

we're going to start today with a reading uh from Margaret Wheatley while turning to one another there's no power greater than a community discovering what it cares about ask what's possible not what's wrong keep asking notice what you care about assume that many others share your dreams be brave enough to start a conversation that matters talk to people you know talk to people you don't know talk to people you never talk to be intrigued by the differences you hear expect to be surprised treasure curiosity more than certainty invite in everybody who cares to work on what's possible acknowledge that everyone is an expert about something know that Creative Solutions come from new connections

welcome everybody I just want to introduce uh the New England staff so I'm Erica um and I'm one of the um congregational Consultants here in New England I am joined by Art Nava who is also a congregational consultant in New England um we're really happy to have you with us today um a few logistical things we are recording today and CLOS captions are available um we uh plan to use this recording a lot because this is a topic that has got a lot of interest so just be aware of that um we we are going to spend a lot of time this morning on um questions and answers so when we get to that part um it's really helpful if you can use the actual Zoom raise your hand feature uh because then you like pop to the top of the list of people and it's easy to see you um but if that doesn't work for you for some reason you can private chat um either art or myself and that will help us know that you uh want to speak um and I think those are all of the logistics so let me just tell you a little bit why about why we are doing this panel so the first reason is because we have started getting a lot of questions about running summer camp it seems to be suddenly All the Rage which is awesome we are big fans so um partly this is an answer to folks asking for more information about summer camp the other reason we're doing this panel is because um I think everybody is aware that this is a challenging time to provide Ministry to parents and families um and the way this conversation often happens is how can we get parents and children to show up on Sunday morning um which is one version of this question a different version of this question is how can we provide meaningful helpful Ministry to parents and children and families um if you ask the question that way you get a slightly different frame um which is basically we know that parents raising children right now are under all kinds of stress because uh parenting is hard working right now is hard uh the pandemic was uh the time when we were in quarantine was incredibly hard on parents and families um so just sort of this overwhelming busy difficult World um families are stressed um and so we really appreciate it when congregations are thinking about how can we help how can we do meaningful Ministry to stressed and uh overwhelmed families and one of the things as a parent of an 8-year-old that I can tell you is a challenge is um finding suitable uh Child Care over the summer um this year the my son's favorite uh summer camp I waited until I think the second week of February uh to register him and in previous years that's been fine and this year everything was full um it's also very expensive so summer camp is a big need for parents in our communities and as you will hear today something that our congregations can offer really well so it seems to us like at the region like a really good um example of effective Ministry to parents and families right now in the current world that we're living in so um great for the theory but what the heck do we actually do so for that I'm going to turn to our first uh story so Abigail Hanford ricardi is from uh worst I hope I got your your name

right there yes okay is from from the first congregation there's two congregations in Wester this is the first um and um we're going to hear from her about Worcester first so take it away okay so I'm just going to share my screen I

hope

and can I oops how do I play my slideshow isn't that a good question I think you go to view view I do there we go all

right r a program called we aora and I'm on the wrong slide so let me go back because it started going without me oh my gosh you get to see all the really really guys am I not go

back hold on try this again I have to get to the actual slideshow because my computer is not

cooperating all

right

trying this again going back to the

beginning okay so why can't I see it it's loading so we aora is a magical themed summer program we run for two weeks and uh it is originally B based off the Harry Potter books we've moved far away from that but that was the original and uh it is a steam program so we offer classes in science technology engineering art music um this is still loading there we go okay so there we go um and uh we welcome pretty much everybody it's not a you don't have to be Unitarian at all we've had people from just about every religion you can imagine um Hindu Rastafarian uh you know anything anything um and uh I'll talk a little bit more later about diversity so I'll skip that for now okay um so I took the questions a little bit out of order because it made more sense for us so we started because uh in 2012 we had a new Faith development director who brought the program with her she had done it down south and um after uh three years when she left we sort of revamped the program um we dropped the name Hogwarts we called ourselves we Agora um and started moving away from the books and the plot of that but some things still stayed the same so um in this picture you can see that we we all the kids and staff and family can send owl mail and it gets delivered every day um by a flying owl um during lunch time um we everybody passes through the flu Network so that's our giant chimney there in the front um the new Scholars get sorted and the entire church which we call Castle um gets completely decorated from top to bottom um so this picture here is the stone Dragon common room um so we have uh I should mention I had it on this previous slide that we did try other programs before so like a previous um director before her um had tried to do a summer um American sign language class for young children and uh we did it the whole summer long every week and the only kids who ever came were our three kids so some things work and some things don't you know um so how many kids are there so this year we're gonna have 110 um we have had as

many as I think at least 125 it could be more than that um obviously um after covid we went way down the first year we went back in person we did 80 last year we did 90 this year we're doing 110 um and uh we break it up into three houses which are multi-age um and so everybody gets sorted so these are our three houses um Phoenix fire wind horse Stone dragon and Wave Rider and um so in sorting we really look at the spread to make sure that we have a good mix of children in all ages but they do take a quiz when they register and answer some questions which give us a little idea of what their personality is like and which house they fit best into and all the STA are also sorted so um house time is is a lot of fun um we use very large spaces um since Co we've had overflow spaces so that two of the houses go directly to an outside space and two of them go into a very large one Unity Hall and one giant Landers room anyway um okay so um who are the people who are going so we have tadpoles is a nursery for staff only so if you're volunteering or you're working as staff and you have young children it makes it easier for you to come and work if you have somebody watching your children while you're in the building um frogs we start um uh age six second grade really um but if you have a brother or sister in the program or a parent who's working in the program you can start in first grade um and so that's usually uh second and third graders about them then we have owls who are fourth fifth graders um sometimes it depends a little how it goes but in any case um and the NES are uh middle school mostly so usually seventh and eighth sometimes 9th also yeah so I'd say the owls include the sixth anyway you get the idea and then we have the elves program um we've had as many as 40 elves um this year we have 25 um yeah I think it's going to be great so else program is very strong and it's uh the teens you have to be 15 you have to have been spent at least one year at the program and you have to have um completed nth grade are basically our requirements or the equivalent of if you're homeschooled all right so this is a look at what our schedule looks like so um there's things on here that you don't really see that are going on behind the scenes like there's an elf's meeting every morning there's a house staff meeting every morning those type of things but in terms of the scholars there's a before work here for parents who work and need to drop their kids off early um then this middle section um is what most days are like the first day and the last day are different because they're different um so there's usually house time um there's also a snack time during the house time um people bring in very magical snacks we just ask and it's become sort of competitive so you know cockroach clusters and witch hats and Broomsticks and you name it you know dirt cups everything comes in um then we have assembly time I think of that as being like um sort of like Sanctuary time it takes place in our Sanctuary we call the Great Hall um then there's classes there's three classes most days um a lunch break obviously we have breaks for cooling off and then there at the end of the day there's always uh a quad Ball Match this says quidditch but it's quad ball now because we're not calling it quidditch anymore um yeah so that's the basic and if you don't like to go to if gets very noisy we have a quiet space for people who don't like that so this is a look at what last year's uh class schedule looked like this is I didn't get the whole thing on because it's too busy um we only had eight classes eight groupings last year so the groupings go by your age group house time is multigen your classes are in your age group and you get L around usually by three um elves who take you from one class to the next and we reason we use three is so that when you get there to the professor you have four staff so that if somebody needs to go

to the bathroom you always have two staff who can go if somebody needs to go to the nurse you know you always have two staff who can go wherever um and still have two staff with the remaining children um so this is a look at some of the classes and they're all um ridiculous names like arithm is a math class um and you wouldn't think that they would like a math class they love this class um you know so it's just whatever the person who's teaching is passionate about we give it a magical name and it becomes magical um so here's a look at some of the classes um this is a care of magical creatures she's got her bunny here um this is our service project from last year so uh they collected food for um people who were food insecure and there's a free refrigerator down um downtown Worcester and so they clean the refrigerator stock the pantry with the donations um oops this is oh this was really cool so we have a a someone who teaches something called magical forces and last summer um he did something with um changing sound waves into fire it's very cool so that's what's going on there um these are just other things this one down here is actually a music class it doesn't look like it but it is um so all different things the one with the Silhouettes was a the year we did lumos and it was all light themed so that was a art class that's transfigurations which is an art class we also have quad ball it's very very big and you win the house the quad ball cups there's a younger team and an older team it's just wild um so Staffing um we have a very large population of the glbtq population they just found a home here and um they're supported and we have um kids who you know try to blend in during school all the year and then they come here and they just are their complete magical selves and it's really nice to see um also a huge population of people on the Spectrum both in staff elves young scholars and really well supported and we have a room called um the room of requirements which is sort of a uh a very low light quiet out of the way fidget toys everything if you need a just a sensory Break um but we've had people here with critical heart defects Mobility impairments um people who use Walkers we've had a couple Scholars who are blind we've had someone who's deaf we've had someone with Down Syndrome you know and a whole bunch of different medical conditions and we always try to work you know what's going to do this and the reason I put this wear is amazing is one year we built this maze um we put it together overnight so that it was a complete surprise on the last day program when the kids came in and uh in the Wind Horse house there was a student who was blind and that year we had had all these Chalice of Champions um competitions that she couldn't really be pardon and so we said well we're going to ask her if she wants to do run the Maze and we were a little worried about this and so we had this maze set up and there are four different entrances and you had to get to the center and you can't really tell here but there are four spots where adults stand and move the walls so that the maze is constantly changing and this girl went through it like the fastest time of anybody else and it was just wonderful so I think that's kind of who we are we really try to see the individual and you know support them and give them what they need another thing I love is the creativity so um uh down there is a a spider that came to hang out in the Great Hall um up here is a flying dragon this was great so we get we have Council meetings all year long and people can throw out any ideas they want you can be an elf or an adult in the tendem and uh elf sometimes come up with these wild ideas and one year it was to have a dragon's fly and knock down or collect an egg or knock down an egg and the elf who um suggested it said we could have razor blades on their wings and cut a rope and

we're like oh yeah so that obviously didn't fly but the idea flew and so they ended up each house made their own dragon mostly out of like a pool noodle and cardboard but in any case and they if they could hit the egg that was in the middle of the sanctuary hanging from the ceiling which was held by a magnet the egg would drop and um so it it turned out you know it's like you can do anything you want the other picture of the mermaids is um this was my class in transfigurations where we basically just um use recycled junk to make art and I had broken this down into 10 steps so that all 10 classes could work on the same thing and over the first week and then by the end of the week they were done so that when we had our Sunday celebration between the two weeks um they would be up and the funny thing is is that um and I could never have planned this but one one house made their mermaid be very female she had long flowing hair she had the heart-shaped bra you know everything one house had very very masculine so he had the beard the mustach and he ended up putting hair on his chest and then there was one house that had you know a goatee and a bra and the other house that had a just no gender at all completely be chest completely devoid of anything and I thought boy I couldn't have planned that if I wanted I was so happy so I just love the creativity that I see another thing is I love the music um our eles and young staff usually provide the music um they're fabulous we've had people um who've worked at the camp who've written uh program uh songs so like we have all these songs that are specific to our program and I'll talk about our theme song in a little bit um there's lots of dancing all the time dance maple dance and they love it and you think oh these kids are not going to want to dance you know line dance and they just like totally are into it so it's really fun um the other thing is I love the intergenerational um component of it and one of the things we do is we have a costume challenge every day nobody knows what it is until the night before um and you're not supposed to to go out and buy anything have to be creative and come in the next day so this was rain and it's just fun to see everybody from like little kids to you know gray-haired people just totally Embrace whatever the costume challenges and somebody decorated the wind horse mascot there so I thought that was cute um youth leadership I mentioned this before but our elves are it's fabulous so they have really long days they get here at 8: am and they stay after until about 5 5:30 because they have a morning meeting which is mostly training and then they have an evening meeting which is just processing everybody gets to go around and say you know what was crunchy and what was smooth um and talk to each other so it's a great uh building opportunity and the elves are just we have six-year-olds who come in and they already picked out their elf name for when they turn 15 it's just one of those things that everybody looks up to them the kids they'll follow them anywhere um it's really exciting um so what challenges so the biggest challenge obviously was Co um and Juliet is out there today so hi Juliet um she was a huge help to us in navigating covid so the first year 2020 we had a virtual program it was all virtual um and we called it the flu Network and we utilized Google classrooms and every um young scholar got uh their own Google email um we had all the same activities we had classes we had assemblies we had everything and at the beginning of the program uh we had built this two-sided fireplace and the kids showed up outside and they brought their stuffy who was going to stay at the church and they swiveled the the place around and then they received this giant box of supplies for their classes so whatever class they had that day there was a box in there that said oh here it is it's a coffee filter a

magic marker and you know rubbing alcohol or something it depended whatever the activity was but they had every Supply they needed to do it and they um did it and it was it turned out to be fabulous it was so much fun and then of course we made a video of the stuff he's doing all the activities so these are sort of jokes so um kindness is like the huge theme underlying the whole program and and they've all uh drunk the Kool-Aid it's just everybody just tries to be kind and so um they during uh quad ball games they always cheer for water break water break and and they also share non-biased sharing so these are jokes this is so if you um get foul during the game you have to wear a fowl on your head um and so here is a fowl who's got two fowls and and these are two octopus that happen to be competing against each other all right so anyway so then in 2021 we went to um um uh in person but we started utilizing our outdoor spaces we didn't use any of the classrooms that year um we used big spaces within the church we reduced our numbers to just 80 um young scholars um the next year we bought air purifiers for all the classrooms so um and we still use a lot of this stuff today so it was a hardship but it's actually benefited us greatly so we still use the Google classrooms for communication for um meetings all year long um so we still have our lunches outside it's been the greatest thing in the world because we used to have this you know this is the allergy table and this is you know just NOP they all eat under the trees and they sit where they they want and it's just perfect yeah um any tips for starting a summer program so the first thing I would say is use a catchy name don't call it um Unitarian universal is summer camp um because the kids won't be excited to go and you're not going to draw in new people and the parents already know it's it's a you Church they know it you know the adults know what it is but um the kids are going to be more excited if it's something exciting as we saw with um just the whole Harry Potter phenomenon when that first took off um so we have a song that's called the weor song and these are literally some of the lyrics in the song and you will notice that they are the seven principles uh you know so we're certainly teaching YuYu values throughout the whole program um we have uh house points that they can earn and it's all for doing things that you know follow yuy youu you know values um but it's not you know cram it down your throat philosophy op y it's fun and um that makes it a great recruiting tool we've got a lot of families who have joined simply because they came you know to do the summer program and then then they go to the the church service in the week between they're like oh my gosh this is amazing this church you know allows this to happen and they you know come back in the fall or sometimes it's much more gradual we have programs all year long that are kind of connected so we have a Dungeons and Dragons program that runs all year we have a um uh a children's choir that um draws people in we have a lorana tournament which is a a card trading game you know stuff like that and um so we have uh somebody who this year their family joined the church but last year she just came to join the children's choir Just the Girl and like uh last year we had somebody join two boys join our uh Dungeons and Dragons group and now this year they're joining the owl program so it's just a really good way to pull people in um let T staff teach what they love so honestly it doesn't matter what they're teaching if they're passionate about it you know if it's something that they're really passionate about the kids are going to love it and I think that's much better than having them try to teach some curriculum that they have to research you know the night before and they're not really that invested in but if they're invested in their life's passion and we've

had people teach felting classes we've had people teach anything anything lots of engineering like misuse of mongle artifacts is basically just taking objects and and making them do other stuff so anything just teach what they love um because it's much easier to recruit people if they're passionate about what they're going to do I talk a Lego class last summer it was the greatest thing ever um so start small and allow yourself to grow so the first year I think we had like 60 kids or something and we only had three elves and like I say we've had up to 40 elves so you don't have to have everything from the beginning um give youth leadership that's huge because that encourages people to stay with you year after year so the kids keep coming back because they want to reach that elf level and they want to reach that like superpower and then we um half our staff now are former elves so they've gone off to college they're adults and they're coming back to work these two weeks because it's so important to them um multigenerational I just think that's really great uh I I don't know there's not that many parts that you can do that I think one of the things I love about we Agora is that you know you can go to our Sunday school all year long and you're not going to get the amount of hours that you get in those two weeks where you do stuff like you have the assembly service type things you you have a social justice um component you have the bonding and and friendship building components and you have the education components you have it's just so rewarding and you have all of that including the multigen and yeah so um and also I'd say make use of your social media so obviously we have a website and we have um uh YouTube channel and also on our church YouTube we have their own playlist um you know we have three Facebook pages one one is just for the public one is for the community and one is for the staff um so yeah anything like that and then also just keep the interest year around so in addition to the other programs I mentioned we also have um uh we our Halloween school a Ule ball and a spring fools so that in each season there's something for people to come to and those are free one day events and so it's a great way for a child to hey come join me you know this Saturday for this and they try out for one day and then they want to sign the summer that's it I will stop sharing I probably talk too long that was awesome thank you so so

much great Eric are we ready to to introduce the the next team awesome so I'd like to introduce uh from first Paris rooster out on Cape Cod here in Massachusetts uh twinx Hastings and Laura Gil um and I'd be remiss if I didn't mention that twinx is a credential religious educator at the advanced level uh since April of 2021 so we're hand it over to T and Laura thank you hi everybody um so we're just going to tell you a little bit about our summer program we can't call it a camp per the town so it's a summer program always um we uh run our program the last two weeks of Summer here on Cape Cod all of the um wreck programs and camps and all all of the things kids have been doing all summer and and there's this of two weeks where Child Care is even harder to find and impossible um so for many years I have wanted to fill that need and we had a little um summer program in the before times before covid just for our um kids and it was um based on the program Abigail was just sharing about um it was super fun and then Co and then and then and then um but finally last year um it was a little bit later in the season that we decided to go with with it actually um so I think it wasn't until May that we finally said we're going to do this um and I my last career I was a director at YMC overnight summer camp so that's kind of a lot of my

motivation and we were talking about our budget postco um we were talking about how to get Outreach into the community and find more um people and children to come back to church and so snow at uu was born Summer's not over at The UU um and and we really held that it was going to meet three um three sort of areas one being social justice um in that we were going to provide programming for families on the cape uh which is really a really huge need here um the other was Outreach for our program and um you know just introducing Unitarian universalism to more families and people on the cape and thirdly to fill a need in our budget which um as hard as it is to when you're wanting to offer programming that that really had to be a consideration for us and um I I always had faith that we were going to make around 12 to \$15,000 which sounds like a a lot when you put it out there and I think it was put in our budget for 9,000 or something and we ended up making um 14 in the end so um that's a part that I think is is important too um and we also partnered with food for kids which is a program on the cape I'm not sure if it's actually Statewide I don't know um and they provided lunch for um all of our program participants so that was another um fun part of the social justice so that's kind of why we um started the program just looking at my notes yeah those three things um and our program runs from 9 to three and then we have 8 to 9 as before care and 3 to 5 as after care um as another option um there's been some challenges along the way you know we we really just started this last year and for me as the Dr um I saw very quickly that this was going to add you know like almost like a second part-time job on top of my job which is the thing I think if you are thinking of starting a summer program um as a Dr you can you um should consider consider and I definitely advocated CU I had a 11-month contract before then so I was off in July and then supposed to be running this program in August as well as doing setup um and I I just knew that wasn't going to happen so I did I managed to negotiate for a 12- month contract and to be brought up to the minimum on the uua fair pay scale um so those are I want to talk about all the fun and and all the programming and how amazing it is but I do think that those um parts are really worth considering if you're a Dr because um already I mean I'm stretching I'm assuming that others are so really think about that and think about what what hours you have and how you can Advocate with your um Church to make it work um so that was sort of some of the one of the challenges beforehand um we didn't have any admin support that first year so I was doing the registration and the payments and the billing and the keeping track of all that it's not my greatest strength in the world and that was a real challenge for me um and so this year uh I I asked for and advocated a lot for some Administration support from our office which was going so well and then our administrator um that was helping me with it left so now we're back to trying to piece all together so that's a thing um software our church software does not support for the form of the summer program so thing to think about and then for me the last biggest challenge was that we opened this the community um we had about 45 kids each week 50 kids and I would say four fifths of them were not our kids and so that first day we started this camp with this kind of like glowing belief that everyone would you know merily participate in the uua and that did not happen and it felt a little Lord of the Flies and I thought we cannot actually run this program like this is out of hand um so it was really it was chaos that first day um you know where we are used to running programs and and these kids have come up through our church and now we have 40 Kids on Campus who have never um been to YuYu

church so the next day um every morning starts with an opening Circle and we made some real changes and um I got really Stern and the church kids were like oh my God because they'd never seen that side of me and everyone else mailed out and we had to be really explicit in our expectations and um what behaviors were not going to fly here and um so that was one thing I wish we had preloaded but didn't think about and then after that it was less lord of flies and um a whole lot more fun and so so I would say for um tips if you're thinking about starting this I would say just make a plan trust and go for it um you know there are some great programs out there and I was like our ours has to be like this it doesn't um look at what your congregation can support and if that is a summer program with 15 kids the first year then that's the program that you should have um so I think just really trusting that this is going to work um if it's something you're passionate about and um the other thing that I think is absolutely vital is make sure that you have the volunteer um support on your side which is a great segue into Laura um with whom there's another um volunteer Susan who's not here today but the three of us um sort of made this happen and you know this is my job but these women busted but all um year and for the long so I think that um that's really vital to get your team in place um so I'm going to hand over to Laura to um talk about some of the other things and I'm going to share some pictures while she does hi um so I as some of you no I'm I'm H just a member of the congregation and uh don't I mean I I I do have some leadership roles and when I heard that Twix wanted to create a summer program having had a history in uh a a summer a summer camp locally I thought you know I'd like to take a leadership role and I didn't know that it was good yes it was truly a a a part-time job and um it was a lot of fun and what I think and I'm not sure if it's Unique because I don't really I you know I don't know what other uyu churches are doing with their summer programs but we uh our program is based on volunteerism and last year we had 56 members of the congregation volunteer in one way or another we have uh what we call the adventure leaders and the adventure mentors and it was what Abigail had mentioned the whatever passion that the volunteers brought that's what ended up being the activity um so I she's showing pictures but I have um I don't let me see if I can share this one thing hold uh you you won't be able to I'm sharing thisen okay so forget that forget that so we basically we have a h professional Weaver that is part of our congregation and so she led a weaving Activity one one time per week so we had two sessions each session is a week and so my job was to to come up with all of the activities and find volunteers to support every single activity so we had everything weaving to survival skills to GaGa ball we have a woman who taught the kids ukulele will be doing that again this year um we are doing mud sculptures this year and we have a former uh founder of a charter school who is leading a MythBusters stem type activity um we have dancer and a we have a a drama person she's going to be doing theater combat and and then a dance P I'm not ex exactly sure what she's doing because sometimes you just kind of give leeway to the people that are willing to jump in and help um so we've got the what I love I think one of my favorite parts of it is that we have each each week we have we have magical Mondays triy it Tuesdays what's cooking Wednesdays thoughtful Thursdays and fun and fabulous Fridays and on uh thoughtful Thursdays to me this is as as much as um creating or filling a community need with the the child care programming um in our community and also uh generating um income for the for the church I really really wanted to be able to provide opportunities for kids feel feel

empowered and know that actions okay twinx I I'm I people it's a lot of pictures can you just hold it for a little bit thanks um thoughtful Thursdays is the day when kids take part in activities and we actually raise money for different organizations and last year we raised money for it's a rehab place called wild care and for an organization called Brewster ponds Coalition and so the kids did car washes and we had people in the community we had signs and people came and we raised about \$700 and we were able to donate the money and the kids learned that their actions even at age five at age 12 can actually do something and and that to me was just so uplifting to see kids understand to make that connection that their actions can go towards doing something good and then at the end of the week we would have wild care come and they brought an owl and a turtle and and the kids could see that their hard work is helping to pay for the care of these animals and uh this year we have uh members of the Wampanoag which is our local native tribe um coming to talk to the kids about about what's going on in their Community as well as we have a group uh we have it's called what's it called goat green Cape Cod a woman is bringing goats and teaching how uh you can utilize goats to to help control invasive species versus using vegg acids or pesticides and so teaching the kids and again we will raise money for these two organizations and for me that is uh when we we did surveys at the end and by far the the most favorite activity was the car wash and yes it involves spraying each other in soap and suds and people laughing and uh hilarity um so it was really really it was a really valuable lesson and to me that was just something that was definitely one of the better parts of of uh snow uu we we use the the word snow and we had uh our three groups were the elves the Reindeer and the igloo um and lots of snow oriented or winter oriented activities Fridays we have um a different day we have kind of a pep rally in the beginning kids are are separated into groups and by color and they do face paint they and then we do a a campus-wide trash cleanup competition which helps us because it is amazing after five days what little straw wrappers and things that end up everywhere uh are all picked up and that really helps us and then we uh we do last year we did Field Day this year we're going to have two themed days one backwards day one is Halloween and August where there'll be fun field field um activities and Then followed by the uh the presentation of the [__] and the and the goats and then we have a talent show so it's really it's a combination of of true uyu oriented activities social and environmental themed activities mixed in with kind of more typical traditional summer camp fun um and it was extremely extremely well received so with just a few months we were able to create this program and um so I do encourage those of you and what twink said is that yeah it is uh it might be just a 15 kid program that's fine for us we really can't go above 40 40 50 kids when we are relying on our elders to lead the activities uh and and it seems I'm laughing because this is the place Laura and I disagree I'm all for scaling up up up but we will see yeah you can go to the next picture you can go to the next picture I was just it was sleeping children oh my okay okay we're so we one one day we had a beekeeper come and she brought can you go back to that last slide a beekeeper brought she brought a hive and she brought all these fun toys and she taught this year we're going to be making po pollinator hotels for the native species of these so again trying to instill in the kids ways that they can help our world and not being overly pedantic about it um so I think that was that that kind of gives you an idea of of the things that we're doing um oh the inter intergenerational nature of it was also something that for me was one of the best parts I

mean we had people in their 80s that were interacting closely and beautifully with four-year-olds um it was just so uplifting and I I have never in all the years since 1989 that I've been part of First Parish Brewster I have never felt um such camaraderie with the congregation it was all different kinds of volunteers all coming together so it was really beautiful I don't want to take up too much time um that the a challenge was not being able to call her eles a camp but that is just because of our town um and the other challenge is because we are not a camp we are we were not allowed to take the children off campus to our beach which we could walk to and the kids could swim there so we had to come up with ways to incorporate uh you know we called it water Antics ways to keep kids cool in the in the summer um but I I I highly recommend I mean it was it's a huge it it was a um a huge commitment on my part and Susan's part uh and of course twinx did an amazing job at uh really introducing YuYu values and the theme of kindness overall which really worked and these kids that came in that weren't used to that are now uh I think we we have changed their lives and their families were thrilled so uh I would say yes try it do it and we are here to provide any any Assistance or advice along the way yeah that I was just going to um finish off with that we um sent out registrations and within 12 hours we were pretty much full for the whole next year um I couldn't believe how well received it was I think it's because it's such a different vibe than these kids get anywhere else so they were just thrilled we definitely made um good money for the budget um we've had kids from the program come in and out um through the year some families have stayed so that's felt really um great as well and um my last thing I want to say is we are not precious about any of our materials so I'm happy to share whatever we have if it um would help someone start their program and just do it it's really it's really worth it and a whole lot of fun thanks awesome thank you so much um so we are going to move into um the questions and answers I'm actually going to Spotlight art can you spotlight all three of our panelists um that would be great um so I'm going to start with some of the questions that were submitted in advance and then uh get your questions ready and raise your virtual hands and we'll come to you so um you mentioned twinx that um this helped support the congregation's budget which must mean that you charged some I'm curious what you charged for camp and how you came up with that uh cost yeah yeah um our first year we had a sliding scale fee from 200 to 300 and then um we really made clear that we had scholarships for all so no one would be turned away from a lack of ability to pay um and I think we ended up I mean it wasn't really scholarships we just didn't um charge them so it came out of the um bottom line of what we made and I think it was for \$500 of um breaks on the fee that um we ended up um using and then the before care and after care were \$20 for before care and \$35 for after care um so that added to the budget and we really struggled with what to charge um you know Cap Cod has so many camps and we looked at all different programs um um you know again this was a bit of an area where the core team disagreed um but we sort of finally came up with that as it seemed affordable and most people paid somewhere in the middle of that sliding scale and then yes this year we've moved it to 300 to 400 um and most people are are of paying around the 300 mark and the before care and after care um are the same price so uh it was really hard to break it down into like hourly and most of our staff were volunteers we did pay three um counselors um this year we're going to get some um counselors fresh out of the summer camp that I um used to direct so they're a

little bit more um trained um right off the bat so that's how we did it great and Abigail do you charge as well and how do you we do we do um we charge 550 for the two weeks together um and that's very low in Wester um almost everywhere um tends to charge more than that we also charge um I think it's a \$100 a week for before care or after care um we do have a lot of scholarships um every year we give full scholarships to the kids who are in the um um family uh homeless house I want to call it ihh it is ihh but they Chang there with the words me in any case in the hour of need there we go um we also uh anybody who you know writes it on the application we basically give if they ask they get the scholarship so um you know it just depends on if they ask or not and we also have um discounts for an early bird discount if you you know sign up before a certain date we have a discount for um members of First Unitarian um there's discounts if you have three or more kids it's \$50 off each kid you you know so there are things like that um we uh take in about uh I think this year our budget is to take in 52,800 but unlike uh twins's program we're not uh volunteer on We were originally originally we made a lot of money for the church and we just decided that that wasn't the purpose of our program and that we were going to pay people just fairly um and um because originally it was very measly stiens um so now we spend um about \$42,000 on the Staffing and that doesn't include me I'm me around doesn't include Samantha whoie around so um and uh and then we have about another \$8,000 in expenses and Supply so we still make about \$22,000 but it's not to make money it's more um as an Outreach and uh growth program so I think our focus is very different yeah thank you um I can attest that those are very reasonable charges for uh summer programming uh Cara do you want to ask a question yeah I was just wondering so in order to run these programs there's got to be significantly C significant cost to bring in the materials to bring in the all the startup So when you say you made you know \$4,200 or \$50,000 or whatever it is where where does the money for the startup come from like does that come out of your budget as the Dr do you go to the program Council and start a whole new thing and come up with a new budget um in order to get started so at least for us the the 52,800 I think is what we're um we're expecting to take in that's in the T that's in the tuition um and like I say at the end of it after we've paid all our staff and we paid all the expenses we only make about \$2,000 um that money comes in before uh the program even starts so right now we're months away from it and we already have I think 92 out of our 110 young scholars signed up so um that's already being paid um before the program begins does that help uh yeah for us um all of the supplies came out of what we made in tuition and the what we paid the um three paid staff and we also us to have the Gaga pit that was something we added to the campus for the program and that came through our endowment board um so I was able to you know I bought some I don't know why our church has enough construction paper to provide all of your construction paper for the next decade um so we had a like backlog of art supplies always anyway um so we were able to use some of them um things that I bought for our our normal programming we used in the summer program and so our expenses were about H I should have these figures I'm going to say they're about 8,000 and then our profit if you want to call that was about 14,000 okay cool that's that's what I'm running up against is you know if I'm GNA hire people how do I promise people you're going to make X dollar an hour when I haven't gotten a single Dollar in tuition yet because I haven't gotten approval to do it um but I can't get approval to do it until I have staff right it's

tough yeah thank you um okay I'm going to take one of the previously submitted questions and then I will come to you Mary um so a lot of people asked us about um various sort of legalities and insurance stuff so liability what are the state mandates um you already mentioned that you're not allowed to be a Camp um so I'm just wondering uh sort of what have you run into in terms of legalities and liabilities and how have you dealt with those um for us this was a big concern from um the congregation a big concern from a lot of people um I had already done this work back when we did our little program um so I knew basically for our town and where we are if if we called it a summer program and it was was a program of the church then we didn't fall into any of the camp um requirements um we basically the um standards we run our um Sunday programs on or what we run our um summer program on we I went the town different members of the board and the church went multiple times because they were um concerned about it a lot um our insurance our church insurance covered it we checked all of that out so it was actually less um of a problem for us where we are than um I think that we thought it might be um any of the activities um you know not going off campus all of that stuff not having like pools of water everything like that that um we would usually do so it worked out quite well for us you want to talk about pories and training I mean that's the are like what standards we have for our summer for our Sunday programs same thing with all the cories and everything yeah yeah we do this the same thing the the cories and that's standard for if you're going to volunteer anytime during the year um I think um the differences are uh we do on the application process there are like three different waiver sections one of them is is just for photography but one of them is for like medical you know so that we have those things initialed and and dated from the legal Guardians

um had something else that I was going to say now it's slipped my mind oh we also do not call ourselves the camp um and uh call ourselves the summer program um and part of that is there's uh specific regulation and I think they're different in different places you know um if we were camp we would have to have a a nurse on staff we don't we have um we call Magical Melodies and they're all certified in first aid and CPR everyone who works in that station but um we don't have a nurse um because that's a huge budget item if you were going to hire a real nurse um yeah thank you we lucky on the nurse front that Laura happens just happens to be handy diving that's fabulous right um I just want to say for anyone uh here or watching it who doesn't recognize the term Corey that that is the background check um that we use for a lot of different volunteers and congregations um just to you know check things that you might want to know about people before they are alone with your kids or in pairs with your kids um okay Mary go ahead yeah I had a couple of different questions um I'm down in uh Harrisburg with the the uh Ari director actually called Corey so when I heard you saying Corey I'm like wait a minute um but uh yeah I went to her and said hey like 10 years ago there was a summer camp at this church I wanted to start a summer camp can I start a summer camp here and she's like sure and I was like wow she just said yes cool um but I guess my uh I had two main questions the first one was I've been going to the Unitarian Church of Harrisburg since I was a teenager but and I'm M of the church but I feel like I'm not really 100% clear on Unitarian values sometimes so you know one of my

thoughts is at since I'm doing a church in a unit or a camp in a Unitarian Church I want to make sure that I'm incorporating those values so I'm wondering for y'all how you uh I think and you did mention a little bit like how half of it's like Unitarian half of it's just regular summer camp like what's the balance how do you incorporate those values and themes and then the other one was just um how you handle challenging Behavior Uh primarily with uh students but also like if you have staff members that are not showing up or if you're arguing with the director or whatever whatever that was my two questions yeah we had all these

issues do you want to go ahead Laura do you have any thoughts that before I want to let you talk to no you go ahead because you were the you you solved them um so I think that that our program worked on yuu values the entire program just sometimes it was more explicit in the programming um and a lot of that came from this eight principles um and just the The General basics of our Sunday program of kindness and looking out for each other and cooperation so all of that that's what I was alluding to that first day it wasn't happening because not all kids are like raised u in that way so um we had to get very explicit with it in the morning meetings um every day I would talk about things that happened the day before um not using names but I would say you know this happened and that was very unkind and um talked through a lot of that which helped um with the behaviors that first week and then we when we had the second group of kids the second week some of them were the same some of them weren't um we started off a lot better on that foot um I think the new um you know the article why am I forgetting what it is article whatever article two right five seven article two um I think those values will be a great um jumping point for a summer program that involves kids aren't necessarily you you we sent one kid home um this summer uh that's not something we ever wanted to do or thought we could do but we you know we tried everything in our Collective um backpacks for how to deal with this Behavior but he just kept hitting other kids over and over and over and over and over again so we had to we had to um stop that even you know we tried everything to keep um this kid engaged in the program because he clearly needed it um and then we had on one of the um two of our youth group were the um counselor PID counselors and I don't think I would do that again necessarily um one of them stopped coming we had to I basically we scrambled and found um other folks in the community to cover um towards the end when she just stopped coming so one thing one thing I wanted to add is that um before the summer program begins All Families receive a adventure hand Adventure handbook I don't know what I called it but it's a handbook and the the last section is all about specific uyu values so they're listed and and this is you know very clear and and the goal is to have the families read them and read them to their children is Le at least that's what we've we've asked them to do so there is something kind of in writing that illustrates how we are going to be running the program I'll try and share that and our staff volunteer handbook in the chat awesome thank you um before we go to you Abigail I just want to um say I just put in the chat a link to the principles which is the current Lang language that um is in our bylaws about the sort of central um values uh and commitments of Unitarian universalism um as twinx was alluding to there is a proposal to um significantly amend that section of the UA bylaws um and actually have the things be called values instead of principles um and I put a link to that

proposal um in the chat as well it that um will be voted on in June at General assembly uh for the second time and so if it's past this year it's real and in effect and whatever uh so if you want to see any of that it's in the chat okay Abigail yeah um I was just uh gonna say I mentioned uh the the school song um which is actually the principal so it's like we are we Gora magical School of fun we are we are Gora friendship for everyone every person is important so be kind and all you do we are free to learn together free to search for what is true every person has a voice build a fair in peaceful world where we all care for the Earth and we aor and songs are heard D anyhow well all the kids they sing it every day and they all know it and this year um during our regular school year I was talking to um some of the kids about um the article two in jet Pig and whatnot and did they know what the principles were and every one of them knew them and they knew them off of that song and they were saying you know what the uua should just use the weor was just very cute um because adults in our congregation couldn't tell you the seven principles matter what one the eight principles of your congregation that uses the eight um so yeah um and as far as Behavior goes uh we do have a lot of challenge not a lot we have some challenging challenging kids every year like I said we have a lot of kids who are on the Spectrum and so things are just different they learn differently um they need different environments things like that um we also uh we have one um young fellow who's been coming the last few years um who is in foster care and is really struggling um and his first year was hard and we basically had to one-on-one him the entire time um fortunately uh our staff are excellent we have a lot of Staff um even though not everybody all 50 are here every day at all the times I'd say there's like a 1:3 ratio at least um for the little kids it's not um yeah we have a lot of Staff because we have like 50 staff and then another 25 elves who are all you know sort of function as uh junior counselors um so we can do a lot of that one-on-one intervention that some kids need uh I'd say behavior-wise we've had more challenging behaviors from the staff than from the kids um and uh a lot of drama I think when you get into creative dramatic people they get a lot of drama um and uh we've actually been able to cut down a lot of that the last two years um I I said two years ago it was the least traumatic year we've had and then last year was even less it was just so smooth and calm um and I think a lot of that just goes into our training and um with the meetings that we have leading up to it and just the expectations um for the staff and we have a lot of stuff everything's in writing so if they have a grievance they know the process and things like

that yeah the two handbooks I just shared the staff volunteer one has a whole section on how we deal with um different behaviors or how we want our volunteers and staff to do with them cool thank you um art do you wanna yeah just move back up a little bit and just uh there's a question that came in uh via the chat uh the person needed to leave but just want to make sure that uh k questions I got asked and I'll just read them from the chat uh for both programs it's like how big are your congregations how did you get by in from congregational leaders do you have a full-time Dr or other professional paid staff with hours to dedicate to these

programs uh no is the answer to the last two statements um it is me and um as I've said we can I can do without Laura and Susan as part of it um that is something that I continue to

Advocate and will do as this program grows which I hope it does um I think that it really would benefit from a separate um director for the program our our church and budget are nowhere close to that but um it really this is I think my biggest tip is to really try find some volunteers who are as excited as you because it is impo it's kind of impossible to do for me and the way our church is structured um I am the only uh like children youth um Dr staff um at at the church um and I yeah I had to really Advocate to get that um 11 months change to 12 months in order to run this program um and bu in from the congregation you know we move at the speed of church around here and sometimes things take a while so that little summer program I did before Co was kind of like the starting um point for me and

then the really the biggest sort of like push back was the the town and how are the town going to think and what's the insurance and once once we had um explained that and proved that and been double checked by all the people who were concerned um people were pretty for it after that you know Laura was able to get like 50 volunteers to sign up I'm going to say pretty easily I don't know was it pretty easy or was it a little bit of a there's some there's some volun telling that happens no most people you you you need well I'm sure you all know when you're trying to get volunteers there it uh you you have to Market it's a it's a sales pitch and um but the the good thing is that last year I mean it wasn't that hard but it it was it was challenging to fill all these gaps in care and this year people are calling me and saying how can I how can I jump in so it's that's really the biggest take home from us like I still can't really wrap my head around the exact why this became so popular and so um beloved both from the congregation and um the participants but it did and I um yeah it was much more easy to get that buy in this year how big is congregation um we have 350 members thanks go ahead Abigail yeah I was just going to say uh I'm very lucky because uh our church has um really put value into the faith development program and uh funding that program so uh Samantha who's our faith development director is 30 hours a week 12 months and I'm the assistant director and I'm 30 hours a week um for 12 months so um that's been fabulous so both of us can um work during those two weeks of program in the summer um and and we also have a we aor manager who um we pay five hours a month something like that uh during the year and then he's full-time from June through the end of the program at the second week of August um and thank goodness for him because he's the one who does all the spreadsheets for me which I'm not good at um so he's more we call him the minister of magic and I'm called the head Magister so I'm more like the base of the program and you know in the assemblies and and talking to the parents um you know we check in every child and I know everybody by name so the parents drive in in the morning and I check them in say hi to everybody and so uh I'm so of the face but really um Mark uh does the the heavy work as our minister of magic so um we're very

fortunate and how big is your congregation say it's about the same size you know it's hard to tell now since covid um I don't even know anymore okay yes I just texted admin because I was like is that so true we're down to 300 members okay thank you um so you both mentioned that you have people in the camp who are not members of the congregation I'm curious how they find

you I'd say the biggest way is word of mouth um we we are listed in some Camp listings um not I shouldn't call the Camp because we're not can't but we are listed in some summer program listings um and uh we have our you know social media um but the biggest way is Word of Mouth um the kids are so excited about this program and they talk about it all year long and they I run into them places and um I was teaching a craft class at the library and I had a child come in and say head Magister abnormal ronculus and everybody's looking like who the heck is that kid you know he's so excited to see me and um and they tell you you know like they're planning their costumes even though they don't know what the costume challenges are yet they just they're just so into it um

so I don't know so for for us we uh um twinx is social media savvy and was able to post on Facebook pages and through our our church website um and what I did was we created a flyer and I um sent them to each of the school districts and they were uh attached in the newslet Weekly Newsletter um and that went out multiple weeks and I think we generated a lot of kids from from that flyer um and that went to we it wasn't completely Cape Wide but it was the six or seven towns around Brewster that received the kids uh the kids received the information about the the summer program we also are um par like our Sunday parents who had sort of been asking for this program also um spread the word to their friends and family um this year we haven't advertised and we don't really need to advertise at all because most of all the kids are returning so I'm glad about that because that was a bit of a SLO the first time and then there'd be like one parent from a group would sign up and then we get like a slew of three or four um different families from that same group or friends yeah it it was a little wasn't hard to fill but it wasn't as quick as I thought it would be but I think now that the word is out there um it was not hard to fill at all this year cool thank yeah we we seem to be filling pretty quickly and we have I think last time I looked we had 33 new um Scholars signed up so um you know people age out every year and people move away or whatever but it doesn't seem to be a struggle to get more people yeah and like like I said and one of you mentioned that like Camp fills up or summer programming uh in general fills up really fast so because there is such a need it um yeah that is something we learned we put out the Reg ation maybe a month ago because last year we waited till May or June and a lot of people had already like got their plans or taking time off work whatever um so we also got some questions uh submitted ahead about

um like other other ways and times to do this so one of them was could the camp take place during an already existing family week and the other was have you considered or done anything in the school vacations like February or April

break I mean yeah oh go ahead go ahead so I was gonna say I mentioned that you know we have the one- day events um and uh they're basically like a one day of program so we have the classes and we have the dancing and we have the quad ball plane so that you get to experience what it would be like um and we have talked at times about doing something during vacation week I think the trouble with that is that a lot of our families go away during those weeks so it would be hard to staff it um and uh a lot of our young staff are in college or you know have jobs so it they're not on a school schedule where they could come back

to staff program because the schedules don't line up yeah and I would say you can do programming out with of Sunday morning anytime that is going to work for your community um I would love to do programming for April vacation February vacation uh we I we just don't have the resources to um run it I mean I just don't have the hours in the year to run it but I I think it is a um I think it's a wide open

opportunity for all of us to think about taking um religious education out of Sunday mornings it's clearly um it works Sunday mornings are hard for families now um it was hard before the pandemic and worse now so I think that um it excites me that there's so many people interested in the summer program and and we are looking a lot at what does programming look like not in the traditional Sunday morning time slot so I would say think of your community what's going to work for your families and go from there so I know that not everybody uh who is here today and not everybody who's watching this recording lives in New England but here in New England um we have the benefit of having a lot of YuYu congregations in a relatively small geographical area which seems like one of the things that might mean is that um we could have some congregations doing summer programing other congregations doing February and April um like nearby and coordinate that way um so just a thought and do you have um I don't really know what this question about the already existing family week means um but uh any thoughts on that before we move on we don't have family week yeah okay cool I will say the one congregation I know of that has a very specific family week programming is the tunon Massachusetts congregation does a week on Star Island um that is multigenerational and similar in some ways to both of these um in that there is like dedicated by AG programming for part of the day and then multi-age programming for part of the day and a lot of like there's a one you know oneoff thing that somebody does etc um so that's called Building Bridges if you want check it out in the Star Island website it will be there um cool I do think we may have gone through the questions unless there's any more I'm going to just scan through see if anyone is raising a physical hand um Erica there there was the the uh pres submitted one about uh existing curriculum oh yes thank you no problem um I missed that one so are there um existing curriculum or plans to use for the programming Abigail I think you said you got this from an existing curriculum right and then so uh she had developed it so it wasn't existing um before her but she had done it a few years in the South before moving up to New England um and we don't really use a curriculum uh I think I think I think instructors teachers anybody volunteers are going to be much more passionate if they're doing what they love it's you know like Laura was saying with all the people I mean we've had and I think one of the beauties of that and what distinguishes it from other um summer programs is that then your science classes are actually being taught by scientists in your math classes are being taught by mathematicians in your um herbology classes are being taught by you know so that people are really in their specialty and they know a lot and um and they're passionate about it and their excitement um oozes out onto the children um I know of a few curriculums that are out there I think one maybe was based off of your program Abigail because I remember that we looked at that some of the things you were saying were pretty familiar um and I think there's a couple I Googled a couple they weren't going to work for us in our space and um how we wanted to do it for ourselves but think there are a couple out there I don't I can't

direct you to them I'm happy to share anything we have on um what we did but I know there are some program curriculums out there um and I think uh in the chat our program is held on our on our church property we are just so lucky that we have this um Green Space and space um on the cape our campus has like a barn and that's used for program in and couple of big Lawns and yeah we're lucky um I don't know how that would happen for other

people yeah we don't have a lot of outdoor space we have um some and we actually during the two weeks of program we block off one of the parking lots and we use that um as a space to do Aquaman which is a water um sport class and uh some the big dancing um because there's a nice flat area for people to dance on and um we have a a small area outside one of the the main house of stone dragon that they can go outside and we also have front steps in a porch of the church that we use um but it's I mean we're centrally located right in the middle of downtown Worcester so we don't have a lot of nice grounds but the church is huge and um so that serves us well cool I just want to lift up a couple things that people put in the chat so um Kristen says check out Faith development week at Star Island which is programming for professionals families and young people um there are also like a whole bunch of family summer programming at all of our camps and Conference Centers so if you live near one uh or want to go near one you can check check those out um and Devin says that Jen blasser is almost done developing a packaged program um which is and gives the website so I'm going to save the chat uh and put these links with the recording wherever wherever we put the recording uh so that you can have those um Erica do you do you also want to uh lift up your own comments about explaining what jet big is and know Abigail mentioned that at one point just for the benefit of the video recording yes thank you um so Abigail mentioned jet Pig so jet pig is the um uh acronym for the proposed uh values um and I was I was joking with my family this week that the like um people who make all manner of pig uh like stuffies and other merch are not going to know what hit them because um this is becoming a thing very quickly but anyway the uh the acronym uh is for the proposed values which are Justice Equity transformation pluralism interdependence and generosity with love at the center um the Malden YuYu congregation uh wrote a song about the jet Pig values which I will give you the link I'm I know that there are other like there is uh already uh a whole bunch of jet Pig themed uh resources being developed and that I imagine will continue um and get even bigger if this uh proposal passes this summer um so you can uh you know look out for those um there's some great stuff already I uh just want to say that the blossoming already of jet Pig materials is a testament to the uh incredible creativity of our religious Educators across unarian universalism um who just step in and do amazing things like these camps that you've heard about and the Jet Pig resources and all kinds of other stuff uh so thank you religious Educators um and oh cool Michael says there's another version that's jet. piglet which has the love in it um so stay tuned for all manner of pig related activities and and items um okay and we are out of our time so I want to say um I want to go back to my outline make sure that I'm doing this the way I'm supposed to hold on okay so I'm going to turn it over to Art yeah hello would have been happy to have you good to do clothing but really just want to thank the panelists for doing such a great job you know your your programs look very creative exciting and you know really doing good work for your community so so thank you

Abigail Laura and twns and really uh thank everyone for taking the time uh today to kind of participate and listen in and you know submit your questions it's it's been wonderful and uh hopefully this recording will help folks who weren't able to be here live right now so I want to thank you all for for your participating

today thank you everyone have a great rest of your day thank you you