

Religious Education Committee Annual Report 2008-2009

The Religious Education Committee meets monthly to plan activities for children and adults, and to organize curriculum and teachers for classes held during Sunday service. This year we introduced the Pennies for Peace program.

Religious Education Director

Chris Parker

DRE Professional Activities

As Director of Religious Education, Chris Parker attended DRE Cluster meetings, the UUA New England Gathering in Worcester, MA, NARG (North Atlantic LREDA Chapter) meetings and Spring Retreat in Litchfield, CT, and the LREDA Fall Conference in Albuquerque, NM. She presently serves the Unitarian Sunday School Society as President.

Religious Education Committee Members

Cindy Hudson – chairperson

Barbara Berrios – chairperson of Adult Education

Laurie Conrad

Donna LaRue

Gwen Mikailov

Michelle Morrison

Mickeline Saunders

Nona Storer – Volunteer Coordinator

New Committee Members: Gwen Mikailov and Michelle Morrison joined the committee in February, 2009. The committee seeks to add 1-2 new members for 2009-2010.

Budgets

RE Committee: \$ 5,200.00

Young Adult: \$ 0.00

Adult RE: \$ 200.00

Total Registered Students: 97

Average Sunday Attendance

Fall: 86 children 26 adult & high school volunteers

Spring: 76 children, 25 adult & high school volunteers

Year: 81 children, 25 adult & high school volunteers

Graduating Seniors: Katie Brodeur, Elyse Brown, Tim Cleaveland, Ben Conrad, Ben Dubray, Jenny Grossman, Ryan Lange, Adrian McLeod, Leah Nodvin, Allison Nutting, Magdalene Pattantus and Brandon Prestiagiacomio.

Senior High Youth Group

The Nashua Youth Group started this year with a field trip to the Monkey Trunks high rope and zip line adventure park in Chocorua, NH as an integrating activity for the new and old members. We had a presence on the 2008-2009 NH/VT District Youth Council again this year. Magdalene Pattantus served as Secretary; Sam Conrad as Treasurer; and Mickey Saunders, Chuck Rehberg and Ginger Hedges were Adult Advisors on the DYC. Leah Nodvin was a Member-at-Large of the Northern New Hampshire District Board of Directors. Mickey Saunders, Chuck Rehberg, Steve Hedges, David Brodeur and Susan Wright were our local Youth Group Advisors. The Senior High Youth Group gave \$196.00 to the Southern NH Fuel Assistance Fund by selling gently used items donated by members of the congregation. They also did a Sr. High Youth Service for the congregation on April 19.

Intergenerational Services

- **Water Service:** For the first church service in September, congregation members are invited to bring a sample of water from their summer experiences to share during the service. We also introduce and dedicate our Church School teachers.
- **Thanksgiving Service:** Steve Edington and Chris Parker shared in the narration of Cranberry Thanksgiving, with speaking parts being read by Mickey Saunders, Scott Shepherd, David Hudson and Andrea Lerude. The Treble Choir sang. Canned goods were collected for the Pastoral Care Center. Following the service, congregants were treated to cranberry bread at coffee hour.
- **Flower Service:** During the flower service, congregants bring a flower to share. Volunteer teachers are recognized for their contributions to the RE program and the Youth Choir is honored. Traditionally, geraniums are offered to all who have contributed time to the Adult and Youth RE programs. Graduating seniors are recognized with a small gift, as well.

Religious Education Committee

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Special Events

- **Open House:** The RE Committee set up a display of curriculum materials to bring greater awareness to the UU RE offerings.
- **Craft Parties:** In winter, following White Gifts, students were to make crafts based on the theme of peace, supporting our main service project this year, Pennies for Peace. This program was cancelled due to hazardous weather conditions. In spring, the crafts celebrated springtime and the service project (see below) supported the Nashua Soup Kitchen.
- **Hunt Rick**, a professional illustrator, representative of the Abenaki Indians, and **Carolyn Black**, a Native American Storyteller, visited the 4th, 5th, and 6th grades on January 11 to help them understand Abenaki spirituality.
- **Pizza & Games Night:** This is a night of appreciation for RE volunteers and their families. Guests are invited to bring their favorite games to share after dining on pizza and dessert.
- **Teacher Luncheon & Orientation:** Chris Parker meets with new teachers in the fall and spring to discuss classroom regulations and provide curriculum materials. Committee members organize lunch following these meetings.
- **Teacher Meetings:** conducted by Chris Parker to enable teachers to share their experiences and seek additional guidance as needed. Mary Ellen Wessels facilitated the spring meeting with Chris Parker.
- **Honk! The Musical:** This intergenerational performance showcased the many talents of our congregation; from singing and acting to set design and costuming. Led by Jed and Martha Holland, Honk! received rave reviews from all who attended. A cast party was held in the auditorium, and additional treats and refreshments were provided to the spectators in the White Wing hallway.
- **Venerable Ajahn David Chitiko**, Vice Abbot of the Great Wisdom Center (Wat Buddhavajana), a Buddhist Meditation Center in Westford, MA visited the 6th grade class and led a chapel service for the younger classes where he shared his insight on meditation.

Service Projects

- **Pennies for Peace:** As described by the Central Asia Institute the “Pennies for Peace Program (P4P) educates American children about the world beyond their experience and how they can make a positive impact on a global scale, one penny at a time. It teaches children the rewards of sharing and working together to bring hope and education opportunities to the children in Pakistan and Afghanistan. A penny in the United States is virtually worthless, but overseas a penny buys a pencil and opens the door to literacy.” A video demonstrating founder Greg Mortenson’s mission was shown in October to the children attending chapel, as well as to the teachers at the October Teacher Meeting. In addition, Steve Edington read the story [Listen to the Wind](#), written by Greg Mortenson and Susan L. Roth, to the congregation in April 2009. Throughout the year, children were asked to bring pennies to chapel and adults were given the opportunity to give pennies during coffee hour. A total of \$176.32 was collected for this worthy cause.
- **Nashua Soup Kitchen:** Students were asked to bring canned goods to the Spring Party. During the party, children made over 10 dozen cookies to contribute to the Soup Kitchen.
- **White Gifts:** Holiday gifts for children and household items were collected for the Pastoral Care Center in December.
- **Southern NH Fuel Assistance Fund:** The Senior High Youth Group raised \$196.00 by selling gently used items donated by members of the congregation.

Adult RE

- **Food for Thought Thursdays:** Kim Hicks developed a four-week program, *Create Peace*, in the Fall. Ginger Hedges did a couple sessions on Non-Violent Communication. Cynthia Schroer led a session on Mindfulness Meditation and a guest was invited in to talk about creating a U.S. Department of Peace. Chris Parker, Michele Rehberg and Gail Donahue lead *Cakes for the Queen of Heaven, Part I*. Joyce Stewart, with Sarah Widhu’s assistance, offered *Spirit of Life: Exploring Spirituality for UU’s*, an eight-week series.
- **UU101:** Steve Edington led an introductory course on Unitarian Universalism in the fall and again in the spring.

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- **Small Group Ministry leaders:** Barbara Berrios, Ginger Hedges, Hilary Keating, Bob Keating, Barbara Spitz, and Anya Zakiewicz.
- **The Buddhist Meditation Group:** This group meets twice monthly and offers an open format for Buddhist walking and sitting meditation followed by facilitated discussion of a dharma related book. Cynthia Schroer has coordinated this group since its inception.

Choir: Director Jed Holland

Jed opened the Treble Choir to any child who wants to sing. The Adult Choir is open to adults and young adults in High School and older.

Plans for the Future

- Partner Church under consideration
- Introducing new curriculum from the UUA Tapestry of Faith program for grades 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6.
- RE Social & Potluck Picnic

GRADE	LIASON	CURRICULUM/TEACHERS	
		Fall	Spring
Babies/Toddlers	Chris Parker	Svetlana Yanushkevich Sarah Stauff Amy Snedaker	
Early Preschool	Cindy Hudson	Celebrating Me and My World	
		Michele Edington Jennifer Morton Tyler Cutler Andrea Lerude	Jennifer Morton Geoff Skelton Tyler Cutler Andrea Lerude
Preschool-Kindergarten	Cindy Hudson Michelle Morrison	We Are Many, We Are One	
		Dawn Cutler Michelle Morrison Zoe Goodell	Michelle Morrison Zoe Goodell Charlie Shepherd
First Grade	Cindy Hudson	Special Places, Sacred Spaces	
		Frank Grossman Cecile Bonvouloir Jenny Grossman Amy Butenhof	Mary Super Mike Super Amy Butenhof
Second-Third Grades	Laurie Conrad	Experiencing the Web of Life	
		Andy Straussberg Victoria Agnew Kate O'Shea Mary Ellen Wessels	Lance Pratt Kristen Fitzpatrick Ben Bate Zach Zalman
Fourth-Fifth Grades	Donna LaRue Gwen Mikailov	Heart Talk for Kids	Why Do Bad Things Happen?
		Dan Earley Krista Earley	Jim Woolsey Gwen Mikailov Celina Wilt
Sixth Grade	Donna LaRue	Neighboring Faiths	
		Ken Cowan Loretta Hubley Anne Lederhos	Loretta Hubley Anne Lederhos
Seventh-Eighth Grade		Our Whole Lives (O.W.L.)	
		Billy Parker Linda Donaldson-Guidi	Ginger Hedges Tom Mandra
Senior High	Mickey Saunders	Youth Group	
		Mickey Saunders David Brodeur	Chuck Rehberg Steve Hedges Susan Wright
Children attended the first 15 minutes of the Adult Service approximately one Sunday of each month. During the rest of the month, childrens' chapels were conducted by Chris Parker for preschool-first grade and second-sixth grades alternately.			

Submitted by Cindy Hudson, Chair of Religious Education Committee