

# Finding Your Place at the Unitarian Society of Northampton and Florence



## A Thoughtful Guide

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A printed copy of this brochure is available in the literature racks in the parlor or the Great Hall, or you can ask anyone with a pink nametag for a copy.

## **Creating a Meaningful Unitarian Society Experience**

Why did you decide to become a part of this congregation? There are probably as many reasons as there are as there are members, friends and visitors! Still, there are some common themes among us. Do any of these ring true for you?

- sense of community
- spiritual home
- a place for my children to gain a religious education
- meet new people/socialize
- be part of a social action/social justice agenda that is bigger than just myself
- be with people who have shared values and beliefs
- re-connect with a religious organization (either different from or the same as the one in which I was raised)
- give my time, energy, and support to an organization with which I feel a deep connection

Whatever reasons brought you here, now that you *are* here, how can you make the experience as personally enriching as possible? Certainly attending services on Sunday brings a sense of fulfillment. That might be enough. But you might be looking for more. The connections we make with each other through social and volunteer opportunities within the Society truly enrich our relationship to the Society.

By now you likely understand that volunteers keep this place running. How can you contribute and enrich your connections? This guide is intended to challenge you to think about your role within our congregation. As you read, please feel free to seek out other members with any questions you have. We want to assist you as you contemplate your role. But remember--by becoming active and engaged in the Society, you find your place and create a meaningful experience.

## **Activities:**

Various activities are listed below as suggestions to help you find your role here. Please consider them as opportunities for spiritual growth and mutual service. Remember, you are welcome to attend all our functions as you explore your relationship with this congregation. The SUNDAY TIMES and the PIONEER are great sources of ideas for involvement.

### Sustaining Activities

We recommend 3-4 of these activities each year to sustain the Society's programs and deepen connections among us. Some require very little time while other's might ask for a bit more.

- Sign up for a Sunday Job
- Deliver or donate flowers
- Offer administrative assistance to the office
- Help with special events, such as potlucks, memorials, holiday events, social events
- Deliver meals to shut-ins or families with new babies
- Take an adult education class
- Help at a property or yard work party
- Join a Small Group Ministry
- Sign up for the Welcome Team
- Volunteer for the Web Weavers
- Help out at the Dec 31 Midnight Café

### Covenant Activities

We recommend at least 1 of the following activities each year. These are activities which require us to be in an intentional relationship or "covenant" with one another.

- Become a pastoral friend
- Participate in a worship service (regular year or summer)
- Facilitate an adult education class
- Mentor a Coming of Age student
- Serve on a committee
- Represent USNF at the General Assembly
- Attend a Clara Barton District gathering, workshop, or program
- Represent USNF on local boards, coalitions, etc.
- Sing in the choir



### Congregational Presence and Community Witness

We hope that in addition to the previous activities, you will regularly participate in one or more of these community activities:

- Attend Sunday services as frequently as possible, wearing your name tag
- Potluck and community suppers
- Stay for Social Hour and welcome newcomers
- Attend the annual service auction
- Attend special parties and events, RE and others
- Contribute to the offering plate especially on share-the-plate Sundays

### Social Justice

We hope that you will feel called to service in one or more Social Action projects each year, including but not limited to:

- Green Team
- Climate Action Group
- Power of One: Pennies for the Help Fund
- Cot Shelter program
- Transylvania Partner Church project
- Grove Street Inn cooking
- Pride March
- Bike path cleanup
- Habitat for Humanity
- Collections for local shelters
- And others as they develop or are created

### Religious Education

Whether you have children or not, we invite you to participate in the Religious Education program each year as follows:

- Classroom co-teacher for one quarter
- Volunteers for special projects and programs
- Substitute teachers
- Youth advisors
- Join the Religious Education Council
- Consultants



## Leadership Opportunities

We hope that over time your sense of place here will grow along with a call to service. After you have been here a while, you are encouraged to consider these leadership possibilities:

- Serving on the Board of Trustees
- Serving as a council moderator or clerk
- Representing a committee on the Council
- Serving on the Stewardship Committee
- Serving on the Committee of the Ministry
- Representing the Society at the District and Denominational level
- Chairing a Committee

Certain “staff” type positions are held by member volunteers. These include:

- The Pioneer Editor
- The Sunday Jobs Coordinator
- The Coordinator of Pastoral Friends
- First Night Coordinator
- Assistant Treasurer
- Auction Chair

## **Membership in USNF—Things to Consider**

When your activities here feel like a spiritual and personal sustenance, and when what serves your own soul also serves the congregation and the world, then you are probably ready to sign the membership book and become a “member” of the Society. Please check out the information on membership on our website: [www.uunorthampton.org/newcomers/membership](http://www.uunorthampton.org/newcomers/membership)

## General Expectations of Adult Members

- Attend the Annual Meeting and any Special Congregational Meetings.
- Make a serious and realistic financial pledge during stewardship period, and fulfill that pledge in its entirety by the end of the fiscal year.
- Contribute weekly to the Offering plate as you are able.
- Financially support special campaigns and projects as you are able.
- Be welcoming to visitors and seekers.
- Become familiar with and advocate for the Seven Principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association

**“The only gift is a portion of thyself.”**

**--Ralph Waldo Emerson**



**“Someone had to do something, and this time the someone is us!”**

**--Quote from Emily Green Balch, “Someone for Peace”**