

## **Deacons Report January 25, 2025**

Very broadly stated, the Deacons' charge is the spiritual well-being of our church. As we live out this charge, it falls into two big categories: planning and prepping, and prayer and care. We work to keep those two different but interconnected parts of our charge in balance each year, as, for example, we prepare the sanctuary for worship and plan the service schedule; and as we hold the community in prayer and strive to listen for God's word to guide our actions.

### **Worship Service Coordination**

In our recent discussions of our chosen leadership model for our church – half our services have been lay-led, and half pastor-led – it has been clear how much we value the variety of voice, perspectives, opinions and styles of our service leaders!

This year, we had twelve lay people leading service on one or more Sundays: Adrienne Major, Charlotte Gifford, Cheryl Charles, David Mulholland, Guy Payne, Jenny Holan, Karen Blanchard, Ray Huessy, Sharon Easterling and Sue Venman, and Tom Griffith and Leslie Turpin led our Easter Sunrise Service. Fred Taylor also led us in worship as a guest service leader. During Susie's month-long silent discernment retreat, the lay leadership covered all Sunday services.

We continue to live-stream our services on Facebook, and would love to show members of the congregation how easy it is to tend the computer during the service. Currently, we strive to have two deacons-on-duty for each service, but sometimes, we have just one deacon available. If another person could just take the seat with the computer, the deacon can do the set-up, and you'd have the easy part. Assistance here would be greatly appreciated!

### **Special Services**

*Christmas:* We chose for the second year to focus the Community Candlelight service on song, story and puppetry; Adrienne, Charlotte and Susie each told a story, illustrating parts of the Nativity story, and Tom and Leslie performed their shadow puppet play. From the response of the large group gathered, it was an engaging service. The late-night Christmas Eve Service was the more traditional service of Lessons and Carols.

*Labyrinth:* We continued our practice of approximately quarterly Labyrinth Walks, falling on the solstices, Ash Wednesday and the Autumn equinox.

*Alternative Sunday worship services:* We repeated our pattern of mid-to-late summer experimental services – four different forms of worship in lieu of regular services. This year we again held services featuring the chanting of the psalms on one Sunday, and held a prayer walk on another. Susie led two new alternate forms of worship: Breakfast Church and a service of contemplative prayer.

### *Susie's farewell service*

What can we say but that it was a blend of joy and sadness? Love-filled, it was a true celebration of Susie's 22+ years with us, and also deep grief at our parting. The Rev. Paul Sangree from the Vermont Conference of the UCC joined us and participated in the service, leading us in a formal Liturgy of Farewell.

### **Service Music**

Fred Gray and Eric Robinson share their gifts with us each week with guitar, organ, piano. Their musical contributions are wonderfully varied, and set our services apart from the norm. We are grateful for the talents they share. Amy Cann has also been of invaluable service, subbing as our accompanist on several occasions, including at the last minute.

### **Our thanks**

We offer heartfelt thanks to David Mullholland, who is stepping off the Board of Deacons on the completion of his term. We are grateful for his dedicated service, and that he will continue to be a service-leader going forward.

Charlotte Gifford, for the Deacons:

Karen Blanchard, Adrienne Major, David Mulholland and Sue Venman