



April 2018 Report to the Board of Trustees
First Unitarian Society of Westchester
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The 2017 – 2018 RE calendar, class schedules and FUSW curriculum maps are listed online. You are welcome to view them at any time. [Click here.](#)

My Hours

I am contracted by FUSW to work part-time, 7 units per week during the RE school year (September through June). I have designated weekday afternoons to work for FUSW. That changes when I attend evening or morning meetings, and when I work at FUSW on Sunday. I have been working beyond my contracted hours and will manage that better moving forward. Please understand that priorities for my work hours are set in consultation with the Minister who acts as my supervisor. At this time of year, I am focused on making sure we are fulfilling current commitments in RE while also planning for significant changes we need to make next year. Other issues that are not urgent may not get addressed immediately.

Meetings, Training & Outreach

Weekly and Monthly

- Weekly with the Minister
- Weekly meeting with Staff
- Monthly Religious Education Ministry
- Monthly Board of Trustees
- Monthly Committee on Ministry
- Monthly Metro NY LREDA Chapter (Liberal Religious Educators Association)

Others

- *Future of Faith Formation* Webinar Series
- RE planning for the April 22nd Westchester UU worship and RE

Future of Faith Formation

The RE Ministry Team and I have been talking about next year for several months already and I have been participating in webinars and workshops with colleagues since September. The team has a shared document where we have been collecting notes about vision, approaches and framing changes for the congregation.

We believe it's important to include families in the process, so we are currently interviewing each family over the phone and collecting responses on a shared spreadsheet. We have six questions we are asking each family to help us understand what families need in faith community, what parents need to feel supported as the primary educators of their children, and what it might look like to balance meaningful programming with their already over-scheduled lives (we are not asking what they want us to *do*). The thoughts, hopes and needs families share in these conversations will inform our path ahead. The families I have spoken with so far are indicating appreciation for the work we are doing and enjoying the conversations they are having as families in preparation for the interview.

There are classes, events and worship planning this spring that the RE Ministry Team is working on, so they do not have time or energy to get into the details of putting shape to new ideas for next year yet. I am creating a RE-Vision Advisory Group that will meet May through December to help with some of that creative planning work, to bring fresh eyes and ideas to the process, and to have informal conversations around FUSW to help ease the way as we let go of some expectations so we can embrace new ways of meeting family needs. So far, the following have agreed to participate on the RE-Vision Advisory Group:

Thea Trosclair, Rob Carroll, Denise Dunn, John Scheuneman, Laurie Schneider, Carla Shane. I will reach out to a few more families and youth.

Peggy and I have talked about increased collaboration next year with Mt. Kisco for Coming of Age, youth group and adult/parent RE. We have also talked about offering OWL classes and neighboring faith classes to the Hastings and nearby communities. I am working on getting a few more folks trained to teach OWL. I will reach out to neighboring congregations and some community organizations, and we'll ask our families to invite friends. I have a draft brochure about opportunities for youth they will be able to share. We will also collaborate with Croton on designing OWL for our local communities.

[Additional Highlights from the Past Month](#)

Phone interviews with RE families about their needs in faith community.

Continue participating in the six-session *Future of Faith Formation* webinar series.

Participated in the March 18th worship service. Participated in the Easter Sunday worship service, also organized an egg hunt and treat table for the children.

Helped at the tag sale Friday night and Saturday.

Met with Hastings and Mt. Kisco Bridging youth (graduating seniors) for a conversation about managing the changes coming in their lives.

Continued planning for the April 22nd Westchester UU worship with RE for children and youth.

The National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI) offered their Ending the Silence presentation at FUSW again in March. A couple FUSW families and one family from the Croton UU attended.

Met with youth advisors Julia Caldarola and Stu Caplan to discuss youth group this year and initial plans for next year.

The March 14th [PrideWorks Conference for LGBTQ Youth and Allies](#) was a wonderful event! Several Westchester UUs staffed the UU table and we talked with many youth. In addition, I talked with the director of [Center Lane](#) LGBTQ Youth and Community Education Center and others about collaborating to offer OWL more broadly.

Conversations with the director of Barvinok about room and furniture use. Svitlana is interested in replacing one of the couches and the rug in room 4. Out of respect for the youth, I will touch base with them before we make any changes to that room. Additionally, before Svitlana purchases anything new for that room, we will have an understanding about who retains ownership of the purchases in the eventuality that Barvinok stops renting our space. Further, any purchases made must meet our needs as well as theirs. The rug Svitlana initially identified is much smaller than the rug currently in room 4.

Participated in the UUA's Employment Audit webinar with Jan Gartner, Compensation and Staffing Practices Manager in the UUA Office of Church Staff Finances, and Patricia Infante, Central East Region staff.

General tasks such as the weekly RE newsletter, updated the website, bought new supplies for the first aid kit, ordered hymnals for the Bridging (graduating) youth and scheduled the Bridging conversation, continued planning for the August OWL training the Westchester UUs are hosting.

Denominational Service

On one of my weekends off from the congregations, March 16-18, I facilitated the [Coming of Age Credo Writing Retreat](#) at Murray Grove. This is the retreat Meagan Henry (DRE in Brooklyn) and I co-authored two years ago. I led part of this retreat for the Hastings and COA youth last year during their spring overnight, which was well received by our youth. Facilitating it in this context with youth from multiple UU congregations helped me identify some areas of the retreat to work on before leading it for our FUSW youth next year.

I participated in a conversation with staff at the [Fahs Collaborative of the Meadville Lombard Theological School](#) about building a Youth Voices archive, following up on conversations at our February meeting. We are beginning to put shape to that archive, which will house youth reflections for Coming of Age, Our Whole Lives, Bridging, youth-led worship and others. These archives will be searchable, so we can track the issues our youth are exploring and themes over time. It's a very exciting project. When the time comes, I will ask our youth for submissions, so their thoughts and work can be archived as voices of Unitarian Universalism.