

## President's Report

October 2021

Dear friends,

Welcome to the future. I hope this note finds everyone well and coping (within reason). I'm glad you understood 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. It went so well we're incorporating vote-by-mail into this year's Business Meeting. We did miss seeing your faces and sharing hugs.

Please join me in thanking the Unitarian Universalist Society of Oneonta congregation for hosting the 195th NYSCU Annual Meeting and Conference. This Conference will present keynote speaker Gretchen S. Sorin, Ph.D., Director and Distinguished Professor at the Cooperstown Graduate Program, SUNY Oneonta. I hope you find your time both rewarding and productive.

We are certainly living in "different" times. Please share -- with 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 with me. And much gratitude to Tom Hackett (starring in the role of The Clerk) and Rev. Lynn Ashley (starring in the role of The Secretary), who have maintained and expedited the machinery that had to be created last year and tweaked this year.

Congratulations to the new executive board leadership team; Ann Rhody and Rev. Sally Hamlin will be masterful in their new roles. I offer kudos to Rev. Carol Huston, nominating committee chair, and other committee members for presenting this year's slate. A fond farewell and many thanks to Mark Bunce, who served as a collaborative and confident vice-president during my last two terms, and thanks to Rev. Mark Cutolo, who is leaving the Board to expand his ministerial roles in New York State. And a partial farewell to Margaret Davis, treasurer extraordinaire, who has served this board and community for twenty years. She will continue to work with the recipients of the Service Gratuity Fund. Many thanks to Tom Hackett; he will continue to function in the important role of Clerk (and fellow Yankee fan). And to Rev. Lynn Ashley, who will continue as Secretary (not sure of her team affiliation).

And my personal fond farewell to the NYSCU executive board; I was first elected to the board as a trustee in 1998 -- the last century! What a long, strange trip it's been. I've worked (and played) with an amazing group of people— many who will continue to be part of my circle of friends.

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

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 \$600,000 and offered no-interest loans (to congregations) totaling more than \$550,000. We're pleased to say that during this time period, all loans have been repaid. Please join me in thanking all board members and committee members who help get these projects funded.

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.

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. If you have a bricks-and-mortar project, consider applying for a loan (remember, interest-free for three years). The deadline for applications is January 31, 2022. Forms and information are available on [www.nyscu.org](http://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, including names and contact information for board and committee members; links to member congregations and denominational contacts; annual reports for the past ten years; a ten-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.

I offer my continuous thanks to Michael Scott, our web-master. He maintains and invigorates our institutional memory. And Michael is a great New York State resource.

I'd like to commend Karen Dau, our tireless archivist. In September Karen engaged in a Zoom meeting with the Curator of Manuscripts and the Collections Librarian at Harvard about transferring most of the holdings of NYSCU's Lee Universalist Archive to them. Harvard already has some of our holdings, and of course it is the main repository of Unitarian, Universalist, and Unitarian Universalist archives. Our archives will now be more accessible to the wider world, and Karen is able to oversee the transfer. Many thanks for her knowledge, patience and fortitude.

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

Peace,  
Judith Adel  
President