

Unsung Heroes
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The Hamilton Unitarian
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There have been many occasions when newcomers or visitors from other churches have commented that they cannot believe a congregation without a minister could consistently have had such excellent Sunday Services.

The congregation has been the beneficiary of excellent worship services Sunday after Sunday, provided during our 3 years without a settled minister (June 2007- August 2010).

The services have provided a range of topics and presentation styles and have been consistently professional. In addition to the spoken parts of the service, we have had wonderful worship in music integrated carefully with the spoken word. This professionalism and integration is what a church counts on a minister to provide.

Until this September our Worship and Music committees have provided this for us without the consistent leadership of a settled minister. We owe all members of these committees a big measure of gratitude.

This month, as Lyla Miklos and Ed Caning leave their roles as cochairs of Worship Committee it is time to thank each of them and all members of the Church Services (now Worship) Committee for their work over the past 3 years. Ed and Lyla agreed to stay on til February, though their term as co-chairs was up in June, to help Rev. Ingram's transition in the first few months of her ministry.

It may occur to you that lots of people have thanked Worship Committee so they are not unsung heroes, however the work they have done warrants further mention. Lyla has been the face of the committee and the person who has designed (and implemented) the structures and procedures that have made things run smoothly. Remember that Lyla is a volunteer, not staff, and at a guess she has probably spent 40-50 hours per month supporting processes that have made effective worship happen.

Unless you have been a service leader or delivered a sermon, it is unlikely that you realize all that goes into preparing a service - from agreeing to be involved - to the Sunday at noon after your service is over. If you have, you know that there are a host of procedures and structures in place that help and guide you and make the Sunday morning flow gracefully. Aukje Byker, Valerie Nielsen, Mary Ellen Scanlon and Monica Bennett worked with Lyla and Ed as members of the Worship Committee to make all this happen.

Cindy Carey, as well as leading the choir, has acted as chair of the Music Committee over the past year and a half. Cathy Grise chaired the committee for the two years prior to that. The music chair and choir leader, along with Rachel Derry, our Music Director, have been responsible for the music component of the Sunday Services.

Members of the committee find and support musicians and groups who minister to us with their music on Sunday mornings. Fitting the musicians with the themes of the service , then getting them signed up, helping them chose music that fits with theme, and coordinating it all (with Unitarians) is no mean feat.

Again the connecting and coordinating that is usually the role of the minister was left to Rachel to work out with the Worship Committee. Without Rachel's interpersonal skills and ability to encourage and support, we could not have had such well-integrated services.

Let's acknowledge Rachel and the members of the Music Committee who did this work along with Cindy and Cathy: Lyle Franklin, Susan Gudgeon, Beverly Horton, Joanne Dear, Jeffrey Simmons, and Gary Hicks

We are all so happy to have Rev. Ingram with us to provide the leadership and coordination for our congregation and particularly for our Sunday Services. Let's not forget however the great services we had from July 2007 – August 2010 and let's make February THANK YOU MONTH for our Worship and Music Committees.