

Northshore Unitarian Universalist Church

2014 – 2015 Annual Report



Our Vision

We of the Northshore Unitarian Universalist Church are a warm and inclusive congregation. All may find a home here in which to grow spiritually and deepen their faith. The diversity of our membership, and the music and art enveloping us, stimulate this growth.

We see the future in our young people and value a thriving religious education program. We foster an open-minded quest for truth and meaning at all ages that will nurture personal fulfillment in our challenging world. We resolve to promote social justice both locally and globally, and to serve others in need.

With gratitude for our beautiful surroundings and reverence for all life, we aspire to be environmental stewards in our own church and in the larger community. For even as we celebrate the worth and dignity of each individual, we acknowledge the interdependent web of existence on this planet.

Thinking, questioning and worshipping since 1815

NORTHSHORE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH

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Judy Putnam

Religious Exploration Director

Church Administrator

Music Director

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Investments & Finance Committee

Membership Committee

Social Action Committee

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Religious Services Committee

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Amy Tedford

Shirley Guerriero

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Chris Ruggles

Lois Markham

Dan Kennedy

Tracee Kneeland

Northshore Church Music Programs



The vision of the music programs of the Northshore Church includes three goals:

- **Our first goal** is to provide vocal, instrumental and choral music for the Sunday worship services that is in harmony with the week's content. We also hope our music adds a spiritual element to the service. This music may be church members and friends sharing their individual talents, choral music provided by our adult Singing Group and the Family Singers and/or the Music Director performing instrumentally. We also invite outside artists approximately every six weeks to provide music. Our library is full of a variety of music anywhere from different world religious traditions, folk, classical, early American, secular and more.
- **Our second goal** is that these musical happenings provide our volunteer members and friends a variety of opportunities to flex their musical wings in ways that each individual finds fulfilling and challenging. We have some members and friends who sing in both the Adult Singing Group and the Family Singers AND ring our hand bells on occasion.
- **Our third goal** is to give members and friends the experience of singing together in a group knowing that it creates an atmosphere touching on the spiritual, fun, and caring. This is a real gift to the congregation's church life.

Our Adult Singing Group rehearses Sunday mornings at 9 am before the service and on some Saturdays when necessary to be fully prepared. Generally, Saturday rehearsals happen just prior to holidays such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter celebrations. We also now have a regular mid-week evening rehearsal staggered between Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday and we are finding it helps the group to fully prepare for the Sundays we sing. We are blessed to have a very committed group who make up the Singing Group AND we are always ready to welcome new singers. We will embrace you and your musical voice wherever you are in your journey. The Adult Singing Group provides the music at Sunday services approximately twice each month.

Our Family Singers group has not been active this church year, but still remains an option for any members/friends who wish to sing together at some of our services. This group is ideal for anyone who likes to sing in a group, including children to elders, and these singers need no music knowledge - just the desire to sing. The Family Singers is a great way for families to come together musically.

Our Hand Bell Choir rings music primarily at holiday services. Our Hand Bell Choir is now seven strong with two new recent members and the possibility of more members in the near future. This group is hard working and fun loving and we create a lot of joy together while making our music.

This past year we welcomed outside musicians playing many different instruments and there is an **open invitation** to members/friends of NSUU to share their musical talents here at NSUU Church. During this past holiday season, we prepared for two months to present a memorable service filled with much singing, drumming, readings and ritual that was received with great excitement. We also heard members playing drums, ringing handbells, and singing solos during services. We were excited to have a few very enthusiastic young singers share their voices at the Easter service. My hope is to involve more young people from our RE Program in future worship services. Come join us for a Sunday morning rehearsal, and experience firsthand the joy that comes with singing with others! If you can carry a tune you qualify – there is no audition. I believe each rehearsal and performance is a learning experience for everyone, including the director and singers. Give this old African proverb some thought: “If you can talk, you can sing.” **WE WANT YOU AND NEED YOU!**

Submitted by Judy Putnam, Music Director

SoulSong

SoulSong is an a capella singing group dedicated to singing at the bedside of individuals at the end of life. Northshore Church’s group was established in July of 2014 after being inspired by a conference on such choirs in Rowe, Massachusetts. Our mission is to bring connection, support and comfort through song to people who are actively dying or who are isolated due to serious illness or physical disability. We sang at the bedside of four individuals, three of them members of Northshore Church, and we sang at two memorial services. Presently we are working to establish a standing relationship with Brooksby Village to sing for their residents of long term care. Our group currently has 13 active members, all women, but we are open to new members of either gender at any time. SoulSong is supported by donations and by our members' own love of singing.

Helen Brandt

Religious Exploration



This has been a wonderful year of growth for us in the Northshore Church Religious Exploration program. Our goal for this year was to create a program that would lay a strong faith foundation for our children. I believe that with the adult volunteer guides that have participated in the program this year, we have done just that. We are fortunate to have a group of young people who are interested in learning about their faith and make class time on Sunday mornings a pleasure. A

strong religious education program makes a strong church community. I believe that we have that here at Northshore Church.

Although our numbers have stayed the same, we have branched out and beyond the “one room schoolhouse” model that we held last year. This year we separated into two groups which were based on both age and comfort level. Under the leadership of Jenny Beauregard, our younger group studied “UU Superheroes”, a myriad of incredible historical figures who formed and lived our faith. This curriculum was well received, engaging and fun...we should actually think of using it for the adults!

Our older group consisted of 5 middle schoolers who worked with the curriculum, “You the Justice Creator”. These young people began with justice vocabulary and continued weekly with role playing, games, and group problem solving that made them think more about social injustice in America and around the globe. This group has also embarked on a once a month Junior Youth Group in which they identified and tackled a service project. For their first focus project they collected and stuffed 15 backpacks for suddenly displaced children. The packs will be distributed by Susan Folkins who is connected to child services in the Merrimack Valley. Following completion of the backpacks, this group entered a final study of racial and cultural injustice. We have had excellent discussions around awareness of this issue and will culminate our year with a field trip to Lynn for a cultural exchange.

There were weeks lost to weather and weeks where our census was low. We are lucky in our numbers that when this happens, we are able to either combine programs or spin off the lesson plan to work together with a craft or one day project. We are blessed with volunteer guides who are creative and flexible and truly enjoy being in the classroom. New this year, we introduced a volunteer model that was based on an eight week commitment. We are required to have two adults in each classroom for safe congregation practice. The eight week model allows volunteers to make a commitment to Religious Exploration without losing an entire year of their own spiritual time with the congregation. I have also found that children do not like a revolving door of guides in the classroom, and the eight week time slot seemed to work for all parties.

We had two lead guides, Jenny and myself. I led the older group and Jenny led the younger group. I was fortunate to have a yearlong commitment to assist from Susan Folkins, and Jenny was assisted by Elise Ruggles (one term) and Beth Berringer (two terms). We will need volunteer guides for next year as well. This will only be an eight week commitment and can be with either grade. PLEASE consider volunteering for Religious Exploration in some way. It is a joyful experience and a great way to engage young members of our congregation. Often the best guides are “non-parents”. You will also learn alongside the children while guiding them. All the curriculum is provided prior to the class. It is easy and fulfilling. Please let me know when you would like to volunteer.

Next year we will again have a younger classroom led by Jenny Beauregard working with a new curriculum that has yet to be determined. The middle school group will begin the year with the program "Building Bridges", which examines neighboring faith traditions. This is a rich program and requires field trips and a consistent commitment to the program. Some in this group will also be ready for "Our Whole Lives"(OWL). This program will be offered at the Beverly UU Church,

and we will be combining with them. This is a long and amazing program. Although Beverly has no information at this time, I can tell you that it will take place in the Spring of 2016. Some of our older group will not be ready for OWL. This is a family decision, as the program requires an attendance commitment. There will be a meeting in the fall to thoroughly go over all the information pertaining to this program. In addition, the North Shore Directors of Religious Exploration are hoping to plan a one day Jr. Youth CON for the fall.

The Senior Youth Group is now fully merged with the Beverly Unitarian Universalist Church. These youth have come together seamlessly and we now have a great size to go forward together. We will be graduating two seniors this year, one from Northshore Church (Remy) and one from Beverly. We also have several Beverly youth who will be moving up to the Senior Youth Group next year. We will be losing both of our Beverly youth group advisors. I am confident that Beverly will be able to recruit new volunteers for this position but if you have an interest in senior youth and are considering this work, please feel free to reach out to me. I would love to have a Northshore Church youth group advisor to add to the adult guides for this group of young people. The youth group is a vital part of Religious Exploration because it solidifies our faith at a crucial time in a young life. We want our youth to go forward with their faith intact as they enter adulthood so that they have something to bring with them that has been formative in their lives. We want lifetime Unitarian Universalists. Let's all help them get there.

Together this year the SYG has cooked at LifeBridge, attended three CONS, and had many pizza parties and Lazarus quest nights. Two of our Northshore Church youth, (Remy and Raina) are on the CON Advisory Team, (CAT) which is a district planning team for Youth CONS. What is a Youth CON? It is a conference, (usually an overnight) held at a church within our district. The events are adult advised and youth run. It is amazing to experience. It is a place where youth can be themselves and live Unitarian Universalist values. This is where you really see the foundation of our faith in place. It is truly a hopeful experience.

Our Religious Exploration Committee continues to meet mostly to re-group and figure out what works and what could be better addressed. The committee makes collective and informed decisions on how the program will go forward and what goals we want to achieve to be successful. RE committee is open to anyone who is interested in RE and the programs that we are offering throughout the year. Please let me or Jenny know if you are interested in participating in any way. We will also need teachers for next year (did I already say that?) These commitments will only be for eight week intervals (trimester model), so they are short. All lesson plans will be provided. All we need is your enthusiasm and desire to lead our children. Please consider volunteering for these short positions!

In conclusion, I would like to thank all of you for allowing me to serve Northshore Church as your Religious Exploration Director. I look forward to choosing and working within the selected curriculum, organizing interesting programs, and helping these children build a Unitarian Universalist faith formation that they will have for their whole lives.

Submitted by Meryl Baier

Administrator's Report

This year the church office has been busy, yet somewhat quiet. In the absence of a minister, I've been working alone. I often have the companionship of my Shitz-Poo, Zsa-Zsa, and on the first and third Tuesdays of each month I look forward to the arrival of the members of the Small Group Ministry. Every other Tuesday, regardless of the cold winter weather, the Tuesday Small Group Ministry members arrive with enthusiasm, smiles, hugs and a much-needed warmth to an otherwise cold, lonely building.

During this year without a minister, I found the members of the church community and staff to be willing and able to step up and take an active role in the preparation and presentation of each Sunday service. The Religious Service leaders coordinated the services with the Sunday speaker, Music Director, Religious Exploration Director and myself to create a wonderful and meaningful service every week. Many members expressed to me how much they looked forward to the various speakers and wide array of interesting and thought-provoking topics they presented.

On several occasions there were situations where a minister was requested, and again there were members willing to help. Working as the intermediary, I called upon Jeri Kroll, who handled the Minister's Discretionary Fund when there was a need from individuals in the community, and I relied on the Caring Associates to help those members in need of support in their times of illness or loss. I also had the support of the former ministers, Revs. Charles Wilson and Edwin Lynn, who volunteered to be on call as needed when the services of a minister were necessary. Throughout the year, I never felt that the church community was left without a support system in place to help anyone in need.

As the Building and Grounds person, the winter provided me with some historic challenges. The un-ending blizzards, record-setting snowfall and subzero temperatures throughout the winter gave me something new to look forward to each day. There was snow piled so high that it reached the roof, snow on the roof that was 6-8' high, frozen sewer lines, frozen gutters, frozen water pipes, icy walkways, etc., etc.

Despite it all, our building and grounds have held up very well during this historically cold and snowy winter. With the strong winds and heavy snow, the removal of the large oak tree that hung over the Meeting Room roof and removal and pruning of dead trees and limbs around the building last July proved to be a very important piece of the proactive maintenance that we must continue. There is a price to pay for this beautiful building, nestled in the woods.

Removal of the accumulated 6-8' of snow on the flat roofs was another proactive move that may well have saved our building. There were so many reports of collapsed roofs around New England, we needed to act promptly for the safety of everyone. We were lucky to have our roofer, Michael Fitzpatrick and his crew, available to clear the roofs before any risk of collapse.

With the daycare closing its operation this year during the blizzards, we were able to keep the plowing and sanding expenses close to budget, where most saw their budgets blow up after the first few storms. Prentiss Landscaping kept the roadway and lot clear and safe for the weekly events and Sunday services. His additional Bob Cat work moved the snow banks away from the sides of the road and lots, so the safe flow of traffic and parking was maintained throughout the winter.

Even though Gary Nelson doesn't know it, he has been officially identified as a Building and Grounds Committee member. He single-handedly rejuvenated the kitchen by sanding, cleaning and painting all the cabinets and removing and replacing the kitchen ceiling tiles. He worked covered in plastic and wearing a respirator in the confines of the hot, humid, window-less kitchen during the summer's hottest weeks. And those weeks happened to be his summer vacation! Gary makes sure that the hearing assistance system is operational and stocked with the necessary supplies and batteries, and he's recently been coordinating the painting of the Fellowship Hall. He has been such a helpful volunteer around the church building and grounds, and I am grateful for all his help.

The church website is a very valuable source of communication and outreach for the church, and Dan Kennedy continues to be the editor of NSUU.org. Dan developed the site and he keeps all of its contents current and informational. Many who visit the church have found their initial "connection" through the website.

Our roadway and lots have been in desperate need of a complete paving for some time now. We have done our best to patch the holes, but the condition is beyond repair. The current pavement was original with the building, and the sub-surface was not well prepared when it was done. The hot-top patches are very temporary, and are destroyed during the winter with frost heaves and plowing. The entire roadway is cracked, broken, patched, and full of potholes. I have recommended getting quotes for complete removal of hot-top on the roadway, installation and preparation of sub-surface, and several layers of asphalt, to include a new surface on the upper parking lot that is now unpaved and needs to be closed during winter months. The board has asked me to obtain 2-3 quotes for this work. This could be an expense that would benefit from the Eva Turner bequest, and we could name the roadway that leads to the church "Turner Way."

There are so many Northshore Church members who give so much of their time to support their church. I've worked with so many of you in my twenty-two years as your Church Administrator, and I look forward to the future of this church as new members step up. I was touched by the recent presentation of the 2014 Anne Milender Award to my mother, Dottie Barton. My mother is a life-long Unitarian Universalist who lives her faith and commitment to the church, and when Ed Lynn presented her with the award, she said "I love my church."

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Paskowski, Church Administrator

Religious Services Committee

Wow! What an exciting, action packed year it has been for the church and this committee. Our mission and duties expanded greatly as we transitioned to a lay-led congregation for this year. The Religious Services Committee planned every service for the church year as well those through the summer. We work to enhance the worship service to ensure that members and visitors have a welcoming, spiritual and thoughtful experience at every service. Our monthly meetings include the evaluation of past services as well as the planning for future services and appropriating funds for speakers and service needs in keeping with our annual budget. I am happy to report that at the time of this report our Committee has performed well under budget!

Answering the call to our extended duties the Committee welcomed four new members bringing our total to ten amazing, talented and dedicated members. Our Committee members are: Co-Chairs Tracee Kneeland and Peter VanDeBogart, Music Director Judy Putnam, Helen Brandt, Sharon Clark, Lisa Judd, Gary Nelson, Jennifer Revill, Amy Tedford and Deb Waybright.

The Religious Services Committee would like to acknowledge the superior organizational skills of our fellow committee member and Music Director Judy Putnam who worked so well with all of our speakers to coordinate beautiful music for each and every service. Thank you Judy!

Our church year is planned out in advance as far as possible to coordinate guest speakers. Service leaders and guest musicians. It is a team effort in securing talented, unique individuals, reflective of our member's interests, to be our guest, and to perform a service at our Northshore Church. The Committee set some goals in planning for this unique church year. Firstly, we were mindful to maintain important traditional services which included the Water Service led by Helen Brandt, a multigenerational Thanksgiving Service led by Lisa Judd, the Holiday Workshop led by Tracee Kneeland, our Christmas Eve Service led by Music Director Judy Putnam, the Solstice Service led by Jennifer Revill, the Spiritual Roots Service led by Helen Brandt, the Easter Service led by Betsy Mead Tabor, candidate for Unitarian Universalist Ministry and the upcoming Religious Exploration Sunday to be led by the children and Meryl Baier, Religious Exploration Director. Our second goal was to ensure at least one service a month be performed by a minister. We met that goal with a talented roster of ministers including Reverend Ana Smulovitz, Reverend Karin Peterson, Reverend Kelly Weisman Asprooth-Jackson, Reverend William Gardiner, Candidate for ministry Betsy Mead Tabor, Minister emeritus Reverend Edwin Lynn, interim minister Reverend Jeanne Nieuwejaar and more scheduled for the remaining church year. Our final goal in planning was to make sure we provided services that reflected issues relevant to our Social Action Committee. In this respect we had "With Liberty and Justice for All" presented by Reverend William Gardiner about mass incarceration which was followed by a discussion group after the service, "Selma Sunday, A Call to Action" presented by Lois Markham, chair of the Social Action Committee and "Redemption

Song” presented by Reverend Jeanne Nieuwejaar about reclaiming lives of those serving time in prison which was followed up by a discussion group after the service. We are fortunate to be able to utilize so much talent among our own church members many of whom performed a service this year. We had services from our own Iain Goddard, Dan Kennedy, Peter VanDeBogart, the Tuesday Small Group Ministry, Tom Duff, and the Green Sanctuary Committee. As part of an ongoing history project supported by our church we had a service “History of the Northshore Church” by local researcher Bonnie Hurd Smith. The speakers and topics this year have been compelling and diverse. I ask you to look on our NSUU Church website and scroll on the home page to review all the wonderful speakers and topics we have had this year.

In addition to our monthly meeting planning services, the committee shares responsibility for ensuring the weekly services go smoothly. Every Sunday, we take turns performing the Pre-Service Preparation (PSP), which includes readying the candles, placing the flowers, arranging the pulpit, making sure there is drinking water for the speaker and ringing the bell to start the service. PSP also includes preparing the microphones, the hearing devices and the recording of the service.

The Religious Services Committee is open to new members, volunteers to do the PSP duties from time to time and open to people who would like to be a Service Leader or guest speaker during the regular church year or summer services. The committee will provide training and support to those interested.

I speak on behalf of the Religious Services Committee when I say it has been an enjoyable challenge to plan services for a congregation so full of an energetic, engaged, dynamic members.

Respectfully submitted by Tracee Kneeland, Co-Chair, Religious Services Committee

Membership Team



The Northshore Church Membership Team continues its three-pronged mission to welcome visitors and members to the church, to provide outreach to members and to develop new membership initiatives that increase visibility of the church in the community.

Our welcoming team of greeters continues to be managed by Elaine Van DeBogert. She coordinates greeter schedules and trains new greeters. This year greeters instituted a more expedient way to keep track of new attendees. Our greeter list is somewhat diminished, and the team will be asking for volunteers in the fall.

Leonard Swanson has continued to provide caring and outreach to members and associate members with visits, cards and phone calls. His work is essential to maintaining a strong, coherent congregation. Leonard's work has been amplified and extended by the establishment of the Caring Associates, a volunteer group that seeks to provide supportive services to members in need. Linda Budd is the Membership Team liaison to this group. We are seeking to improve our outreach capabilities by maintaining accurate member records, while continuing our strict privacy policy.

Iain Goddard provides tireless effort in the marketing area, communicating The Northshore Church's messages through the local press and media outlets. He does so even while he is wintering in Florida. His Face Book and other online work continues to make our communities aware of us.

This year's archive project, spearheaded by Barbara Haight, involved the entire team. A local historian, Bonnie Hurd Smith, was contracted to assemble the church documents for display on our website, and her work culminated in a service in February in which she traced the history and origins of the church. The team, spearheaded by Iain, will initiate activities relative to two upcoming anniversaries. This year is the bicentennial of the Universalist Fellowship in Danvers, and in 2017 we will celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Northshore Church. Iain has announced a contest for the logo to represent these two events.

Other marketing initiatives include the following. Roadside signs have been ordered, and will be placed in critical locations around town. The visitor's packet has been updated and is being printed. A Rail Trail marker has will be placed in the area bordering our church property. The team continues to investigate alternative ways to enable sermon titles to be displayed at the church entrance. And, although homecoming Sunday this year was not as well attended as hoped, it will be held again next year with earlier notice for members and friends.

Membership Team

Chris Ruggles, Chair	Iain Goddard	Audrey Merkle	Elaine VanDeBogert
Linda Budd, Secretary	Barbara Haight	Leonard Swanson	

Caring Associates



The Caring Associates, a group of seven volunteers, has grown out of the general mission of the Membership Team. Organized in June of 2014, the group continues to provide caring contacts and support for members in a variety of circumstances. The group underwent a professional level of training in December of 2104 and they continue to meet monthly for in-service discussions.

The group is developing an informational file to serve as a resource for members looking for a variety of professional services and assistance. Caring Associates asks members to contact anyone in the group or the Church Administrator should they become aware of a member who might need support in dealing with a difficult situation, an illness or a loss.

We are here and glad to hear from anyone who has a need or concern and wants an ear — or some help with seeking community resources. We have a file of brochures from a wide variety of organizations (housed in the church office) and are always looking for additions to the file. The Danvers Senior Center (25 Stone St.) also has a huge number of resources, and a Social Service Outreach staff member too. Remember that if you know of someone in our community who might like a card or call, please let us know about it.

Members are: Martha Ardiff, Helen Brandt, Linda Budd, Alice Rohr, Barbara Reeder, Leonard Swanson and Paula Wall.

Social Action Committee

Our mission is twofold: (1) to develop opportunities for the congregation to engage in discussion of issues related to social justice and (2) to identify social-action needs and coordinate and support the congregation in activities in pursuit of social justice locally, nationally, and internationally as a means of living out our Unitarian Universalist principles.

In the past year, the Social Action Committee

- continued to administer the share-the-plate program.
- continued to organize the congregation to provide dinner at Lifebridge once a month and continued to collect funds to support the food budget for Lifebridge dinners.
- continued to promote the collection of nonperishable food contributions for the Danvers Food Pantry.
- continued to promote the collection of supplies for Operation Troop Support.
- continued to be a supporting congregation for Family Promise North Shore Boston.
- expanded a lending library of DVDs and books for use by the congregation.
- organized a group to walk in the Boston Gay Pride Parade.
- formed a subcommittee to explore the process of becoming a Green Sanctuary.
- sponsored three events on the topic of economic justice: viewings of the films *Capitalism Hits the Fan* and *The New Economics 101: True Wealth in the New Economy* and a discussion of the book *The American Way of Poverty: How the Other Half Still Lives*.
- distributed a "summer reading list" on the topic of economic justice.
- sponsored discussions about mass incarceration and racism after sermons on the topics and held a discussion of the common read: *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*.
- coordinated a letter-writing campaign for legislative reforms on mandatory sentences.
- ran the third annual fair-trade boutique in November and December, where members of the congregation bought fair-trade gift items from SERRV, thus supporting small farmers and artisans in developing communities to earn a fair wage for their labor and also earning a profit for the church.
- gathered signatures on petitions for minimum wage and earned sick time ballot initiatives.
- supported volunteers in the ESL and Homework Club programs at the Homeless Shelter at the Extended Stay Motel in Danvers and collected coats and boots for residents of the shelter.

Submitted by the Social Action Committee: Lois Markham (chair), Lynette Gray, Jean Koulack-Young, Marcia Lassar, Gwen Scottgale, and Cathy Sullivan-Bradley

The Meeting Room Art Displays



Art Exhibits 2014-2015

The church year began in September of 2014 with the amazing tapestries created by the father of one of our long time members, Iain Goddard. For October and November we had a church members group show. It was wonderful to see the great variety of talent we have in our midst. Those involved were: Fred Bougas, Astrida Cutter, Marion Frost, Shirley Guerriero, Donna King, Jean Koulack-Young, Marcia Lassar, Dick Lundgren, Ed Lynn, Audrey Merkle and Brian Orr.

In December our traditional Joy Blocks were up to go along with the Christmas decorations. In January of the new year the Joy Blocks remained up to add the illusion of warmth to our sanctuary. For February and March of 2015 we enjoyed the work of a group of four traditional quilters, Carol Chapman, Carol Dyson, Trish DiNatale and Joyce Willson. They produced some red, white and blue quilts to commemorate the fact that Carol Dyson had become a U.S. citizen in 2014.

April and May gave us the oil paintings of two very talented women, Ginger Greenblatt and Judith Groelich. For June and July we will welcome back a former member of the church who will share her oil paintings with us. She is KT Morse, whom some will remember as kT Hezekiah. That closes the year and brings us round to a new beginning. Next year is nearly all planned and will include another members show.

Shirley Guerriero

With the help of Barbara Reeder

Donna King and Jean Koulack-Young

Board Report



The Northshore Church board met monthly throughout the year. All our meeting minutes were posted in the monthly newsletters. We handled a large array of issues over the year. Bob Bullivant and Brian Orr served as co-chairs. Here is a summary of the board's work.

After the prior board's decision that we could no longer afford a full-time minister, we bid farewell to Rev. Frieda Gillespie in June and honored her six-year ministry at NSUU. Because she became an interim minister in Omaha, NE, no severance payments were required.

First and foremost was our financial responsibility to the church. As you will hear from our treasurer, we came in ahead of budget this year. But more than that, we took a strong interest in maintaining our endowment funds and bequest monies. We drew very few funds from bequest monies for our yearly responsibility of running the church. We voted to improve our investment accounts by \$50,000 by moving some of our bequest funds to our endowment investments.

Furthermore, we are acquiring a better contract with our cell tower tenants through the work of Scott Houseman on our behalf. We are due to be paid a \$20,000 bonus from them as well as a new payment schedule with a \$150 per month increase. To further improve our financial situation, we have been victorious in a lawsuit to retain the rights to Eva Turner's house which she left to the church as part of her bequest.

It is very clear that we can proclaim that the state of our church finances at the end of this year is very sound. We have learned to live within our means, and now we have to focus on increasing our means so that we can restore full-time ministry as soon as possible.

At the same time as handling our finances as outlined above, we handled a lot of building issues through our budget, fundraisers, volunteers, and use of the bequest monies. We are happy to report that our building to-do list will be shorter by summer's end. We installed the sound absorption panels in our fellowship hall. We had our kitchen and hallway painted, thanks to the efforts of Gary Nelson. We filled our potholes. We had ceiling fans installed in our meeting room. This summer we will have a new street sign. We are going to add a new handicap parking space. And, last but not least, we put up no trespassing signs in the upper parking lot so that teenagers don't take liberties there. Our building is aging, but it is better now than a year ago.

We are fortunate to have a staff of people who do a great job running this church. Our music is inspirational and superb, our religious education is solid, and our administrator keeps us on our toes with everything that is needed in and around the building and otherwise. The board functioned as supervisor for our employees this year. That job was made easy by the excellent work that they do, and the Board voted to award them bonuses for their dedicated performance. After the retirement of our custodian, we entered into a contract with Busy Ladies to provide

cleaning and set-up services.

Our church was also run this year by a set of committees staffed by volunteer members. Each committee will provide their own report for this annual report. The board tried to maintain open lines of communication with the different committees. As a board, we tried to support the work of the committees. The truth is that our church year would not have been successful without our committees, and we would like to thank each and every committee member and volunteer.

One particular committee came directly out of the work of the board. We formed a "transition team" which evolved into our Search Committee. Their task was to outline our need and proceed to interview candidates for a half-time minister position here at NSUU. This group of people has gone through a year's worth of work that has brought us near to conclusion. By month's end we should know if we will have a new minister or will have another year functioning as we did this year.

Our board supported Barbara Haight's work in getting our History Project up and running this year. We also supported several fundraisers and activities which were successful. Our fundraisers are being reinvented with the first annual Harvest Festival, a delightful night of music provided by Bonnie Anderson and Joseph Foley, an upcoming "Night of Musings and Music" featuring Jeri Kroll and the singing of Helen Brandt and Terri Hansen and a car/yard sale envisioned by Martha Ardiff.

All year our job mostly involved orchestrating all the work that was actually carried out by our congregation and our committees. We are fortunate to have such involved members. Thank you all for your contributions.

Attempting to become more closely associated with the leaders of area UU churches, a group of volunteers offered to host a leadership brunch at NSUU in the fall, which was postponed until later this month.

Our board was an attentive and active group of members. Many members are continuing on next year. Thank you to Aaron Steeves and Iain Goddard for their service to the board during their terms which have expired. They will be missed.

We look forward to continued stewardship of this wonderful church with three new members to be voted on at this meeting.

Thank you.

Brian Orr
Bob Bullivant

Transition Team Report



The Transition Team was formed last summer by the board to navigate the change from our full-time ministry to becoming a lay-led congregation in search of a half-time contract minister.

Co-chaired by Bob Bullivant and Brian Orr, the members include Bo Batty, Sharon Clark, Lynette Gray, Vanessa Grimes, Barbara Haight, Jean Koulack-Young and Jeri Kroll.

We have tried to keep the congregation informed of our progress by making update reports during Board Greetings and publishing information in the newsletter under board reports.

The Transition Team learned that because we are seeking a half-time minister there would be no support from the UUA and that we would only receive help from the Mass. Bay District. Unfortunately our representative resigned in January and has not yet been replaced. So the responsibility for this journey has fallen almost solely on the shoulders of the team members.

We chose to designate the position as a contract minister, rather than interim, consulting/developmental or called minister because the contract category gives NSUU the greatest flexibility in the hiring process. The selected minister will have a written contract signed by the board to serve for a defined period of time, typically in one-year increments.

To help define our needs, we convened a church-wide meeting in October to document the opinions of congregation members about who we are and what we are seeking in a new minister. This feedback was essential to the development of a job description.

We became aware that it was unrealistic to hope that we could hire a new minister by April 1, 2015, to start the fiscal year, and set a more realistic target of September 1, 2015, the beginning of the new church year.

A lot of behind-the-scenes work went into the preparation of a recruiting package, borrowing heavily from the document of the NSUU Search Committee which worked from 2005 – 2008 to hire two interim ministers and the Rev. Frieda Gillespie. Thanks to the efforts of Dan Kennedy, the new package was put on the NSUU website with password access so that candidates could easily view the information. (If you would like to explore this information, go to <http://nsuu.org/ministerial-search-packet/> and type in the password: nsuu323.)

We prepared job postings for the UUA and Mass. Bay District websites which were unveiled in early February. We also sent the job description to several theological seminaries and institutes hoping to attract students and alumni. An NSUU Congregational Record from 2008 was updated for UUA ministers to be able to research our church history. At this time the Transition Team morphed into the Search Committee.

We began receiving candidate responses, which have fallen into two categories – ministers who are seeking to reduce their workloads as they transition to retirement and recent seminary graduates who are seeking their first ministerial position. Fully employed ministers are not financially interested in considering our half-time position and salary.

Resumes, biographical information and UUA Ministerial Records when available were circulated electronically to team members so that we could get rapid reactions about whether we wanted to proceed to interviews. Google searches were performed to gain additional information about the candidates.

Four interviews were scheduled in March, but one of the candidates chose to withdraw from the process. An average of two hours in each of three interviews was spent by the team asking questions of the candidates and providing information about our church.

We decided that we would deviate from the standard practice of scheduling ministerial candidates to preach in neighboring churches so they could be observed by the committee members. Instead, we have scheduled the candidates to preach at NSUU so that there will be a wider opportunity for church members to form opinions. We are not able to identify the candidates publically at this stage because they may be in situations where they have not declared their intentions to their current congregations until the time they are selected as a finalist.

Our goal is to meet in May to make a decision about whether we can offer a contract to a new minister or opt to continue the search into the next church year. We will be calling a special church meeting to vote on the recommended candidate, although this process is not required under the contract hiring definition. We want the choice to be made as democratically as possible,

After the choice is confirmed and an offer is extended to the successful candidate, a negotiating committee has been appointed to handle any issues which the candidate might like to change and to establish the starting date. The final contract will be presented to the candidate and the board for ratification.

Bob Bullivant
Brian Orr

Report of the Investment Committee For the Fiscal Year Ending 3/31/15



Overview:

This year the Finance Committee has continued to oversee two legal situations that had arisen last year. First, we were sued by Eva Turner's nephew over the ownership of Eva's home. We found out on April 10th that we had won, but her nephew has until the beginning of May to appeal the judge's decision. After that time we will likely work on some repairs to the house in preparation for selling. To be clear, we don't yet know what type of work will need to be done, but expect some updating in order to get a better price for the house. To date we have paid out a little under \$9,500 in legal fees and insurance, roughly \$7,800 came from an annuity that Eva also left to the church and the rest will be covered by the sale of the house.

Our other legal issue involves the cell pole. At this time, we have agreed to the financial issues for a new contract, but the greater and more challenging issues involve how American Tower and their subcontractors can access and utilize our premises. As some of you know, they have added 2 structures inside the enclosed fencing, but were not very communicative with us during the building process. Scott Houseman is our attorney, and is currently negotiating this portion of our contract with them.

The Investment and Finance Committee met with representatives from Eastern Bank for two reasons this year. First, we had a sum of money that we wanted to invest and we wanted to look at several options. Second, we wanted to restructure our investments as we felt our percentage in equities over this past year was too high at 78%. We did meet, and changed our portfolio strategy to a lesser amount in equities (65%). Our current portfolio is invested with equities at 63% and our fixed income at 35% (there is currently 2% in cash).

The sum of money we were looking to invest was \$50,000 from the Bowerman bequest. After looking at several investment vehicles we chose to go with the UUA Endowment Fund, where we already had 3 established funds. I'm pleased to announce that on March 1st we created the Ed and Beth Bowerman fund.

The Investment and Finance Committee has again worked closely with the Board Presidents, Bob Bullivant and Brian Orr, and the church Treasurer, Vanessa Grimes to take a hard look at the church's financial situation. This year we have all worked together to create financial stability for not just this year but hopefully for many years to come.

Summary:

Our account with Eastern Bank has grown by 8.39% over this past year. As I mentioned previously we met with the bank and adjusted our portfolio to a 65/35 split, equities to fixed income. We believe our portfolio is well diversified and a bit more conservative for the future.

The NSUU Endowment Fund has had a good year with favorable market conditions. The whole UUA fund grew 4.4% as of March 2015. We believe the account is well-diversified with an

emphasis on equities. Our investments in this fund are comprised of equities: large, midcap and small, sector funds and bonds so the return cannot be totally correlated to the S & P.

Portfolio Summary 3/31/15:

Eastern Bank: Portfolio	Market Value	% of
Cash	7123.27	1.933
Fixed Income Securities	128,975.04	34.999
Equities	<u>232,412.91</u>	<u>63.068</u>
Total Account	\$368,511.22	100.000

UUA General Fund: **\$28,464.77**
* (The \$50,000 Bowerman Fund does not appear until 4/1/15)

Bequest Fund: **\$75,761.78**

Investment Outlook:

The NSUU Church's assets are invested for the long term, and we continue to maintain a balanced, well diversified portfolio consisting of domestic and international equities and fixed income. Although we cannot predict where the market will go, we feel we are well positioned at this time.

Jodi W. Smith, Chair
Investment Committee

Members:
Astrida Cutter (continuing)
Carol Bullivant (continuing)
Vanessa Grimes (ex officio)
Brian Orr (ex officio)

