

New York State Convention of Universalists
Annual Meeting 2023
Board/President's Report

The Board of Trustees of NYSCU, as well as its committees, were active during 2023! Throughout the year, we've continued to look at our operations and documents and to see where we could become more current, more streamlined, and better serve the mission of the organization:

- 1. To promote the growth of Unitarian Universalism, primarily in New York State, through support of innovative programs carried out by UU Societies and associated organizations;*
- 2. To promote awareness and appreciation of, and literacy in, both Universalist history and the contemporary value of basic Universalist concepts; and*
- 3. To carry out such functions as are necessary to administer the NYSCU Service Gratuinity Program; to hold, maintain or dispose of real and personal property deeded to the Convention; and to maintain a relationship with the St. Lawrence Foundation for Religious Education.*

It is always good to revisit our Mission, particularly at Annual Meeting time. Why ARE we here? We are all busy people with lives that are full. Why do just one more thing for one more organization?

NYSCU isn't the biggest or most powerful organization, but we DO make an important difference to congregations and organization that share our values.

To that end, the following actions were taken this year:

- We passed and administered a NYSCU budget, and took care of other financial responsibilities, including an annual audit;
- Considered 20 grant applications and awarded over \$113,000 in grants;
- Updated our connection with the St. Lawrence Foundation to reflect today's needs (there is no longer a need to appoint a NYSCU member to the Board of the Foundation);
- Considered and reached consensus on changes to the grant application and guidelines for decisions;
- Reviewed last year's Annual Meeting experience, and made some changes in plans as a result;
- Began the planning for a major celebration at the 2025 Annual Meeting, to be hosted by the Canton congregation. Both NYSCU and Canton will be celebrating their bicentennial that year!;

- Continued to work with our staff of Treasurer, Clerk, Archivist, and Webmaster to streamline operations and go digital wherever possible.

In the coming year, my hope is to increase the visibility of NYSCU within our denomination and in congregations; to seek ways to better serve the member congregations, and to widen our reach when looking for Board members and volunteers for committees. The Bylaws committee will be working to incorporate the new grants and loans information in an update.

Thanks to the members of the Board of Trustees, each of whom brings an important and unique perspective to our meetings. Our committee members work to plan our financial operations, ensure that our Bylaws are reviewed, and that nominees for the Board are put forth. Thanks as well to our Clerk, Tom Hackett; our Treasurer, Melissa Lesley-Fox; our Webmaster, Michael Scott; and our Archivist, Karen Dau.

Finally, I thank the Rev. Dr. Lynn Ashley, who is departing as Secretary of the organization. Rev. Dr. Ashley has been a wonderful presence and a help to both the organization and to me personally in stressful times. Thanks for your service, Lynn!

Best blessings and many thanks to all for a good year in NYSCU!

Here's to 2024.

Respectfully and gratefully submitted,

Ann F. Rhody, President
New York State Convention of Universalists
October 12, 2023