

President's Report

October 2020

Dear friends,

Welcome to the future. I hope this note finds everyone well and coping (within reason). I'm sure you understand our decision to postpone the 194th Annual Meeting of the New York State Convention of Universalists. Thank you for participating in our Vote-By-Mail Business Meeting. We will be sending an email and snail mail wrap-up of the results. We miss seeing your faces and sharing hugs.

Please join me in thanking the Unitarian Universalist Society of Oneonta congregation for offering to host the NYSCU Annual Meeting and Conference in October 2021. This Annual Conference will include keynote speaker Gretchen S. Sorin, Ph.D., Director and Distinguished Professor at the Cooperstown Graduate Program, SUNY Oneonta. The date for the postponed meeting will be announced in the early summer of 2021.

We are certainly living in "different" times. Please share -- with the board members -- any thoughts on how we might design future meetings. I used to kid about a Fiji retreat; we could probably do a virtual one.

I offer warm thanks to Mark Bunce and Margaret Davis, who served on the Annual Meeting planning committee. And much gratitude to Tom Hackett and Rev. Lynn Ashley, who have maintained and expedited the machinery that had to be created this year.

You can find details on this past year's activities in the other reports in this delegate packet; the reports of the secretary, treasurer, the service gratuity chair, and the grants/loans chair will provide an excellent sense of what NYSCU has been doing.

Organized in 1825, the New York State Convention of Universalists continues to: support Universalist history and values, provide financial support to CER programs, and administer our Grants and Loans Program which has benefited both congregations and individuals within New York State and beyond. Since 2004, NYSCU has awarded grants of more than \$550,000 and offered no-interest loans (to congregations) totaling more than \$450,000. We're very pleased to say that during this time period, all loans have been repaid.

We also offer retirement assistance (through our Service Gratuity Fund) to ministers (and surviving spouses) who served in New York State Universalist churches for a specified period of time prior to 1961.

Please join me in thanking all board members and committee members who help get these projects funded and distributed.

If you have a vision for the growth of Unitarian Universalism or the affirmation of Universalist history, I hope your congregation will apply for a grant this year. If you have a bricks-and-mortar project, consider applying for a loan. The deadline for applications is January 31, 2021. Forms and information are available on www.nyscu.org and a form is in your packet.

While you're at the website, take a longer look. The site includes other resources: names and contact information for board and committee members; links to member congregations and denominational contacts; annual reports for the past 10 years; a 10-year history of grants and loans, with links to some project websites; a guide to books that the Convention has helped to publish; and the history of the Convention, written by our archivist Karen Dau.

From the book guide page, you can download *The Universalist Heritage*, a compendium of keynote addresses from 1976 to 1992, and *Remember Universalism Into Life*, the Leaders' guide for an 8-week adult discussion series based on those addresses. We offer our continued thanks to Michael Scott, our webmaster, who maintains and invigorates our institutional memory. And Michael is a great New York State resource.

Again I wish to thank Mark Bunce, our Vice President, for chairing last year's business meeting and serving as a partner to me. Margaret Maguire Davis served another full year as treasurer. Ann Rhody, Jim D'Aloisio and Rev. Sally Hamlin are continuing as board members. (Thanks to Ann and Jim for agreeing to stand for a second term.) My gratitude to Rev. Dr. Lynn Ashley, who serves as our board secretary. Many thanks to Michael Scott, acting nominating committee chair, and other committee members for presenting this year's slate. As always I'd like to commend Karen Dau, our tireless archivist. And thanks to Tom Hackett; he will continue to function in the important role of Clerk (and fellow Yankee fan).

It is a pleasure to serve with such a multitalented, enthusiastic, knowledgeable, caring group. If a member of the nominating committee calls you next year, or maybe next month, about serving on the NYSCU board, I hope you'll give the idea serious consideration. Giving money to fund creative, potentially collaborative, causes and lending money for necessary repairs and upgrades provides great pleasure. Who wouldn't enjoy that? Especially now.

Peace,
Judith Adel
President