



The USNF Beacon

Weekly Newsletter of The
Unitarian Society of Northampton & Florence

September 14, 2021 Vol. 2, Issue 9.2

Board Report

In our regularly scheduled August Board meeting, USNF Trustees considered proposals from our Transition Team on re-opening this Fall and from our Sanctuary Team regarding its planned and careful dissolution. The Board also held a special meeting on Monday, September 6 to address the imminent departures of our Administrator Lisa Britland and Music Director Lemmy Gurtowsky, as Janet has reported in her Minister's note. We are very sorry to see them go. We will immediately begin a search for a new Administrator, and we plan to work with substitute pianists for at least a few months before organizing a search for a new Music Director. Less than two months after our joyous outdoor service and gathering in June, these meetings took into account new concerns regarding the delta variant that had already begun to emerge in our local communities.

USNF's diligent Transition Team has been hard at work on plans for a "soft" reopening in accordance with the changing face of COVID and emerging science. Simultaneous with continued live Zoom and YouTube broadcast of the service, they proposed a "soft" return to in-person worship in the Great Hall at least once or twice a month with a limited number of attendees. At first, most of these will be volunteers in training to help with logistics of simultaneous in-person and Zoom services.

There are more details in the most recent [Transition Team Report](#) (please note, survey mentioned in the report is now closed). More specifics will surface as we know them. We will continue to monitor COVID developments and guidance, with the hope that as conditions improve, more of us will be able to gather in person. As painful as this is, we remain heartened by the strength and love in the USNF community and beyond.

Providing sanctuary to Irida for nearly three years, supporting and getting to know her and her beautiful family has been an honor and a gift for many of us and our community. Given that Irida is no longer in need of sanctuary protection, our long-serving Sanctuary Team presented a plan to gradually transition our formal support, bringing closure to the institutional USNF sanctuary relationship with Irida with integrity, humanity and compassion. The Board expressed our gratitude to the team and to everyone who has made this work possible. You can read the team's letter [here](#).

Please feel free to share your questions or thoughts with me or any other member of the Board. We are honored to be serving our beloved congregation in these challenging times, doing our part in what Ursula LeGuin calls “the dance that makes the world.”

Jane Simonds, President

What is the Future of Unitarian Universalism?

In this year ahead, our congregation will engage with various aspects from the UUA Widening the Circle endeavor. We will begin at the beginning, contemplating trends within our denomination, religious movements at large, and society as a whole.

Consider: in the time you have been associated with Unitarian Universalism, whether it be 5 weeks, 5 months or 5 decades, what have you noticed stays the same and what changes? What developments in various communities affect our faith practices?

We hope many of us will join together during the last week of September for listening circles to contemplate previous and recent trends, and how they will impact our future. Details will be forthcoming. In the meantime, you are invited to review the first short chapter of WTC on Trends here (a short read or a ten minute listen): <https://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/cic/widening/trends>

Kim Henrichon, Past President

This Week's Happenings

Sunday, September 19, Annual Haiti Support Book Sale, 9am - 1pm, USNF Front Lawn.

All proceeds of Sunday's book sale will go to the two organizations that the Society supports in Haiti. Please stop by, pick up some books to read for the fall and winter seasons, and help those in need in Haiti.

USNF Beacon Publication Schedule

The USNF Beacon is published on Tuesdays with featured articles appearing each week. The monthly schedule is:

Week 1 - Minister's Notes

Week 2 - Board Report

Week 3 - Committee Reports and Articles

Week 4 - Religious Education and Faith Development

Week 5 - Editor's choice for month's that have 5 Tuesdays

Articles/photos are due in the Friday before the week they are to be published.

Send submissions to: newsletter@uunorthampton.org

Contact
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