

the steeple

The Congregational Newsletter of the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Burlington
January 2020

From Our Developmental Senior Minister **Transitional Thoughts**

By Rev. Patricia Hart



It has been a joy during my first six months here to learn something about Vermont and get to know this congregation. I'm grateful that so many of you – members, friends, and especially the staff and leaders of this First Unitarian Universalist Society – have shared stories and traditions, teaching me the habits of your congregational home.

My job as your Developmental Minister is to pay attention to First UU: to learn as much as I can about this congregation's history and culture, as well as your hopes and concerns about present and future. There are challenges to be faced, of course; but my sense is that there are even more opportunities before you – some of which exist now, and more that could arise over the next few years.

You are my tutors in this large and exciting project, since most of you know much more about this congregation than I do. Ministry is a fundamentally collaborative exercise – I'm glad to have all of you as my partners!

As most of you know, there are five “developmental goals” guiding my time with you. The Board drafted these goals a year ago, with congregational input, and they are actually part of my contract. I've talked about these five goals at numerous meetings and conversations this fall and winter,



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Transitional Thoughts

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including the Ministry Areas Gathering (MAG), staff meetings, Stewardship, Finance, Pastoral Care Associates, and the Transition Team, not to mention the Board. These discussions have already been helpful. I look forward to their generating more wisdom (and great questions) in the months to come.

DEVELOPMENTAL GOALS 2019-2023/4

The Board commits to working with the Developmental Minister to fully engage in the work of the developmental period including:

- *Develop strong, intentional diverse lay leadership*
- *Assist the congregation to live effectively at its current size*
- *Assist the stewardship team in growing the financial stewardship of the congregation*
- *Modify our policy-based governance model to better serve the needs of a mid-sized congregation*
- *Actively and meaningfully welcome, support, and empower congregants who are black or other persons of color, LGBTQ+, have disabilities, and other congregants with marginalized identities*

I'd like to know what you think about all this. Do these goals seem achievable over the next few years? Are there other areas of focus, not included here, that also seem essential? Do you have thoughts about how the role of the minister(s) might change at First UU – and whether the goal should be one minister or two? What parts of this work belong to the Board, or the Minister, the staff, or the congregation as a whole? What feels especially important to you?

Some information gathering has already begun. Two “Money & Mission” listening sessions hosted by the Board, Finance Team, and Transition Team in January were important opportunities for members and friends to learn about the budget, and share thoughts on how the congregation’s resources can best support its mission. Your enthusiastic response to those gatherings and the many great questions raised make me optimistic that more such opportunities will happen in coming months. The Transition Team and I, and the Stewardship folks, will do what we can to facilitate more good conversations this spring. After all, the overall goal of these developmental years is to imagine a vital future for this remarkable and important congregation. That will take all of us.

I hope you will participate as often as you are able – many voices and perspectives make the difference!

Many blessings,

Rev. Tricia



Spirit Play class, Fall 2019

From the Stewardship Team

What to Expect From the 2020 First UU Stewardship Campaign

By Nancy Knox

We on the Stewardship Team are excited to share this preview of this year's Stewardship Campaign. The campaign is the time period during which we ask members and friends to make a financial commitment to the Society to support our staff and programs, for the fiscal year 2020-2021. Two thirds of our operating expenses come from pledges, so this annual process enables the Board and Staff to plan for next year's staffing and programs.

Some things with this year's campaign will be familiar (yes, we'll still ask you to pledge) and some things will be different. One change relates to the entire congregation, with the rollout of the new Realm software program, happening soon. With this new program, you'll be able to pledge online and manage your payments to complete your pledge for the next fiscal year, which starts July 1, 2020.

The campaign will run during the month of March, starting on March 8 with our Campaign Kick-off Sunday. During the rest of March, we'll have a series of social gatherings called "cottage parties" at the UU and in members' homes, for fellowship, and to talk about what inspires our gratitude and generosity, and answer any questions about stewardship, pledging, and our budget. Everyone will be invited, and there will be no pressure to pledge at these events (but the sooner you pledge, the less we need to follow up with you). Let us know if you'd like to host a gathering of UUs in your home (see below).

During the campaign, we'll provide details about the process of pledging, and Stewardship Team members will be available in the Parlors and the

Community Room on Sundays in March to answer any questions you may have. You'll also be able to pledge online using the new Realm software. Members will share stories from the pulpit as well.

The campaign will end with a pancake breakfast on Sunday, April 5, sponsored by the Stewardship Team and the YUUTH group. It's our way of saying THANK YOU for your generosity to our First UU community.

If you have any questions or comments about what we do, please contact the Team at stewardship@uusociety.org or reach out to me, Nancy Knox, Chair of the 2020 Stewardship Team at ospreyvt@gmail.com or see me at the UU.

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Interested in writing an article for *The Steeple*?

The next issue of *The Steeple* will be published in April. The deadline to submit articles is **March 23**.

If you would like to write an article or have questions, please email
mary@uusociety.org.

From the Board and “Our Mission/Our Money” Team

Our Mission/Our Money

Thank you all who attended the “Our Mission/Our Money” discussion groups earlier this month. We were overwhelmed with the level of participation (thank you again for your patience as we had to change venues) and the amount of fantastic input we received both at the meetings and outside the meetings. We are working on compiling all the comments and sharing with the appropriate people. We hope to have a summary of the comments available to everyone in the very near future.

Also, please keep in mind that as we move through the spring budgeting season, there will be more opportunities to discuss, provide input, and ask questions about how we are fulfilling our mission and our funding for our congregation. Our hope is to create a greater connection to and understanding of our mission and how our decisions and actions as a congregation can bring us closer to our vision. Thank you from your board of trustees and the “Our Mission / Our Money” team.



Craig Newman of Outreach for Earth Stewardship (ofesvt.org) with rescued Screech-Owl, September 22, 2019 Faith Development Justice Sunday

Rooted, Inspired, & Ready!



General Assembly is the annual meeting of our Unitarian Universalist Association. You can join thousands of other UUs to attend worship services, workshops, business meetings, and more. Registration is already open, but please note: the process has changed. Adult full-time registration is \$400, but that price is only good through March 15.* Once the final registration and payment are complete, financial aid and volunteer opportunities will become available. Registration for housing opens March 2 at 9 a.m., and tends to fill up very quickly!

Anyone can attend General Assembly, but you must be a member to be a delegate, which entitles you to vote at business sessions. Each congregation gets a specified number of delegates based on its size. There are also opportunities (at a reduced cost) for youth participation or to attend some sessions off-site. More details and additional information available at www.uua.org/ga. If you might be interested in going to GA, being a delegate, or applying for financial assistance, be in touch with Christina Fulton (xina@uusociety.org) or Rev. Tricia Hart (revtricia@uusociety.org).

**A payment plan is now available. With a \$50 down-payment, the cost of registration can be paid over the next several weeks, with final payment due by February 29, 2020.*



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WE'RE ON THE WEB!
WWW.UUSOCIETY.ORG



Summer Internship Applications Are Open! All young adults are welcome to check out [this post](#) about paid internship opportunities with the UU College of Social Justice. More information and the application can be found at www.UUCSJ.org/internships. Placements this year are:

- Annunciation House – San Antonio, TX
- Boston Immigration Justice Accompaniment Network – Boston, MA
- Engaging People in Change – Millbrook, NY
- Rural & Migrant Ministry – throughout New York
- UU Justice Florida – throughout Florida
- UU United Nations Office – New York, NY



Rescued Barred Owl from [Outreach for Earth Stewardship](#)
September 22, 2019 Faith Development Justice Sunday
