

New York State Convention of Universalists Annual Meeting 2025

Report of the President and Board of Trustees

The 2025 Board of Trustees was comprised of officers Ann Rhody (President), Rev. Sally Hamlin (Vice-President), Rev. Linda Anderson (Secretary); as well as Melissa Lesley-Fox (Treasurer), and Tom Hackett (Clerk). The Treasurer and Clerk are non-voting members of the Board, but they participate in dialogue and debate. Our Trustees on the Board were Mark Berninghausen, Gay Canough, Jim D'aloisio, John Roleke and Rev. Jo Von Rue. One Trustee seat went unfilled for the year.

The Board met three times during 2025:

- February, to consider grant and loan applications
- May, to deal with regular business
- October, just prior to the annual meeting, where a budget for the coming year is presented and passed

In addition to these meetings, we've been in touch and discussed ideas over email.

During 2025, the Board...

- Considered modifications to our Annual Meeting structure, in the hopes of avoiding duplication of efforts, streamlining our planning, and increasing participation from member congregations
- Awarded two interest-free loans for a total of \$110,000; and 22 grants totaling \$134,230.
- Increased payments to Service Gratuity recipients by a COLA of 5%
- Increased the hotel subsidy for Annual Meeting delegates from \$50 to \$100 per night
- Discussed our investment policy, and how to ensure that we are investing responsibly
- Brainstormed ways to increase NYSCU engagement and outreach
- Considered the best ways to maintain our archives and electronic storage of records
- Worked with webmaster Michael Scott to update our security practices, eliminating personal information (such as home addresses and phone numbers) of NYSCU leaders on the website
- Appointed or confirmed members of the Finance, Service Gratuity, Grants, and Annual Meeting Planning committees (a Bylaws Committee is appointed ad-hoc if the need arises).
- Appointed Richard Reed to serve on the Nominating committee (normally, these members are elected at the Annual Meeting, but the Board may fill vacancies between these meetings).

A personal note, as someone who has served on many Boards, committees, work groups, and task forces: The NYSCU Board of Trustees is a high functioning, productive group. Members respect one another even as there are disagreements and debates. We feel comfortable talking about uncomfortable things. I've personally been challenged to see things in a different way. None of us takes our responsibility lightly. In short, the NYSCU Board of Trustees is able to lead, forge ahead, make changes, and deal with difficulty, all while modeling Universalist principles of service, justice, and love.

Many thanks to Rev. Jo Von Rue and Rev. Sally Hamlin for their service on the NYSCU Board of Trustees; and to Karen Dau, who is moving on after many years of service as NYSCU's archivist.

It is an honor to serve you, and to serve among you. Respectfully submitted, Ann Rhody, President