantos and David Doolittle led the initial construction effort, with the help of Charles Egbert, Norwood Long, Dale Marshall, Mike Welch, Shoshanna Shelley, and (on the flying roof) Jed Dickinson, Chris Bartlett, and Ron Rhodes. The Board approved the installation of two benches in the memory of Nancy Nye and Alice Gould, which will be installed in the Spring. Once the bench designs have been chosen, a zoning permit will be sought from the town.

A new ad hoc committee named the Memorial Garden Administration committee has been formed to make recommendations about the way that people to be memorialized will be approved, and to recommend the form of physical markers or plaques. The ideas generated at an initial meeting were discussed by the board, with final decisions to be taken in the new year.

There are some final construction details on both the cupola and the path to be finished, and a planting plan under the leadership of Katrin Helgason to be recommended and begun, but basically the Spring and early Summer of 2010 should see the end of the first phase of the memorial garden project.

Norwood Long
For the Committee