

**Unitarian Church of Montpelier  
Midyear Committee Reports  
December 2016**

**EXECUTIVE TEAM**

Rev. Joan Javier-Duval, Ron Cameron, Judith Hinds, Paul Wallace-Brodeur

The ET met twice a month with the church professional staff as a full Management Team (MT). Focusing on the UCM Strategic Plan, we established our priorities for the year, which include providing support and guidance for church committees in their efforts to advance Strategic Plan goals. We will publish quarterly updates on our activities via the e-news. We discussed the respective roles of the ET and Board in carrying out the Strategic Plan and ensuring church policies are updated and followed. While the Board studies data to determine how best to make room for our growing congregation, we on the ET/MT hope to engage a variety of members and friends in finding shorter-term, temporary ways of making our full sanctuary more comfortable.

We named a hiring committee to fill the Office Assistant/Rental Coordinator position. Following their recommendation, the ET and Board approved the selection of Becky Atchinson for this key role beginning October 4th.

We approved updates to the Financial Management Policy and Sexual Abuse, Prevention, Education and Response (SAPER) Policy. We met with representatives of the Property Committee, Committee of Chairs, SAPER Response Team, Community Lunch Committee, and Event Coordinators. We discussed requests from other committees, including the need for additional members on Leadership Development and Living Lighter. We approved additional indoor and outdoor signage to clarify accessibility and Green Sanctuary expectations.

We approved the first Religious Education planning workshop led by consultant Cindy Beal. We participated in the workshop along with representatives from other groups within UCM.

**ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE**

Liz Benjamin, Chair

The Accessibility Committee is enthusiastic about applying to the Unitarian Universalist Association to participate in the AIM (Accessibility and Inclusion Ministry) program, which is structured similarly to the Green Sanctuary and Welcoming Congregation programs. The first step is to recruit a team or task force that will work on the program. We want this to be a larger and more diverse group than the committee. To that end, starting in January, we will have a weekly table in the vestry after church with a stimulating question for people to reflect on and talk about at the table. The questions will be about our congregation and its attitudes toward and progress toward accessibility and inclusion. One of the goals of an AIM congregation is “providing leadership, guidance, information, and learning opportunities so that all people in the

congregation make progress toward overcoming negative feelings, ignorance, and judgments about disabilities.” This is directly in line with Vision Outcome #1 of UCM’s Strategic Plan. We are eager to get more support from the leadership of the congregation, including the Committee of Chairs and the Board, and from the congregation at the next annual meeting.

We are also very concerned about the overall issue of accessibility of the building. We look forward to working with the Property Committee, the Board, and any other concerned groups about planning and budgeting for full accessibility in the future, in accordance with Vision Outcome #5.

#### ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

John Poeton, Chair  
No report submitted.

#### ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Kristin Glaser, Chair

The mission of the ARE Committee is to offer opportunities for faith development and/or personal growth. During the first half of FY2017, ARE addressed this mission by carrying out the 6 different action steps required of it by UCM’s 2020 Strategic Plan, as follows:

- “Review curricula and other materials and make a plan to deliver educational programming that offers opportunities to examine assumptions and biases within the congregation”---*In collaboration with the Social Responsibility Committee (SRC), ARE convened a group to study the UUA’s Navigating Whiteness curriculum, which is intended to cause participants to examine their assumptions and biases related to White Privilege.*
- “Offer opportunities for diverse spiritual perspectives and practice beyond Sunday services”---*ARE offered half a dozen sessions of the Evensong curriculum on Monday evenings over the summer. Beginning in September, the Committee established the 4<sup>th</sup> Monday ARE Series, offering each month a predictable opportunity for one-time ARE events.*
- “Lead a process to create a vision for a cohesive faith and spiritual development program”---*Rev. Joan Javier-Duval consulted with the RE Committees about use of a consultant from the UUA to help UCM explore what kind of faith development program it wants. The consultant led a retreat with interested church leaders on September 24. ARE also joined the RE Committee, the Acting DRE, and Rev. Joan for a UUA webinar in November about RE-Start where “Full Faith Week”, “Second Hour RE”, and other options were discussed.*
- “Offer learning opportunities for spiritual practice and to foster ethical decision-making, Unitarian Universalist (UU) identity, understanding of other religions, faith development, and personal growth”---*The 4<sup>th</sup> Monday ARE Series and other events promoted by the ARE Committee this fall included a Tai Chi class/group (for spiritual practice) and a Non-Violent Communication class/group (involving ethical decision-making). ARE advertises these and other events in the weekly announcements, on the website, and at the RE table on Sundays.*

- “Deliver programs which foster reflection on and sharing of our own beliefs and experiences”---*In October Rev. Joan and ARE began co-facilitating the UUA curriculum “Soul Matters,” designed explicitly to foster reflection on personal beliefs and experiences.*
- “Lead educational programs to examine the underlying causes of violence, poverty, racism, and the climate crisis”---*The 4<sup>th</sup> Monday ARE Series event to be held in January, 2017 will be a guided discussion of the UUA Common Read book called The Third Reconstruction by Rev. William J. Barber II, with Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove. The book examines racism as promulgated through politics. The ARE Committee and Acting DRE ordered, read, and are loaning copies of the book to interested congregants.*

## COMMUNITY LUNCH COMMITTEE

Janet Poeton, Contact Person

The work of the UCM Community Lunch and its volunteers relates to the Strategic Plan through Vision Outcome # 1, specifically through Action Step # 6. Many volunteers have expressed an ‘exceptionally rewarding inner feeling,’ likened to spiritual fulfillment after an hour / a day / a few volunteer times. There have been comments that volunteers feel closer to the other working individuals and there has been a comment heard that volunteering here is "my small group ministry." UCM friends and members are providing a safe haven with a sustaining meal to a diverse group of individuals. We are stretching our comfort zone through the process of "breaking bread together" with conversations which help us learn more about each other, guests and volunteers.

Another way our work relates to the Strategic Plan is through Vision Outcome #3, specifically through Action Step #3, by providing meals, as well as items and or food to take home for the future, and Action Step # 4, by addressing the needs of our neighbors – personal items are available as well as food and conversation. We have also begun having agencies, Foodbank, Washington County Mental Health, the local Police, visit for all of us, volunteers and guests, to learn how support is provided when necessary. We feel Action Step # 5 is included in our actions.

## EVENT COORDINATORS

Hedi Ballantyne and Linda Sproul

We have taken on the task of organizing potlucks in people’s homes as well as at the church. We do this in order to have new members, friends and others get to know each other better, a practice which directly supports Vision Outcome #1 and also provides opportunities for dialogue and connection around other parts of the Vision and Strategic Plan. So far there have been three potlucks in people’s homes and one at church, all with a mix of newcomers and old-timers. There will be three more home potlucks before the end of 2016.

## FINANCE COMMITTEE

Paul Wallace-Brodeur, Chair

The Committee held two meetings this fall. We were pleased that the 2015-16 church year ended in the black. A new counting procedure is now in its second year. The system is designed to make the process shorter and less complicated for the Sunday pouch counters. Counting materials were revised and updated over the summer and a training session for counters was held at the beginning of the year, but there are still issues to be addressed with the process.

In November the Committee met with David DeBellis and Ashley Ferrone from our LTIF manager, The Trust Company of Vermont. TCV prepared a summary and report of our investments which was discussed and reviewed by the attendees at the meeting. TCV advised that they continue to feel comfortable with the Church annually withdrawing up to 4% of the LTIF value to support Church operations, which in recent years has been the annual capital budget request.

In terms of the UCM Strategic Plan, the Finance Committee hopes to receive information in the budget process that will identify how committee and staff activities and proposed funds will advance the vision outcomes in the Plan. This request will be included in the Budget Guidance sent out in December. We believe this will be helpful in the budget drive process in encouraging generosity and creating an understanding of the way the budget advances the Mission and goals of the Congregation as articulated in the Strategic Plan.

## HISTORY TEAM

Peter Thoms, Historian

Last summer, in cooperation with the Executive Team, and after reviewing other materials, we provided extensive resources to members of the Board who are conducting the research needed for the growth study, as outlined in Outcome # 5, step 1, of the Strategic Plan. We are ready to assist any staff, church committees, or task forces, to provide relevant documents, to further the intent and purposes of the Plan.

Last May, at the Annual Meeting, UCM received its seventh consecutive VQUUC grant, of approximately \$900. The funds support the church records project, and are again being used to pay the salary of archivist Leslie Rowell; she is in her seventh year of work on this significant project.

## LAY PASTORAL CARE TEAM

Mary Jane Ohlson, Team Leader

Vision Outcome #2, 3<sup>rd</sup> Action Step. “Offer learning opportunities to build active listening, compassionate communication, and conflict resolution skills.” We practice active listening and compassionate communication at our monthly meetings among ourselves, as well as with those we support in one-on-one relationships. We held a retreat the end of August to nurture our spirits and our skills.

We are a team of five plus Rev. Joan and are looking to recruit one more person, preferably a man. At any given time we serve 8-10 people. Some are ongoing; others are one time or occasionally. We include Mary Margaret Groberg, coordinator of the Caring Network, at our meetings to better coordinate the needs of the congregation.

#### LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Bill Doelger, Chair

The Leadership Development Committee focuses on finding individuals who will take the responsibility of leadership in the activities of our church, most especially in realizing the outcomes of the Strategic Plan approved in May of this year. In October we held a Service Fair in the vestry after church to give those unfamiliar with the many committees and groups a chance to talk and learn more. Several people sought more information. The LDC is starting the process of identifying board nominees for the spring and people to fill other leadership openings. In the coming months we will continue to see learning and development opportunities offered by the UUA. We hope to help delegates attend the General Assembly in June.

#### LIVING LIGHTER COMMITTEE

Peter Watt, co-chair; second co-chair vacant

No report submitted.

#### MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Dave Peters, Chair

We have specific responsibilities for addressing parts of Vision Outcome #1 during the 2016-2017 church year. This Outcome tasks the committee with reviewing current materials and practices to ensure that they reflect that UCM is a truly welcoming community. At our annual retreat in August, the committee set Vision #1 goals including:

1. Review current materials. This goal has been achieved and all materials have been reviewed. As a result we have obtained copies of two additional publications for distribution to visitors and participants in New UU programs.

2. Review current processes. We have requested comments and suggestions from the following other committees: Social Responsibility, Welcoming Congregation, and Accessibility. The responses of these committees will be summarized and discussed by our committee and an appropriate action plan will be developed.

3. Develop a broader understanding of our potential role in achieving Outcome #1. We have reviewed two programs developed by other congregations and the UUA. Two committee members plan to participate in the UUA program to broaden our understanding of potential membership activities and strategies.

4. Establish position of Vestry Host. We believe that UCM can make more of an effort to welcome new people to the church. Thus we have established and staffed the position of Vestry Host. Every Sunday a committee member stands near the Vestry entrance and welcomes newcomers. Thus far we believe that the results have been positive.

## COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY

Emily Seifert, Chair

The Committee on Ministry supports and nurtures the shared ministry of UCM. We serve as a resource to the congregation by helping to foster healthy process, relationships and decision making. We aim to help UCM enhance the health and effectiveness of its ministries. We also act as a sounding board for Rev. Joan, and advise her on matters of concern.

We are excited to begin implementing the 2020 Strategic Plan. The plan lays out “Vision Outcome #2: Spiritual practice and spiritual seeking continue to center our community as we engage in thoughtful conversation about our most deeply held beliefs and passions.”

The CoM has started work on Action Step #5: “The Committee on Ministry ensures that committee chairs and other leaders are trained to facilitate gatherings that are spiritually grounded and compassionate.” Starting this work, we met with the Committee of Chairs in October and explored what “spiritually grounded” and “compassionate” mean to each of us, shared what we are doing to foster these experiences, and discussed what more we would like to learn or do. It was a lively, engaging and productive evening, and we came away with a list of next steps. The CoM will facilitate another session at the CoC meeting in January to provide some of the requested resources and trainings.

## MUSIC COMMITTEE

Donia Prince, Chair

-The Music Committee is essentially an arm of the UCM Choir under the leadership of Dick Riley. In service of the Strategic Plan’s goal of stretching people’s comfort zones and reaching

diverse groups of people, Dick has chosen an impressive range of music to present to the congregation, ranging from popular genres, to world music, to contemporary pieces with challenging tonalities. Provocative and uncomfortable themes have sometimes been addressed within the music. The quality of the choral offerings has been superlative, with congregants regularly commenting on how the music has enriched the overall spiritual impact of the services.

-Numerous musical offerings beyond the traditional choral and piano offerings have been incorporated into services, including Hindi chanting, the Hospice Chorus at the remembrance service, a performance by Bronwyn Fryer, the special music service led by Matt Meyer, and a musical offering from members of Planting Hope.

-I have been asked by Emily Seifert of the Ministry Committee to assist in bringing song into meetings during a session in their January meeting.

-Sue Stukey and I attended a UU Congregational Singing workshop in Concord, MA at the end of October.

-The Music Committee has initiated plans to discuss ways we could keep musical activities alive during the summer months.

#### PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Jennifer Payne, Chair

The Personnel Committee has experienced quite a bit of turnover in the past year. We are in the process of seeking new members and growing from a committee of 3 (including Joan) to a committee of 5 or 6.

Committee work:

- DONE: Updated Personnel Policies with recent board and ET approved revisions around the resignation, suspension or termination of at-will church employees.
- DOING: Figuring out how the new FSLA Overtime Rule does and does not apply to UCM employees, defining exempt and non-exempt status of employees.
- TO BE DONE by January 2017: Re-evaluation of Fair Compensation Guidelines and recommendations for increasing Sexton salary.
- TO BE DONE by March 2017: Policy for Sundays off for DRE and Music Director.
- TO BE DONE by May 2017: Creating uniform hiring procedures for transparency.
- TO BE DONE (if we have time, may just begin): Conduct a thorough review of the Personnel Policies and update.

#### PROPERTY COMMITTEE

Paul Ohlson, Chair

The Property Committee will be deeply involved in Vision Outcome #5 which seeks to create a long-range, comprehensive plan for accessible, sustainable physical space to assist us in fulfilling our mission.

The Board will present its best projection for ten-year growth of the congregation in early 2017. The Board will then appoint a task force to take this projection and determine how we may best meet those space needs. The Property Committee will participate in great depth in this task force.

The task force will be charged to identify, examine, and prioritize the long-range physical space needs of the congregation. The task force will be further charged to report to the Board a full spectrum of strategies to meet the physical space requirements essential in bringing to life the congregation's vision.

The Property Committee will work with the task force to deliver its findings and recommendations to the Board in church year 2017-2018.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Kairn Kelley, Chair

Acting DRE Liza Earle-Centers and members of the committee have done an excellent job of keeping our existing RE programs humming along. It's important to recognize Liza's work supporting not only Sunday morning programs but also *three* levels of "Our Whole Lives." Members of the committee have also contributed time outside meetings to keep things running smoothly.

Much of our work this year has been focused on creating "a vision for a cohesive faith and spiritual development program" (Vision Outcome #2) and delivering educational programming that supports spiritual development. In addition to discussion during our regular meetings, Joan arranged a workshop for UCM stakeholders facilitated by Cindy Beale to reflect on our church's religious education history. Several church members also attended RE Start!, a program hosted in the UCM vestry and delivered online by the New England Region UUA. The focus of the RE Start! program was on ways to support faith formation that reflect the needs of our modern, growing congregation.

Our most recent meeting reflected the group's uncertainty about how to best move forward. We recognize the urgency of addressing practical questions about budget and staffing. We also want to take our time to develop a vision that reflects the deepest priorities of the congregation and the real resources and limitations of our technology-rich lives.

We have not explicitly discussed the full scope of the tasks of the Strategic Plan that mention a role for the RE committee, nor have we had time to discuss how other tasks in the Strategic Plan

might interact with the faith formation activities in the church (e.g., Vision Outcome #5 - a long-range, comprehensive plan for accessible, sustainable physical space).

#### SAFETY COMMITTEE

Tina Muncy and Lindsay Wade, Co-chairs

We have met once this year. We discussed with Paul Ohlson the church property being designated (posted) that no weapons are to be brought onto this property. (This would exclude authorized persons such as police officers).

We continue to discuss condensing to one page a list of "do's and don'ts" when dealing with disruptive behavior. This is the topic of discussion for our next meeting.

We have discussed whether it is or isn't a good idea to have a defibrillator in the church. Lindsay spoke with the Fire Department and they strongly advised us to invest in one. They offered to assist us in positioning it in an appropriate place and will do in-service with us on how to use it. They said it's very easy to use and simple instructions come with the piece of equipment. Cost is in the range of \$1400. No final decision has been made.

#### SMALL GROUP MINISTRY PROGRAM

Sue Stukey, Coordinator

Several small groups have been meeting this fall. The "semester" ends in January and new groups will form in February. A fuller report will be submitted in May.

#### SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY COMMITTEE

Mark Hughes and Ansel Ploog, Co-chairs

This year, the Social Responsibility Committee has made it a priority to use UCM's Strategic Plan as a roadmap for our work. At our retreat, we created a list of ideas, organized roughly into Structure, Education, and Outreach categories. The Structure ideas involve improving the efficacy of the SRC through communication and better delegating. We've created a 'master list' Listserv of people who are both members and friends of the SRC to make sure everyone knows what is going on.

The SRC is working on becoming more literate in the struggles of people, especially ones underrepresented in our community. We devoted a portion of our October meeting to discussing Rev. Barber's idea of "fusion" politics that unites disparate groups together in each other's fights against oppression (ref. *The Third Reconstruction*, this year's UUA Common Read). Incorporating discussions into our meetings is another way we hope to educate ourselves. We also have a goal of being more involved in the Community Lunch, in order to interact with more

members of our larger community. We would like to encourage those who aren't already involved to volunteer at least once a month and attend a Community Lunch as a diner.

As of November, the SRC has not been engaged in as much Outreach as we planned at our retreat. We have adjusted some of our ideas to rely less on technology and return to some of the simpler tools for getting the word out. We are re-doing our bulletin board in the vestry to include up-to-date events, meeting minutes, and other information to share with the community. We are also re-doing our lending library. Attendance has been high at our meetings and so has the enthusiasm!

### SPUDS Program

Nancy Schulz, Coordinator

SPUDS, a community service initiative launched in January 2011 at UCM, is a loose acronym that stands for "Service is our Prayer Buddies." Volunteers can sign up to attend monthly work outings that benefit non-profit organizations in central Vermont. Some volunteers assist once, others come occasionally, and still others attend frequently. SPUDS work outings typically last three hours.

So far in calendar year 2016, the following received assistance from SPUDS volunteers: the Old Labor Hall, Days for Girls, Kellogg-Hubbard Library, Wrightsville Recreation Area, Turtle Island Children's Center, Habitat for Humanity, the Peace Park, Summer Street Park and Hubbard Park. The Additional Recyclables Collection Center is scheduled to receive help from SPUDS volunteers in December.

Since SPUDS was launched, 184 people have attended at least one of the 63 SPUDS outings and 39 recipients have been served by SPUDS volunteers. If you have a suggestion for a non-profit organization that would welcome a visit from SPUDS volunteers, please contact SPUDS Coordinator Nancy Schulz at (802) 223-7035 or via email: [SaddleShoes2@gmail.com](mailto:SaddleShoes2@gmail.com).

### STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Dan Groberg, Chair

The Stewardship Committee is tasked with nurturing, caring for, growing, and protecting the resources of the church, and inspiring the spirit of generosity within the congregation. Together, we use our resources to craft lives of meaning and purpose. As we work to carry out the UCM Strategic Plan, the Stewardship Committee stands ready to support this vision and ensure that there are adequate resources to fulfill this vision. This fall, the Stewardship Committee has studied the best practices in congregational stewardship and worked to prepare a plan for the 2017 pledge drive.

## VERMONT INTERFAITH ACTION COMMITTEE

Harris Webster, Chair

Three members and Joan attended the first VIA summer conference near Randolph during which they carried out one-to-one conversations with VIA members from around the state (including the Upper Valley group from NH), heard reports about VIA's last year, and agreed to the statewide Voter Engagement Project.

In late summer UCM VIA held a Mini Retreat during which we looked at our past year and both brainstormed and decided our main foci for the upcoming year. It was surprising how many activities we did last year (though many were attended by just a few of us.) We decided our main focus for the upcoming church year would be to support Central Vermont VIA's (CVIA) campaign to End Homelessness in Central Vermont by 2020 (replacing our previous church year's stress on divestment in fossil fuels) with secondary foci supporting the VIA Clergy Caucus' campaign to increase the VT minimum wage, the Voter Engagement Project, our local 350vt partner, and Margaret Blanchard's September educational programs on water.

In October we worked on details of how to support CVIA, which included many members attending CVIA meetings. We collected 192 signatures to vote for elected officials who support our UCM and VIA faith values for the Voter Engagement project. In November our main effort has been to support the CVIA Educational Forum which will be held on 11/29 led by CVIA, local leaders of housing NGO's, and recent homeless folks who have found homes, with the goal of informing citizens and state legislators.

## WELCOMING CONGREGATION COMMITTEE

Nancy Schulz, Chair

The Welcoming Congregation Committee exists to guide UCM to become ever more welcoming to individuals who self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning. We explore ways in which all those connected to the church (minister, staff, church members and friends) as well as all policies and programs can become friendlier to the LGBTQ community. Vision Outcomes #1 and #3 have and will continue to be embedded in all we do.

In August, we invited all the UU churches in the Northern New England District with the "Welcoming Congregation" designation to UCM. Over 20 representatives from various churches attended our program. We appreciate the financial support furnished by the UUA that enabled us to host this event. It's our hope that this gathering can be an annual or biennial event, perhaps hosted by other churches on a rotating basis.

For a fourth consecutive year, the Committee is partnering with the Kellogg-Hubbard Library to organize a series of discussions about LGBTQ books and films. In the 2016-2017 church year, the chosen titles are the memoir "Becoming Nicole," the documentary film "From Trauma to

Activism,” and the novels “Call Me By Your Name” and “Under the Udala Trees.” The Committee contributed half the cost of purchasing 10 copies of “Becoming Nicole” to help the KHL continue this series.

It is through the Welcoming Congregation Committee that church space is provided at no charge twice a month for a social evening for LGBTQ youth ages 13 to 22. The program, called Friday Night Group (FNG), is organized by Outright Vermont, the statewide advocacy group for LGBTQ youth. The chair of the Welcoming Congregation Committee is a volunteer facilitator for FNG. New youth, especially transgender youth, continue to find their way to this friendly and affirming space.

We are grateful to UCM member Rob Chickering who donated materials and labor to create a beautiful bookcase to house our lending library of LGBT titles. The bookcase sits on the Welcoming Congregation Committee table during coffee hour every Sunday and the table is staffed by a member of our Committee.

Our current focus is preparing for our third LGBT worship service, which is scheduled for January 29. Several members of the greater community who attended our previous services subsequently became members of UCM. We look forward to offering another service full of inspiring music, words, and images.

## WOMEN’S ALLIANCE

Sandal Cate, President

Function: The Women’s Alliance is open to all and meets on the first Tuesday of each month of the church year starting with a potluck dinner at 5:30, followed by a program and business meeting. Usually around 20 people attend our meetings. We serve the church in several capacities: as a social and educational group, a fundraising arm of UCM, as a caring community and to arrange for church receptions as needed. We fully endorse the UCM Strategic Plan and will continue to seek ways to support the outcomes.

Programs to date: Many of our educational programs directly support Vision Outcome #3. For example, in October a panel with Peter Thoms, Diane Fitch and Lois Liggett presented about the newly organized Central VT Refugee Assistant Network; and in November we had a speaker from Burlington-based Pathways, an organization which helps homeless and needy people.

Donations: We make several financial donations to UCM and other area non-profits each year. So far this year we have given \$838 to the general fund (half the earnings of the fall rummage sale); \$300 to the Community Lunch; \$300 to the Care Fund. We create an annual budget and work to see that it stays balanced. We maintain our own audited savings and checking accounts.

## WORSHIP & ARTS COMMITTEE

Bill Paine, Chair

Recognizing we have a key role in Vision Outcome #4, we expect it will form the foundation of much of our work over the next few years. This year we've welcomed some new members on our committee and begun to enjoy new energy and perspectives. We've also been helping new members orient to the work we do and find their roles. We've been enjoying working with Liza Earle-Centers as acting DRE. We began the year with a training session for committee members who are filling the weekly role of Worship Associate. Rev. Joan presented and guided the training. We will be doing more such training and practice sessions after the holidays.

On October 16, we welcomed Matt Meyer who presented a well-received service focused on music. Other service highlights include the multigen Diwali service on October 30 and the annual "To Say Their Names" service on November 27. We decided to present this service as we begin the holiday season, in part because Christmas and New Year's Day fall on Sundays this year. We would like to thank Carolyn's Angel Band hospice choir for presenting music at that service.

One of our tasks in the Strategic Plan for this year is to explore summer service offerings. In the summer of 2016, we worked with Adult RE to present a seven-session program called Evensong on biweekly Monday evenings. We feel that the program was successful and we'll continue to evaluate how best to present more programs in the summer of 2017. We'll also be talking more with Peter Thoms and Pat Carstensen about the success of the Quaker Meeting / Sunday morning meditation program that they have been guiding.

Beth Damon has graciously continued to work on the flower arrangements this year stretching a very modest budget a long way.