

## Right Relationships Team

At the 2014 Annual Meeting of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Nashua, members voted to adopt a Draft Covenant of Right Relationships. Since that time, your Right Relationships Team has been moving forward with this important work.

Lori Lerude and Ginger Hedges co-facilitated a 13-week (Sept-Dec) exploration into Non Violent Communications (“NVC”). NVC is a communication technique developed by Marshall Rosenberg which teaches practitioners to communicate by articulating feelings and their associated core needs. An average of 10 people attended the class. After the formal NVC class ended, Lori and Ginger set up two NVC practice groups for drop-in members to continue to practice.

Team members Lori Lerude and Kathy Fletcher met with the Rev. Dr. Janet Newman in order to hone the Draft Covenant of Right Relationships before sending it to the Board of Trustees. The amended draft was sent to the Board, who adhering to the Policy Governance model of church governance reviewed it to make sure it reflected their vision for the mission of the church. The Board made some changes and suggested calling the document The Evolving Covenant of Right Relationships, reflecting our commitment to an on-going relationship process.

In February, a group of eight members from this congregation traveled together to the Concord UU church to be introduced to the model of conflict resolution they use called Restorative Circles. Ginger Hedges, Mickey Saunders and Eileen Herring attended two additional days of RC training. All of the members who attended were intrigued and felt that Restorative Circles might also be used by our congregation when congregants fall out of covenant. The Restorative Circle model is a tool that we can use to help members come back into covenant after a conflict. The main tenant of RCs is reflective listening, and RCs differ from mediation in that the community is called in to be a part of the circle process.

Accordingly, the CofRR team invited the chairs of the Concord Restorative Circles group to a Sunday Service. That service focused on Restorative Circles, and after the service, the two Concord chairs attended a Deeper than Coffee session of interested Nashua members attended by over 20 church congregants.

Moving forward, UUCN will be hosting a 3-day workshop to train facilitators in the Restorative Circles process. Plans are to invite other UU churches in the New England district to attend. Sarah-Elizabeth Whitcomb from UU Concord will lead the training set for October 16-18, 2015. Lori has contacted Rev. Allison Palm who supports and encourages this important work.

Kathy Fletcher, Lori Lerude Chairs