

Unitarian Society of Hartford Board Meeting March 11, 2025

Location: USH and Zoom

Quorum NO__YES__X

Board Attendees	Guests	Regrets
Nancy Kemmerer Rick Tsukada Jon Covault Nina Elgo Judy Sullivan Laurie Kelliher Gloria F. Mengual Rev. Bob Janis Jim Venneman	David Newton Janice Newton	Laura Cipriano Paul Cipriano

Annual meeting: May 4th.

Orders of Business

6:36 p.m. Nancy-called the meeting to order.

Approval of February 2025 Board Meeting Minutes –Rick made motion to approve minutes. Jim seconded. Unanimous approval.

Endowment Nominating Committee Recommendations ~ David Newton

Michael Shea and Rocco Orlando have been nominated to serve on the USH Endowment Committee, beginning July 1, 2024. Sherry will step into role of committee chair. Motion to accept these nominations was made by Jim Venneman; Nina Elgo seconded. Board vote: unanimous. **(See complete recommendation, with nominee bios, in addendum below).*

Board Nominating Committee ~ Laurie Kelliher

It's appropriate to put out there that we are looking to fill Board positions, as well as approach people we may be interested in seeing serve on the Board.

Rev. Bob suggested May 4 for USH annual meeting, which will include vote for Board positions that will be vacating. Rick and Jim will not be running for positions again. Rick, Jim and Nancy are leaving the Board. Nina is taking on Board Chair role. Discussion of how to reach out included suggestion that information about openings run in USH newsletter. For finance position, person must have both financial savvy and strong interpersonal skills to connect when making the 'ask.'

Stewardship Update ~ Nancy Kemmerer

Nancy volunteered to head Stewardship Committee this coming year. Some already have offered to help with this. (Carolyn, Sherry and Brian, along with one other person). USH is not transparent enough as to how funds raised are spent. Total of 80% goes toward staff, with 20% toward building maintenance. Pie charts showing this information would be helpful. April will be stewardship month; moved back from the usual - March.

Educating what money is for and why we need it is key, rather than just asking for dollars, noted Jim. Stress the work USH is doing, especially pastoral care. This motivates folks more than thinking about paying to shovel snow.

Candlelight Concerts Update – Nancy Kemmerer

International group approached USH about renting USH for a series of concerts. They previously have used South Congregational Church in Hartford. Concerts take place on Friday and Saturday evenings; they would be paying between \$2,000 - \$3,000 per weekend. Nina noted this would be nice exposure for USH. Laurie noted it not only exposes people to USH, but also the potential use of our space for future rentals. Rick recommended we review the riders in their contracts.

Council Reports

- **Social Justice – Judy Sullivan**

*(See addendum below) Judy attended CT faith-based solidarity network in Meriden recently. This will be three-pronged approach to assisting immigrants who have been detained. Glenn, attorney serving immigrants need to free up his time to do the legal work and needs help from congregations to help serve families. Family support group help is needed as well. They are trying to also form a non-denominational youth group. Rev. Bob – based on USH member and friend feedback, there is strong interest in immigration-focused volunteer efforts from us. Government dehumanization focus is much of their priority. Other thing: concern over ICE raids. So far, they have not entered house of worship to do a raid. GHIAA advice: have a rep ready who says ICE cannot come in until they meet with that rep (i.e. Rev. Bob or another designated person, given the specific time this is happening).

Judy noted that GHIAA will be doing training soon in how to respond if there is an ICE raid at our place. Judy noted Peter Meny's request that we help with supporting Simsbury Methodist Church in their Welcoming Project. Family in New Britain with three sons needs help with transportation. She wrote a piece about this for E-news.

Fern Street UU will not be having table at UCONN LGBTQ student event. Deadline passed. They need volunteers for March 21 – 22. She will speak with Shahan about potential USH youth participation.

- **Finance – Jim Venneman**

- Committee will be meeting on Friday of this week.

- **Finance – Jon Covault**

Snow removal is 6% below normal. It's looking like a modest surplus will be in budget by end of FY. Looking at 3% staff increase in salaries. If councils need more funds, please put in for that now. Guest musician budget has been increased by 20%.

- **Membership – Laurie Kelliher**

*(See addendum below)

- Attendance has been robust. We have had over 90 in the pews and sometimes it goes to over 100 folks, including Zoom. Newcomers continue to arrive. March 30 is next *Under the Stairs*. New member orientation was well attended. Total of 17 people have attended one of the two sessions. Another seven people did not attend, but expressed an interest in attending in the future. Demographics: 50/50 split of those over and under 65 years. Shahan is starting to get interest from the 20+ group. About 10 – 15% of new folk have a UU history; some are from other area UU churches. Some of this is Article 2 fallout.
 - Received volunteer recognition nominations from all Board members.
 - April 6 will be next New Member ceremony. Will have 10 new members that day, maybe more.

- **Spiritual Life– Rick Tsukada**

*(See addendum below) Rick expressed the need for more information related to budget, when it is due, what info is needed, etc.

- **Youth Discussion**

Nancy – Shaheen needs help with volunteers to cover the youth groups meeting during services.

Rev. Bob – We need to increase visibility for youth services, as well as considering use of space, given the growing number of children. We are on the edge of critical mass. One option to consider: asking parents and others to volunteer 4 – 5 times per year, so they don't completely give up attending services.

Nina – Developing an RE committee may be helpful so Shaheen is not left holding the bag alone. Other thing: When Rev. Katie was here, the youth group was decimated. Katie suggested an intergenerational experience, with all adults following kids downstairs to be part of it together. Suggested a show-and-tell, where all, not just kids, but everyone, bring in something to share stories about. Some powerful stories were shared. This may be fun way to share and get to know each other.

Laurie – When Katie set this up, there was nice energy of people (not just kids) moving throughout the church, sharing and talking together.

Rick – Wants to work more with Shaheen when he steps off Board. Parents need to see It's the church working to strengthen youth services, not just leaving it up the Shaheen alone.

Laurie – We need increased visibility of children during services; it is easy to not be conscious of our children if they are separate all of the time. Also, are we recognizing our teachers?

Rev Bob – When older youth are heading out to college and we recognize them and wish them the best, this would be a good time to also recognize the teachers.

- **GUEST COMMENTS**

- None

- **MOTION TO ADJOURN** – Nancy adjourned meeting at 8:08 p.m.

Addendums – March 2025 Reports

1. USH Ministerial Board Report ~ Rev. Bob Janis

"Change. But start slowly, because direction is more important than speed." – Paulo Coelho (Seems like a good leadership quote!)

Sundays & Special Services

- Religious Education is going well. The children need more space than they currently have. Need to expand – which is a nice problem to have!
- Congregational Forum went very well, I think. Still a few responses coming in to the three questions I asked about where we go next as a congregation. Have started looking for themes in the responses, which Gloria M. will be helping me with
- Thanks to everyone who made the February "Zoom only" service with Rev. Andrew work. And a great Women's History Month service!
- March 23rd service going to be great! Still a lot of work to do to put it together.

Programming and Social Justice

- A lot of interest in speaking up for our values. We have done some discernment about what we do and don't put on our e-news, as far as "political" posts. We are not endorsing a political party, but at the same time we are living with our eyes open to the momentous changes in our country.
- Talking about momentous changes, our immigration justice partner IRIS is more or less shuttered due to federal budget cuts. Talking with one of their staff this week about ways we can help them continue to provide vital services to people in need.
- The new "early twenties" group is always sowing dividends – younger adults are finding each other and connecting. And the "Mids" group (30s & 40s) had a nice hike at the reservoir.
- Started a new group of congregational "spiritual leaders" who are involved or looking to start spiritual programs and offerings at USH. A terrific energy and we're planning to meet monthly for mutual support and inspiration.

- CCIU (Connecticut Council For Understanding) meeting scheduled for June 1st. Massive thanks to Rev. Josh who moved UUSE's date to be accommodating to what worked best to us.

Pastoral Care and Rites of Passage

- It's a very full time for pastoral care, what with everything going on in the world. Trying to continue to check in to those in health difficulties, and all the other of life's challenges.
- Funeral, wedding, and child dedication all provisionally booked for spring/early summer

Foundations and Behind the Scenes

- Continuing meeting with staff and setting goals
- I'll be away with family in Puerto Rico April 12 – 17. I can Zoom in to Board meeting as need be.

Thank you all! Appreciate all you do, and the change in the world we are making together.

Blessings,

Rev. Bob

2. Membership Report – Laurie Kelliher –

Attendance at Sunday services for the past 4 weeks has continued to be robust. We have had 99+ people in the pews and with the Zoom audience, attendance has been over 100 for 3 of those weeks. The snow date on 2/16 was the outlier but even then 52 people attended via Zoom in addition to the hearty 10 who showed up for service.

Newcomers continue to arrive and the next First Connections will be held March 30th. Newcomers receive an email of welcome in the week following their visit. But obtaining that email address remains the limiting factor. Setting up a visitors table in Fellowship Hall did not increase awareness so the next step will be a more central table in FH and better signage.

Our most exciting news is the interest in the New Member Orientations held Thursday evening February 20 and after service on March 2. The first meeting was attended by 8 potential members and the second had 15 in attendance. In total 17 people all together attended 1 or 2 meetings. An additional 7 people have expressed interest in membership. The sessions were animated and robust especially when the group was broken into clusters of 4 people guided by Rev Bob's suggested questions for discussion. The demographics were ~ 50/50 split between under 65 years and over 65 years age. Focusing on the 20s group run by Shahan should be the next target.

Nominations for the Volunteer of the Year are gratefully received and will be proffered for rank voting in the near future.

3. Building and Grounds Meeting Minutes, March 9th– David Newton –

The February 7th meeting was an opportunity to discuss ongoing projects for the updating of those present. The AI summary feature was in use as part of the zoom

connection, and you may find it interesting to see how it summarized the meeting with some mostly name corrections. These tend to be related to the person attributed to various comments, which the AI assigns to those on Zoom incorrectly at times.

Quick recap

The meeting covered various topics related to building maintenance, upcoming projects, and event planning. Discussions included driveway repairs, smoke alarm installations, grant applications for building conservation, security upgrades, lighting projects, and piano renovation work. The conversation ended with plans for an upcoming celebration of the listing of the Meeting House on the National Register of Historic Places. Part of the event will feature tours and informational displays about Meeting House architecture and history.

Next steps

- Kevin to monitor the delivery and installation of the new planters for the main entrance.
- Kevin and John Bengtson to coordinate with the lighting contractors for the installation of Phase 2 lighting for the chancel when ready.
- Paul to oversee the piano repair process scheduled for June and July.
- Kevin to consider minor restoration of exterior wood of the piano after the internal repairs are completed.
- Aesthetics Group to follow up on the delivery of the new sign.
- David discussed with Kevin applying a sealant along the sidewalk and paving edges to prevent water seepage.
- Building and Grounds Committee to continue preparations for the upcoming celebration event.

Summary

Planning Meeting Minutes Review

David discussed the minutes of the last meeting, which were approved by unanimous consent. He also mentioned a note from Evan Williams regarding a scheduled tree work on March 18th and the delivery of a sign. Kevin reported on two smoke alarm installations on the upstairs library and chancel, which are now activated and tested for functionality.

Church Grant Application and Building Maintenance

David, Paul and Laura discussed the church's plans to apply for a grant to support the building maintenance and conservation from the National Fund for Sacred Places. He mentioned that the grant application process involves a thorough study of the building's envelope, and it's expected to take about a year. The grant is for a significant amount, but we are expected to raise matching funds. David also mentioned that the group Building Conservation Associates would be well capable to be involved in the required early needs assessment.

Sidewalk Planters and Chancel Lighting Update

Paul discussed updates on the plan for specifically the 5 500-pound planters that need to be bolted to the sidewalk. He mentioned the possibility of using leftover funds from the grant for additional cameras. David also discussed the phase 2 lighting project for the Chancel, which has been delayed multiple times. He mentioned that the electricians are ready to proceed, but installation does not look like it will arise to cause a problem with the Register Event, a good thing.

Piano Renovation and Water Supply Update

Paul discussed the upcoming piano renovation work, scheduled for June and July, with an expected completion by August. He mentioned that the piano, a 60-year-old instrument, needs repair and that the vendor, a piano tuner who has been working with the instrument for some time, has quoted a price of \$10,000. The renovation involves replacing the hammers and keys and restoring the piano's original sound. The exterior of the piano can also be restored. The Board has approved this expense.

Additionally, Kevin shared that the water supply pipes in the building were investigated and found to be copper, with the water supply entering the building in the Sewage Pump Room and serving all areas. The waste system is made of cast iron.

Victor Lundy Building Celebration Plans

The group discusses the upcoming celebration of the building, including plans for tours and informational displays about the architect Victor Lundy's design choices. David mentions that he provided information for the tours and notes the recent request for the date of solar collector installation. Judy Robbins has researched the building's history and shared stories about past conditions, highlighting how much the building has improved thanks to the Buildings and Grounds Committee and volunteers. The celebration will include hard copies of current Usher articles with QR codes for accessing additional information electronically.

4. Community Within Report – Laura Cipriano

The **Big Event** this month is the March 23 **National Register of Historic Places Celebration** chaired by Nancy Kemmerer and Judy Robbins with Lu Giammatteo's help arranging the catered lunch. Members are encouraged to bring desserts to share on March 23.

Activities and events this month include the Mids Group, Gentle Yoga, Book Club, Pizza & Movie, Hiking Group, Lunch Bunch, Disability Support Group, Genealogy Group, Singalong Group, Men's Group, Artist's Way, Magdalene Circle, and Meeting House Presents Mad Agnes in concert.

The **new webpage is live!** Take a look at what we have so far, but please understand that it is evolving and there are still rough spots. Karolina, David Newton, and I can edit and add content now. Judy Sullivan will be added to the list, and any other council chairs who want their names added should let Karolina know so she can get you a password. <https://hartforduu.org/> is the new webpage and the old webpage <https://ushartford.org/> is still available.

Let Karolina know if you find broken links or missing content, or if you have new content to add. The easiest edit is to add/replace a whole paragraph instead of changing a word or two in multiple spots. We are aware of several broken links but let us know when you find them. We can also add buttons to your part of the page with links to subpages. Let me know if you want to sit down together and discuss the webpage.

5. Administrative Council Report ~ Paul Cipriano

The Sacred Spaces grant for preserving and repairing the meeting house was submitted on time to meet the deadline. Thanks go out to Janice and David Newton, Laura Cipriano, Kevin Girouard, Karolina, Laurie Kelliher, Tina Davies, Judy Robbins, Jon Covault, and Reverend Bob for help in making this happen. We included as part of the application packet the most recent issue of the USHer about the construction and preservation of the Meeting House. We should know by early summer if we have been approved.

With spring coming, the planters we ordered last Winter as part of the security grant should be arriving at the garden center this month. They will be delivered in April. We ordered five planters that weigh 500 lbs. each when empty so that should be more than enough weight to protect the lobby entrance of the meeting house.

The sanctuary piano repairs will take place in June and July and should be completed by August. While the piano will be out of commission, the chancel itself will still be accessible while the work on the piano progresses.

The phase two lighting project for the Chancel, which has been delayed multiple times, is moving forward. The electricians are ready to proceed, but installation will not start till after the National Register of Historic Places Ceremony later this month.

6. Treasurer Report ~ Jon Covault

Current budget year (2024-2025) income and expense update:

Our FY25 operating budget balance sheet for the 8 months July 2024-Feb 2025 suggest we will potentially have a modest year end budget surplus (\$10,000-20,000). Current income is \$323,433 which is 6% ahead of budget (\$241,000 from pledge giving 9% ahead of budget).

Expenditures paid to date total \$282,891 which is 7% under budget. We have not needed to tap our budgeted one-time resources for balancing FY25 budget which included \$10,000 from COVID19 pay check protection program grant and \$32,000 carry forward from FY24 related to grant payments received in FY25 for expenses in FY24. In not needed this FY they could be available if need for the FY26 and FY27 budgets.

FY26 (July 25 – June 26) budget.

Work on the FY26 budget is beginning involving input from the treasurer, finance committee chair, and board president. Contributions from the endowment will be budgeted as per the endowment committee's recommendation in February of \$60,830 for FY26 (4.5% of the average endowment past 3 years, a 6.5% increase from FY25). Reverend Bob's contract specifies a 3% annual increase and we will include similar increases for all of our staff in the initial budget. Council chairs – please submit requests for any modification of council budgets.

The approved FY25 budget is available via our website at <https://hartforduu.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/24-25-approved-budget.pdf>

7. Endowment Committee Nominations ~ Laurie Kelliher

David Newton, chair of the present Endowment Committee, provided a report noting that committee has recruited two individuals for membership on the Endowment Committee for three-year terms beginning July 1, 2025. it believes they are well qualified. If the Nominating Committee agrees, please forward the Endowment Committee nominations for Board consideration.

Recommended by the Nominations Committee:

Resolved, That the Board herewith appoints Michael Shea and Rocco Orlando to open positions for three-year terms on the Endowment Committee as of July 1, 2025. And, be it further resolved, That the Board herewith appoints Endowment continuing Committee member Sherry Manetta as Endowment Chair as of July 1, 2025

Related information:

As of July 1, 2025, there will be two vacancies on the five-member Endowment Committee. They are David Newton and Cris Noble, each finishing two-year terms and who choose not to continue for another term.

Under the Constitution:

Members of the Endowment Committee shall possess the necessary education, knowledge, and experience to appropriately manage the investment of Endowment funds. The Chair of the Endowment Committee may not concurrently serve as an officer, an at-large member of the Board of Directors, or a Council chair.

Beginning July 1, 2005, the Board of Directors shall annually appoint member(s) who have been nominated by the Nominating Committee to fill vacant positions on the Endowment Committee. All members of the Endowment Committee appointed after July 1, 2005, shall have terms of three years. (the correct mixed duration of appointments was created in the resuscitation of the Endowment Committee two years ago)

Candidate Backgrounds

Michael Shea - and his wife, Frederique, rejoined the USH congregation last year after a hiatus of over two decades. He leads the USH Hiking Group. Michael is now a judge and before that was a lawyer for most of his career, but he also worked as a reporter covering Congress in the late 80s and early 90s.

Michael was born in and grew up in Hartford, where he spent most of his time playing basketball and became the point guard for the varsity team at Northwest Catholic High School. He has recently begun learning to play the guitar. Michael and Frederique have three children.

Rocco Orlando - Rocco and his wife, Joanne have been members of USH for over 40 years. Rocco has recently stepped down as Chief Academic Officer a Hartford Healthcare, a practicing GI surgeon at Hartford Hospital and professor of surgery at UConn and Quinnipiac University. He continues to work part time for HHC as a strategic advisor with a focus on education, advocacy and artificial intelligence.

Rocco and Joanne enjoy traveling to Colorado and Milwaukee to visit their children and grandchildren. The existing Endowment Committee members enthusiastically support the two candidates for appointment and look forward to their contributions to the ongoing activity of the Endowment Committee.

Sherry Manetta -In addition, the current members of the Endowment Committee support and recommend Sherry Manetta for Chair of the Endowment Committee as of July 1, 2025. Sherry Manetta is well qualified to act as chair by virtue of experiences as Board Chairperson at USH, and extended participation in the affairs of USH over an extended period. Her bio previously circulated is repeated here:

Sherry and her husband, Brian Harvey, have been members of USH for thirteen years. Sherry served as President of the USH board and has participated in various committees and projects including strategic planning and social justice.

Sherry was an audit and consulting partner at Ernst & Young in Chicago and New York and served in financial, operational and technical positions in the insurance industry at Aetna, Phoenix, HealthRight and Conning.

Sherry is a CPA and has a BS in Math from Misericordia University and an MBA from Indiana University. She has served on the audit, finance and investment committees of boards of directors in the insurance industry and on boards and committees of various universities and nonprofit organizations. Current board roles include a life insurance company, the University of St. Joseph and two foundations focused on education. She volunteers with immigration services. She enjoys theater and traveling and spending time with her family in the Atlanta area. Sherry was born in Indianapolis and has lived in CT for over 30 years.

8. Social Justice Council ~ Judy Sullivan

The Social Justice team has been exploring types of collaboration and support with our neighbor congregations and organizations. We have been active in encouraging our congregation to participate in community events such as Town Hall meetings with public officials, giving written testimony for legislative bills at public hearings, participating as a group at rallies, and showing up at early morning interfaith demonstrations. All of these activities have shown USH support for those targeted unjustly and most need support.

Immigration Organizing

We have multiple contacts and interests with ongoing groups:

- St Patrick/St Anthony Immigration Ministry
- CT Faith-based Immigrant Solidarity Network (FISN)
- Prison Ministry
- Family Support
- Non-Denominational Youth Group
- Husky 4 Immigrants
- CT Students 4 A Dream
- Welcoming Project
- GHIAA

Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Alliance (GHIAA)

- On Monday, March 3, 30+ GHIAA leaders joined a public action, led by immigrant rights advocates, to launch the Trust Act Now campaign. They are also planning a Zoom training by an immigration attorney to provide resources to develop appropriate plans for institutions to interact with ICE.
- **HB 6889**, which would expand Just Cause eviction protection to tenants of all ages and disability statuses, was passed by the Housing Committee this week! The next step is a vote in the full House of Representatives, followed by the Senate, and then on to the Governor. We will seek support and co-sponsorship for this bill in our upcoming constituent meetings.
- GHIAA leaders joined CLJ staff and over 100 Hartford residents at a North End Public Safety Coalition visioning session to offer community input in the selection of Hartford's next police chief.
- GHIAA congregations, including Asylum Hill Congregational Church, Immanuel UCC, and Universalist Church of West Hartford, are engaging in information and education sessions on fiscal policy reform. We will continue to seek support for reforming the fiscal roadblocks in our upcoming constituent meetings.

True Colors LGBTQ+ Conference March 21-22

No table organized this year for USH and Fern St. However, for those interested, if you volunteer for 3 hours anytime the week prior to, or during the event, you may attend one day free.

9. Spirit Life Council Chair Board Report ~ Rick Tsukada

Half way through my second year of a two year position of Chair of Sprit Life Council I believe there are some general issues that over that time would benefit from some Board review. First, a report on the individual parts of this council's "departments".

Chancel Arts;

Primarily responsible for the "Display" each Sunday of the visual "Altar". This is a very established stand alone area of Sunday Services from the point of creation and execution. They are good at wanting to create displays that reflect the service themes especially the use of the many banners that are part of USH's collection.

On going considerations:

1. Placement of piano that because of the space available on the stage...interferes with sight lines thus reducing the displays impacts
2. With the increased use of the "stage," especially large group musical performances, the glass altar and the piano can create an available space issue requiring removal (glass) and repositioning of piano, which effects setting up for Sunday Services that follow in a day or two.
3. Although it has not appeared as an issue ever during my tenure because of the dedication of the artists that have committed to this department, I can see that potentially there may be a time when a "review" of their work may be useful in increasing congregational participation...feedback...design possibility.

Worship Associates:

The role of the Worship Associates, both in terms of content and labor in relation to the formal services, are the principle public feature of a church. These activities include formal Sunday Services, First Thursday Services and Memorial Services. In addition, with the expanded and core operational "idea" of shared ministry, the WA's are responsible for twice

a month services when Rev. Bob is not at the pulpit. These services require a high level of understanding of not only maintaining the "style" of our services, but also working with the pulpit guests on developing the actual "sermon" at times, and often the music content.

Over the last year it has become important to bring in skilled and talented congregational members to not only replace seasoned associates, but to also increase the number from 9 to 12 to more easily meet the work of the WA's. It should be noted that it does take time for a person to become comfortable and skilled at learning the tasks WA's are asked to do.

The WA's are appreciating more and more their influence in shaping the spiritual life of our congregation. This requires a close appreciation of the partnership the WA's have with the minister and the character and personality of our congregation. This includes their influence in the music that is ever present at every service.

On going considerations:

1. Having a full range of interests and personalities that reflect our Unitarian Universalist religion as a "liberal" big tent culture. This means gender, generational, cultural and just plain "Stage Personality" mix from week to week.
2. Finding meeting times for our once a month planning and development meetings that allow for full participation of the issues noted in item #1.
3. Working with the various components of the services -- musicians, ushers, ministers, pulpit speakers (GNO, testimonials, board reports) guest musicians, candle bowl lifters and AVS staff -- require a great deal of communications with and between elements. Sometimes things get lost in the mix.

Music

As we look at our Music offerings, beyond the content, we are noticing an increased participation and interests in the range of areas congregants are interested in. The "Saturday" Folk singing, "Healing and New Age music," Choir, Sunday Performances and concerts produced by Meeting House Presents. This is over and above the actual content of the selection of musical works. What is emerging is a need to look at this very range of desired programming to meet the congregations desire to make music and to be also entertained by music; two different sides of music.

I am of the mind that the job of music director has moved to one of Music Ministries. It is, in the best interests of the overall church's life that it encompass and nurture the entire range of our musical life here at USH. Therefore meeting the needs of this congregation will take a new look at what is expected...what are the criteria that are used to "measure" expectations and what is realistic in terms of supporting the development of these desired outcomes....making music and music for entertainment

Ongoing considerations:

1. The need for weekly musical content at every Sunday Service
2. The quality of communications between elements to support the musical content and performance of the works
3. The capacity to be fluid and creative in the performance of the musical selection.
4. And from the congregation, active and useful support of the programming; it is a big job.
5. As we continue focusing on our musical equipment, we are paying more attention to the upkeep and increased use. This has brought an awareness of the need to possibly allot more funds to address their level of mechanical function. The case and point might be the "water powered" organ in the Chapel. The question is...is this instrument not played because it is not working, or because no one is interested in using it?

Religious Education:

This department is the most elusive one for me to assess at this point. Our RE director is not only new and has only been on the job for 7 months, he is starting from scratch in building an attendance population and a presence in the consciousness of our church's life. I believe I need (we need) to build a better presence in the ongoing life of this church of via participation of the children as part of our culture. This is in part a simultaneous process of adjustment and programing creativity to meet current "Sunday School" activity as the congregation grows, hopefully with more and more families with children.

I admit I have lost touch with what is going on downstairs with kids and the level of adult help that is actually happening from Sunday to Sunday. I know that Rev Bob is in good communication with Shahan but I think we need to do a better job of making our youth and families more of a consideration in our overall church life

I believe that the liberal, wide tent, open mind and open heart that lies at the foundation of UUism is a needed and missing part of the lives of our youth (in America) where the "outsiders," the "divergent," the creative, exceptional children can gather in a safe and nurturing place; this aspect of our environment is really important today

On going considerations:

1. Creative and flexible programing to meet what is an inconsistent level of attendance, although it is growing in numbers
2. More adult help and church "welcoming of our care and interests" in having families here.
3. Chuck wide events that have children around and when possible, as participants in the events themselves.

Big Picture, future Thinking:

1. It is, for me, in the Role of Council Chair, very hard to understand what my responsibilities are to the sub-council/department professionals. What can I do to be useful to their meeting their job descriptions? The council has two paid staff positions that are answerable to both the administrator (the minister of the church) and to the congregation as the primary consumer of their products. Where and how does the council chair fit into that mix?
2. How do we assess, track and guide the ongoing work of the professionals, including determining direction and outcomes?
3. What is the Board's role, if any, in the activities of these departments?
4. How is friction managed over the course of what might be considered 'normal stuff' that happens that need to be addressed?
5. How do these departments communicate to the Board/minister around their needs and well-being?
6. In general, these thoughts pertain mostly to the "paid staff" in part because they are employees and we are the employers (supervisors)... each have traditional responsibilities. in our church cultures, the power roles can become blurred. Nevertheless, it is a relational structure with leverages (kinds of perceived power) that is very useful in maintaining a stable and dependable social system that is designed to produce outcomes. In a healthy system, there is both an understanding and mutual valuing of the shared interdependency that support the production of good outcomes. Over the last couple of decades, I have

noticed (and this is solely my opinion) that a lot of work needs to be done to improve the employer/employee workings of our church.

7. The other two departments: WA's and Chancel Arts, are volunteer positions and to my mind...we have been very lucky to have the leadership and personnel that are self-motivated and work well as teams. However, as the council chair, I wonder if that were not the case, what are the remedies for addressing issues with volunteer positions or groups?

8. In general, I also think that funding needs to reflect projected future growth, taking into consideration our imagination for what may be needed to meet demand or to create demand...e.g. conference money for youth programming, retreat funds for department development or staff training...etc