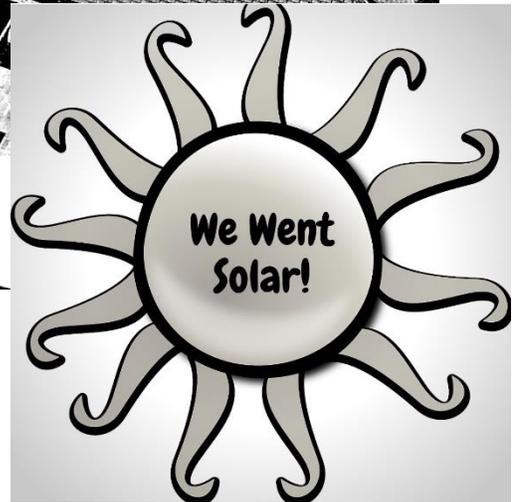


*Unitarian Universalist
Congregation of
Asheville*



2018-2019
Annual Report

2018-19 Annual Report

June 2019

Table of Contents

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----|
| Board of Trustees..... | 4 |
| Leadership Development Committee..... | 5 |
| Lead Minister | 6 |
| Music Director | 13 |
| Minister of Faith Development..... | 14 |
| Director of Administration..... | 24 |

Board of Trustees



Bruce Larson, President; Mariah Wright, Vice President; Diane Martin, Clerk; Cecil Bennett, Nora Carpenter, Judy Harper, James Schall, Ryan Williams, Mariah Wright

Our congregation uses policy governance to guide its work. In brief, the Board discerns congregational values, mission, and ends in conversation with members, and the Executive (Rev. Ward), working with staff and members of the congregation, acts to realize the mission and ends in light of congregational values. Knitting together this work is a Governance Document that discusses (i) Ends, (ii) the role of the Board, (iii) the relationship between the Board and the Executive, and (iv) limitations on the Executive. The Board monitors the work of the Executive toward realizing congregational mission and ends via scheduled reports developed by the Executive.

The work of the Board is cyclical. In 2016-17, it discerned congregational Values. In 2017-18, it discerned congregational Mission and Ends. During 2018-19, it systematically reviewed the Governance Document that conditions the work toward mission and ends. This was the first systematic review undertaken since its inception in 2014. Hats off to the Board members and others who created the original Governance Document. You made the way easier.

Thus monitoring and reviewing in the context of policy governance were central elements of the work of the Board this year. In addition, the Board heard from congregants on a number of matters relevant to our mission and ends. This included action related to the Solar Panel Project, becoming informed about Green Sanctuary Recertification, the importance of UUA support, partnering with the Creation Care Alliance, working with the evolving Message Map, and becoming informed about the Buncombe County Pathway to Prevention, a plan to prevent sexual violence, domestic violence and child maltreatment.

Throughout the year the Board was continuously informed about our experience as a Sanctuary Congregation and the gift of the presence of “La Mariposa.” There is no doubt that this was the most collaborative activity that our congregation has ever participated in. It shows so clearly what is possible when true partnerships are formed.

In addition, the Board was regularly brought up-to-date about the work of our first-ever Minister of Faith Development, Rev. Claudia Jiménez. She has brought additional experience, effectiveness, and vitality to our Religious Education program, as well as worship and pastoral matters, that is greatly appreciated.

This year the president of the Board (Bruce Larson) and the clerk (Diane Martin) are completing their three-year terms. Newly joining members of the Board are Michael Beech and Clyde Hardin. The future looks good!

Leadership Development Committee



James Cassara, Chair, Kristi Miller, Bill Kleiber, Sarah Hartnett, and Bob Wilson

With rare exception the Leadership Development Committee (LDC) has met on a monthly basis for the 2018-2019 year. At the end of this month Kristi Miller will have completed her three-year term while Natale Polinko will be joining us.

It is been a productive year for us, engaging in new activities and working to grow and clarify the responsibilities of the LDC and strengthen its purpose. Previous to this year the LDC was one of the few (if any) committees to not have staff representation. Director of Administration Linda Topp has been attending our meetings since June, helping to streamline communication between the LDC and the staff.

In November, LDC members James Cassara and Bob Wilson, along with Board of Trustee member Judy Harper and congregational members Erin Shadle and Sandra Goodson drove to Birmingham, AL and visited the National Civil Rights Museum. It was an informative and moving experience that strengthened the bond between those that attended and reaffirmed our commitment to social awareness and justice.

Other activities have included an informal book club, reading and discussing the book, *Serving With Grace*, by Erik Walker Wikstrom and the book, *Listening and Caring Skills*, by John Savage. Both books helped expand our understanding of what leadership can look like and benefit both the individual and congregation.

As chair of the LDC I have made a concerted effort to attend new member potlucks, classes, and any activities that might increase the visibility of the LDC and help me to put future congregational leaders on our "radar."

In short it has been a year of growth and refinement, one we are proud of even as we understand there is much work to be done.

Lead Minister



Rev. Mark P. Ward

It's been a good year for UUCA. Financially we are stronger than we've been for some time, adult programs like Small Group Ministry and the Wednesday Thing are seeing good participation, worship has been engaging and often powerful, Sunday religious education has been well-received and we are moving more confidently into the work of social justice in several areas.

After several years of transition – in our staff structure, in reframing and articulating our mission and ends – we have been busy this year living into being the congregation we hope to see. Our values have been deeply interwoven into our Stewardship and Annual Budget Drive programs. With new Ends Statements in place, the Board of Trustees has taken the time this year to review and update its Governance document, and **Director of Administration Linda Topp** has updated all church policies and updated them on our web site where they are widely accessible. It's important work because it helps us all understand all the best practices we have discovered for how we work together and get things done as a community. I hope you'll take the opportunity some time to look them over.

We also have had a terrific first year with the **Rev. Claudia Jimenez** taking the reins of our new position of Minister of Faith Development. This position blends ministries of children, youth and adult faith development together with leading worship one Sunday a month and directing our pastoral care program. This first year was a trial run for this position, and Claudia and I have had a productive time getting a sense of its many demands. As this report was being written, we were preparing for a Start-Up workshop in May led by Rev. Dawn Cooley and Rev. Hope Johnson of the UUA's Southern District to help us clarify Claudia's roles. We expect that as a result of this review we will be adjusting the position in ways that clarify the congregation's expectations and better serve Claudia's call to ministry.

It's also been a year of some significant achievements in Social Justice. We continued our commitment to provide sanctuary for Maria that began in April in the last church year. Some 200 people, including members of some 17 other faith communities, helped provide support for that work that involved not only 24-7 coverage of our sanctuary space but volunteers who helped buy her food, provided sewing materials for goods at her *tienda*, and helped her navigate health concerns. We were all happy to be able to celebrate when Maria was able to return to her home, and we're delighted to have her and her husband, Esteban, often attending Sunday services.

We achieved a long-time dream of putting PV solar panels, more than 100 of them, on the flat roof of our main building. Once again it was a group effort that made this possible: our Net Zero group that designed the array and proposed a contractor to do that work (**Dan Clere, Bob Roepnack, John McGrann**). Then, the rest of you – more than 130 of you (THANK YOU!) – followed through with the funding to make it possible, one \$700 panel at a time. It's encouraging to know that most of the

electrons that power the cursor writing this report now are derived from renewable solar energy, and not gas or coal.

Indeed, what is most important for you to read in this report are these words: **Thank You!** We on staff endeavor through our gifts and skills to put the resources of this congregation in service to its Mission – to Connect Hearts, Challenge Minds, and Nurture Spirits while we Serve and Transform our Community and the World. But it is the members of this congregation who are the life of this community through your leadership, your commitment, your contributions, your good humor, your work, your compassion, your hope, your love.

☪☪ *Worship* ☪☪

Leading and arranging effective and compelling Sunday worship is one of my central duties as your lead minister and a great joy to me, but of course I don't do it alone. Many players go into creating Sunday worship. I'm grateful for Rev. Claudia's compelling contribution to our worship life about once a month as well as occasional pulpit guests who provide us with a diversity of perspectives. It is always an honor and joy to work with Music Director Les Downs and our UUCA Adult Choir and occasional All Ages Choir in developing worship services. The best worship is a synergy of word and music that lifts us up, that touches and inspires, and we do our best to achieve that goal every Sunday.

I'm also grateful for our team of Worship Associates who partner with me in making worship happen. This year they are **Louise Anderson, Jane Bramham, James Cassara, Lisa Forehand, Nancy Heath, Laurel Jernigan, Charlie Marks, Carol Taylor and Bob Wilson**, together with our two Youth Worship Associates, **Isabelle and Olivia Steinke**.

We began the worship year with a service from Bill Williamson, who grew up in this congregation and is now graduating from Harvard Divinity School. He invited us to imagine what a UU Revival might look like. Next, my colleague Rev. Jennifer Rhu, who is entering a hospice ministry, spoke on "The Living Should Take This to Heart."

I followed those two by inviting us to consider practicing Social Justice from the perspective of creating Sanctuary Everywhere. And my colleague Rev. Julianne Lepp came next with, "Walking with Ralph Waldo Emerson," and we closed July with our annual poetry service, "The Awe-dacity of Poetry."

Asheville Citizen-Times columnist Chris Highland kicked off August with "What Are We Missing?" and Rev. Claudia followed with her first service with us, "Transitions and Possibilities." UUCA member **Lisa Forehand** then offered a reflection on how "We Are Each Other's Angels" and we closed with our annual Water Service around the topic of "Joining the Story," with wonderful puppets from **Jennifer Murphy**. Then came UUCA member **Iris Hardin** leading a service on what it means to be Practicing UUs.

We kicked off the fall worship calendar, returning to two Sunday services weekly with a monthly worship theme of Vision. My service focused on how “We Can See Clearly,” followed by Rev. Claudia’s description of “A Vision for Faith Development,” and my service on “What Hope Looks Like.” We concluded September with my annual forgiveness sermon, this year focused on “Anger and Forgiveness.”

Then in October guest Rev. Michael Dowd led a service on “Expanding Circles of Compassion.” For a month with the theme of Sanctuary, Rev. Claudia reflected on “The Sanctuary of Certainty,” and I followed with a service inviting us to see our work supporting Maria in sanctuary on our campus as “Sanctuary of the Heart.” Then, while many of us were away at the annual congregational retreat at The Mountain, musician Greg Greenway led a service focused on his own struggles with racial justice entitled, “Deeper than Skin.”

In November with a monthly theme of Memory, I led a service looking forward to the upcoming election asking “And Now What?” Rev. Claudia and I followed with a bilingual service inviting the congregation to imagine a vision where “Together, We Weave the World.” My next service, “Remembering the Land,” raised up native American voices who invite us to imagine ourselves in kinship with the Earth. We concluded the month with guest Rev. Joe Hoffman reflecting on “Staying Focused Amid Chaos.”

For December, with a worship theme of Mystery, Rev. Claudia led with a service on “Finding Meaning in the Season.” Weather caused us to cancel service the next week, but then we continued with my service on “A Naturalist Makes Peace with Mystery,” followed by a service from me in the spirit of the winter solstice entitled “Sweet Stillness.” Our Christmas Eve pageant focused on “Three Miraculous Births” from religious history – Jesus, Buddha and Confucius and in our candlelight service for the second year in a row the choir offered a half-hour of holiday music before the service, entitled “Gather Round.” Our last service of December entitled “Starting the New Year,” centered on stories and rituals to mark the year’s end.

Beginning the new year with the theme of Possibility, I opened worship in January with a service reflecting on Emily Dickinson’s poem “I Dwell in Possibility,” followed by a service on Parker Palmer’s invitation to “Look Well to the Growing Edge.” Rev. Claudia followed with a service focused on the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and then a service on “Caroline Bartlett Crane and the Seven-Day Church.”

In February with the worship theme of Trust, I began with a service reflecting on the nature of faith entitled “In What Shall We Trust?,” followed by our youth, the YRUU group, with a service on “Breaking and Rebuilding Trust.” I finished up the month with services on “The Other Side of Fear” and “Should We Sing Amazing Grace?” which was prompted by an auction winner.

We kicked off March with the theme of Journey, with our Celebration Sunday blending reflections from me and Annual Budget Drive Co-Chair **Will Jernigan** and wonderful music from our choir and our

house band, The Sandburgers. Our next service, “Moving with Metta,” was a collaboration between me the UUCA Buddhist Sangha. Then, my service entitled “An Unfinished Journey” reflected on the legacy of the 1965 Civil Rights march from Selma to Montgomery. The next service, “Owning Your Journey,” tied together the poetry of Mary Oliver with the story of the Exodus.

April, with a worship theme of Wholeness, began with a reflection from me about what it means to be “All There,” followed by an Earth Day-focused service around the subject of climate change entitled “So Much, So Big.” Rev. Claudia and I collaborated on a multigenerational Easter service that invited us to think about how each of us can be agents of blessing. The closing service of April was a blend of poems, stories and reflections intended to help us discover how we might “Abide with Grief.”

With the deadline for this report approaching, we are looking forward in May, with a worship theme of Curiosity, to the annual Coming of Age credo service, then two services from me, one exploring the meaning of our Unitarian Flower Ceremony, entitled “May You Blossom,” and another following my practice of offering a sermon in May on Unitarian history to coincide with the anniversary of W.E. Channing’s “Unitarian Christianity” sermon in 1819. This year’s service will focus the “Western Way” among Unitarians in the 19th century, which opened the denomination to new ideas and new practices. Rev. Claudia will close the month and the regular worship year with a service around our UU *Our Whole Lives* curricula entitled, “Curiosity and Sex.”

☪☪ *Passages* ☪☪

Finally, we take note sadly of those members of our community who died in the last year, all them remarkable people in meaningful ways who leave behind loved ones and a community that grieves losing them. We think of **Nels Arnold, Leon Gouin, Clark Olsen, Jane Stearns, and Sam Zurich.**

☪☪ *Earth & Social Justice Ministry* ☪☪

Recommitting to Black Lives Matter

Members of our Action group include: **Eleanor Lane, Carol Buffum, Cecilia Rawlins, Elizabeth Schell, Mary Alm, Joy McConnell, Michael Beech, Mary Ellen Brown, Chistine Van Wandelen, and Sue Walton.**

In August 2018, UU’s Anti-Racism Group action, which had become inactive, reawakened itself and rebranded as the UUCA ReCommitting to Black Lives Matter action group. Our main vision was to reignite interest and commitment by the congregation in our 2016 Resolution in support of the Black Lives Matter movement.

Since then we have focused on increasing presence at the Earth & Social Justice table at coffee hour and have published a brochure detailing the vision of the committee and some ways to get involved. When reports surfaced of the dismal situation in the Asheville City schools over continued, and worsening, racial disparities in outcomes, our committee worked with the ministers to bring this

message into worship and began garnering interest among congregants in putting together an Educational Initiative to respond. More than 30 people signed up and multiple meetings and discussions have been underway to determine the best and most productive way for our congregation to make a difference. As part of this work, we are preparing to host a “Racial Equity Engagement and Language” workshop with Marta Alcala Williams later this May to better equip our congregants for being more intentional allies in this work.

This past year we continued our partnership with Asheville Showing Up for Racial Justice (ASURJ) by hosting their monthly community potlucks and providing childcare when needed. We continued to strengthen our connections with groups like MotherRead and Marvelous Math Club.

Congregants who regularly attend various multiracial coalition meetings and the Citizen Police Advisory Council report back at our monthly meetings so that we can be better informed of potential needs as well as existing work going on in our city. We also have been working to increase visibility of Community Plate recipients throughout the months we are partnered with them by adding materials (and a giving basket) at the ESJM coffee hour table.

This past year a covenant group also emerged that is focused on Dismantling White Supremacy and is presently doing the work of Layla Saad’s “Me and White Supremacy” workbook. This group meets twice a month.

Out of a desire to uplift all Earth and Social Justice ministry groups at UUCA and the intersectional ties between them, our action group has supported Elizabeth Schell in putting more energy into improving communication between groups around organizing the Sunday morning coffee hour table, getting out info to congregants via email, and working with Rev. Mark on a gathering in early summer. We are very excited about the coming year in which we plan on supporting an initiative to raise the level of visibility of Black Lives of UU in the congregation as well as deepen racial justice concerns via study groups, worship, workshops, and other offerings to and with the congregation.

Earth Community Circle (ECC)

This was a big year for the Earth Community Circle with the completion of our Solar Energy project, resulting in the placement of more than 100 PV panels that supply about 85% of the electrical needs of our main building. It was an exciting moment when Lead Minister Rev. Mark Ward was able to pull down a symbolic switch in worship to acknowledge the completion of that project. Similarly, we are grateful for member **Dan Clere’s** participation in the Creation Care Alliance event on solar energy for faith communities and the *Mountain Express* article that highlighted his role in bringing our solar project into being.

Wink Zachritz and **Grace Curry** completed an intensive review of our history of environmental action over the past 10 years for an assessment to accompany our request to have our status as a Green Sanctuary congregation renewed.

The ECC is currently reviewing proposals for our focus in the coming year. We also once again provided volunteer help for the Southside Orchard fall workday.

ECC co-chair **Rebecca Bringle** led a Wednesday Thing book discussion group over several weeks on the current UU Common Read, *Justice on Earth*. The ECC also led in the initiative to make UUCA a Congregational Partner of Mountain True's Creation Care Alliance.

Environmental & Social Justice Film Night

(Submitted by Charles **Wussow**) The E&SJ Film Night was very successful this year. Attendance was up from last year, averaging over 40 attendees per screening. As has been true for the past 5 years, a majority of attendees were non-UU members, demonstrating the outreach aspect of the program. The announcement email list has grown to approximately 300 households. While a few attendees are "regulars," participation seems to depend primarily on film subject matter.

Environmental films dealing with climate change, including the impact from animal agriculture, have been the most popular, demonstrating a growing public awareness and concern. The film, *Living in the Future's Past*, narrated by Jeff Bridges, drew 85 attendees. Voting rights and the ratification of the ERA were also popular topics.

Screening license costs have increased to approximately \$150, including DVDs and shipping. Donations vary, but have averaged 40-60% of license fees, also an increase.

We have had some issues with the overhead projector. The projector failed the day of one screening, and we had to use the large video monitor. While the monitor has better video than the projector, it cannot be raised high enough for viewing by the audience size we normally have.

An increasing number of the folding chairs are soiled.

Iris Williams and I look forward to the 2019-2020 E&SJ Film screening season!

Community Plate

Linda Kooiker, Chair, **Rusty Bryant**, **Laurel Jernigan**, **Eleanor Lane**, **Nancy Miller**, **Brenda Robinson**, **Donna Robinson** and **Lori Vose**

(Submitted by **Linda Kooiker**) The Community Plate team contemplated our role at UUCA. Keeping in mind our congregation's work in social justice, we decided our emphasis should be to continue to fund organizations that are administered by and serve people of color. We also thought about the size of the organization and felt that we preferred to fund smaller organizations where our donation would have a more significant effect.

This year, we asked organizations to not only send a representative to attend on a Sunday morning, but to provide a speaker who has benefited from the services of the organization. The congregation

has responded with even larger donations than in the past. Last fiscal year, we donated a total of \$18,900 to 12 entities. This year we anticipate a donation total of over \$21,000.

Peacemakers

(Submitted by **Bruce Larson**) Peacemakers meets the second Wednesday of every month “To explore peace and the way of peace so that we might practice and promote peace in all of our relations.” Its members are those who gather. It usually meets in 21 Edwin Place from 7:00 to 8:15 pm.

Peacemakers is the continuation of the Peacemaking Potluck, which met from March 14, 2007 through August 9, 2017. The new name was adopted to support The Wednesday Thing, which made the potluck unnecessary. Peacemakers began meeting on September 13, 2017.

Information about Peacemakers is communicated through UUCA’s *Weekly eNews*, inserts in the Order of Service, and a monthly email, “The Month Begins,” by distribution list; the list has 67 addresses and is maintained continuously.

During the twelve months covered by this report, Peacemakers met eleven times, not gathering in December due to weather.

- Read and discussed *Centering: Navigating Race, Authenticity, and Power in Ministry*, edited by Mitra Rahnema. May through August.
- Viewed and discussed the 2018 Ware Lecture of Brittany Packnett. September.
- Viewed and discussed the video “The Power of Forgiveness.” October and November.
- Did not meet. December.
- Viewed and discussed the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize lectures by Nadia Murad and Denis Mukwege. January and February.
- Viewed and discussed the video “Instructions to the Cook” based on the work of the late Bernie Glassman. March.
- Gathered to discuss “What’s Next?” for Peacemakers. April.

Thirty individuals participated in the activities of Peacemakers during the 12 months covered by this report, down from 40 in the prior year. Average attendance was 8, down from 9 in the prior year.

The gathering of Peacemakers that took place in April made it very clear that participants are eager to “DO something.” Building capacity to “Do something” and then “Doing Something” will surely be focal points of May 2019 through April 2020.

Music Director



Dr. Leslie Downs

Every summer I attend the annual Association of Unitarian Universalist Music Ministries Conference, where I am exposed to music that other congregations are doing that we have not done, as well as new music that will work well for our services. This past year the choir sang several anthems with themes relating to our country and its core values as well as our usual themes of social justice, love and inspiration. We have also begun introducing songs, such as Holly Near's "I Am Willing," that can be sung with our combined choirs and the congregation.

The UUCA Choir continues to grow, both in numbers and as a solid ensemble. This year we welcomed several new choir members from the congregation, and I continue to hire ringers (trained professionals) to provide additional support.

Our Multigenerational Choir has morphed into an All-Ages Choir. They meet several times a year and provide a singing opportunity for our children and for adults who are not able to commit to singing in the UUCA Choir.

We have been fortunate to have some wonderful guest artists whom we pay, including Finn Magill, Chris Rosser, Jason DeCristofaro, and Heather Pierson. Our in-house musicians, including **Brett Johnson, Paul Moore, Will Jernigan, Sandra Goodson, and Juliana Austin**, continue to periodically provide music for our services. Our YRUU and Coming of Age classes have also provided music for services.

Minister of Faith Development



Rev. Claudia Jiménez, CRE

☞☞ *Ministry Overview* ☞☞

Religious Education (RE) Coordinators: Kim Collins and Jen Johnson

Committee on Ministry (CoM): Barbara Campbell, Ben Fleming, Lisa Horak, Jim Steffe and Carol Taylor

I am deeply grateful for the warm welcome I have received from the congregation and staff in my first year at UUCA. It has been a busy year adjusting to life in the mountains and to serving a 500-member congregation. The transition has been smooth thanks to the preparation by the RE staff who had curricula and volunteers in place for the new RE year. Linda Topp who served as interim RE director, had the RE Council staffed and ready to begin our work together. Rev. Ward also prepared the Pastoral Care Team for my arrival and hosted an informal gathering for us to get acquainted. Staff has been available throughout the transition to answer questions and provide support. I am excited about the work we are doing together. I am also grateful to serve a congregation that is engaged and committed to learning, searching for meaning and “walking the talk” of Unitarian Universalism. The work required for my portfolio could not be done without the myriad of volunteers who offer of their time and talent consistently and enthusiastically.

My work in faith development (FD), pastoral care and worship (monthly sermon, coordination of Time for all Ages and Wednesday Vespers) has been both rewarding and challenging as I strive to fulfill job expectations and work realistic hours (as well as support RE staff in doing the same). I am grateful to the Committee on Ministry, which meets monthly, providing feedback and support as I reflect on my ministry at UUCA. They will evaluate me each year as I work toward final Fellowship with the UUA. I also look forward to the May “Start-Up Workshop” that will be facilitated by UUA Congregational Life staff to invite the congregation, key leaders and staff to discuss the focus of my work this year and expectations for the future.

I met weekly with RE staff this year to discuss programming, review policies, plan for 2019 and complete the UUA *Lifespan FD Accountability Assessment Tool*. This tool challenged us to explore individual, program and congregational multicultural competencies and receptivity. It has increased our awareness of ways we can be more inclusive of diverse ethnicities and experiences in our programs. For example, in Spirit Play we are evaluating stories we use to ensure diverse authors and cultural references. We have also explored ways to incorporate racial justice work into the 2019 programs using Teach-In materials and other resources. Next year our goal is to continue this work by taking the *Intercultural Development Inventory* to inform further reflection and skill building for anti-

racism, anti-oppression, multicultural work (in the acronym-filled world of Unitarian Universalists, this is referred to as ARAOMC work).

I also met monthly with the RE Council. We got to know each other during a day-long retreat in August when we discussed our covenant, roles and expectations. As this report is being written the RE Council is actively recruiting teachers for 2019 under the leadership of Jennifer Gorman. Ann McLellan and Amy Moore are planning the Volunteer Appreciation reception later this month.

All the program reports included in this document correspond to areas of responsibility which fulfill UUCA's values and mission. Each staff member summarized their areas of focus. **RE Coordinator, Kim Collins:** YRUU, Our Whole Lives, Childcare, Non-Wednesday Thing adult programs. **RE Coordinator, Jen Johnson:** Spirit Play, Coming of Age, NF, Elementary.

☪☪ *Congregational Care* ☪☪

Pastoral Visitors: Karin Eckert, Iris Hardin, Jill Preyer, Ephraim Schechter (reserve status as of 5/19), Myrtle Staples, Carol Taylor

Meal Train Coordination Team: Beverly Cutter, Deb Holden, Corey Gibson

This dedicated team offered a compassionate presence and deep listening to congregants dealing with disease, chronic illness, grief and personal/family crisis. Our team also sends cards to those who they are aware are dealing with health and other life challenges. We also share information with Venny Zachritz for *This Loving Community (TLC)*, the weekly email that keeps the congregation connected and supportive of each other. The Pastoral Visitor Team met monthly to check-in and discuss any additional support or training needed to better serve the congregation. We welcomed **Corey Gibson** to the Meal Train Coordination Team and appreciate his help in ensuring meals and practical support are available to congregants in need. We also thanked **Ephraim Schechter** for his faithful service on the team as he assumes reserve status until we are able to diversify our group.

As the year closes we are planning a training for new Pastoral Visitors. I have made connections in the community to include the expertise of Mental Health First Aid educator Andrea Morris as well as death doula Misa Teral and Trish Roux. Greater visibility of our program will require a larger team. Furthermore, it is important to recognize that at times Pastoral Visitors travel and need to step away. Having a larger team will ensure continuity of service.

The team is also exploring sponsoring programs that address pastoral care concerns such as conversations about death and dying. There is an identified need for a widow/ers' grief support group but we have been unable to identify a facilitator. This year we sponsored various events:

- Helpmate and Our Voice presented on domestic abuse and child maltreatment
- Pastoral Visitor **Jill Preyer** facilitated a Drop-In parent support group
- In May there will be an Advanced Directives Workshop

- The Blue Christmas service was planned but had to be cancelled because of snow. It will be offered next year (hoping for NO snow this time).

☪☪ *Multigenerational Faith Development* ☪☪

The Wednesday Thing

Planning Team: Kim Collins, Ellen Brown, Linda Topp, Jeff Jones, Rev. Jiménez

Hosting Team: Winslow Tuttle, Tobias VanBuren, Bob and Jane Hite, James Cassara, Joyce

Birkenholz, Jeff Jones, Kim Collins

Average attendance: Vespers 33; Program 30

When considering ministry at UUCA, the Wednesday Thing concept was tremendously appealing. The Wednesday Thing provides mid-week multigenerational faith development and community-building. Despite being a resource-heavy program with fluctuating attendance, the conversations, learning and worship that occur each week affirm its value to the UUCA community. I am appreciative of the work this year's planning team accomplished to ensure recruitment of hosts, vespers leaders and program facilitators.

One of our goals was to reduce staff time dedicated to the program. This was partially accomplished by reducing staff program facilitation and hosting responsibilities. **Jeff Jones** recruited a team to be Wednesday Thing hosts who set up and closed the main building after Vespers. Jeff also worked with the team to develop a checklist for hosts. Congregants volunteered to offer programs and the team decided to use drop-in workshops to launch faith development programs such as Haunting Church and UU History. We were pleased to have more offers to facilitate programs than we had program slots.

A second goal was to provide weekly all-ages programming. Some were more successful than others. We will continue to explore ways to encourage greater multi-age involvement at the Wednesday Thing. Program highlights:

- **Odyssey:** We invited long time members of the congregation to share their life stories beyond their involvement at UUCA. This year's Odyssey presenters were: **Bonnie Habel Stone, Larry Wheeler, Nancy Heath, Jerry McLellan**
- **Multi-gen Movement:** All ages dance classes were offered by local dancer Lisa Zahiya
- **Drop-in Parent Support Group:** **Jill Preyer** facilitated a pilot parent group to be continued in the fall. Educator Colleen Burnett from the Positive Parenting Program will offer a workshop May 15.
- **Book Studies:** *The Better World Handbook*, co-authored by **Brett Johnson**; *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo and *Justice on Earth* edited by Rev. Mishra-Marzetti and Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom (UUA Common Read)

Whole-Church Worship

This year there were eight whole-church worship services including the holiday pageant: *Three Miraculous Births*, and two services led by YRUU and Coming of Age youth. Every Sunday there was a Time for All Ages that corresponded to the worship theme.

Mystery Friends Program

This staff-led program provides opportunities for intergenerational connections. Partners are encouraged to continue the connection by sitting together during Time for All Ages or Whole Church worship, sharing a meal during Soup Sunday and participating together in UUCA projects or events. This year we had 10 matches through the program.

Congregational Retreat: Gathering at the Mountain

Planning Team: Kristi Miller, Larry Wheeler, Nancy Heath, Sarah Hargrove, Anna Martin, Mariah Wright, Cecil Bennett and Myrtle Staples

Vision: The purpose of the UUCA Gathering at the Mountain is to foster intergenerational relationships, to appreciate nature in a uniquely UU setting, and to have fun.

(Submitted by **Kristi Miller**) Approximately 140 congregants attended the 6th annual UUCA Gathering at the Mountain, October 26-28, 2018. Rev. Ward and Rev. Jiménez were in attendance all weekend. We opened with the creation of a sand mandala under the guidance of **Martha Kiger**. Workshops included “Stories from the Heart” with published-author **Nora Carpenter**, “A Way to Start a Day” with our minister Rev. Mark Ward and a dulcimer workshop with the **Kleibers**. There was music throughout the weekend thanks to the Sandburgers, our homegrown music group. We had a talent show, a costume contest, several hikes, low- and high-ropes courses, arts and crafts for all, labyrinth walks, and a garden tour. The weather was cold and rainy, so we had to snuggle quite a bit, but the sun came out for a nice look at the mountains before we left on Sunday.

The committee met after the retreat and agreed that the retreat was at capacity – there are no plans for further expansion! The committee reviewed evaluations, debriefed and planned for 2019. New committee members for the 2019 retreat October 11-13 include **Colleen Finegan** and **Adam Griffith**.

☪☪ Children & Youth Religious Education ☪☪

Staff: Kim Collins and Jen Johnson, Religious Education Coordinators

RE Council Members: Kay Aler-Maida, Jennifer Gorman, Greg Gregory, Ann McLellan, Katherine Murphy, Melissa Murphy, Steve Reines

First, some numbers:

Children and Youth Registration: 125

Average attendance: 98.8 (includes teaching volunteers)

Highest attendance: 127 on 9/9 (First day of RE - this is typical)

Volunteer teachers/assistants: 75

All Ages Faith Development - 9:15-10:30 on Sunday mornings, Sept-May

We had a small, core group of young children who regularly attended our 9:15 program, as well as older children who occasionally joined us. We utilized *Soul Matters* materials to integrate theme-based ministry for this class. Consistent attendees fostered a cohesive, intimate group. We also had a small pool of assistants, often congregational elders (thank you!) who delighted in getting to know these children and vice versa. This program was mostly staff-led due to minimal volunteers. Although the program was successful, it requires more paid time to sustain the program. We have decided to use a curriculum next year to entice a dedicated four-person team to lead 9:15 programming.

Grade Level Faith Development Programs - 11:15-12:30 on Sunday mornings, Sept-May

Each program is facilitated by a four-person volunteer team that coordinates lessons with staff support. Teacher training and planning time occur in late August each year.

Spirit Play (K-3rd Grade)

This storytelling-based program has been a core tradition at UUCA for many years. As the trained storytellers unfold the pieces while they tell the story, children usually listen and hear the UU principles being shared in captivating stories. There is truly a magical quality to this when the setting, storyteller and room energy is aligned!

We require training for our storytellers. Several congregants have participated in weekend trainings. One of them, **Will Jernigan**, offered two “in-house” storyteller trainings this year to increase our eligible storytellers.

Before the story, we open our Spirit Play circle with rituals, including a short welcoming activity, offertory, candle lighting for joys and sorrows, and brief silent meditation/prayer time. We have witnessed how, over the year, the children respond positively to these rituals. It has been a pleasure to watch their growth. We do all of these things with our 9:15 class as well.

Early in the year, we began choosing a leader of the day, which helped almost immediately with some of the challenges that arise with young children in a group setting. It encouraged investment in one another and, alongside the opening activity of sharing our joys and sorrows, helped us get to know one another better than our previous approach allowed.

Another part of our Spirit Play program is the activity following the story. Centers may include: Contemplation, Movement, Art, Drama, Music or Nature’s Classroom

Elementary (4-6th Grade)

Curricula: Grade 4 – *Love Connects Us* Grade 5 – *Amazing Grace*

This has been a marvelous year in our older elementary classes. The teaching teams have been spectacular in what they provide the children through the Tapestry of Faith (UUA) curricula but more importantly, through their time and energy to be present and engaging with these kids. Every week the teachers are sending home notes about what they did in class, with links and encouragement to continue the growth and learning at home.

Neighboring Faiths (7-9th Grade)

This class offers insight on world religions by directly experiencing those faith traditions in their own settings and supportive learning that surrounds those visits. One challenge this year has been a small class size due to 7th-8th grade split offerings of OWL and *Neighboring Faiths*. Visitor attendance is a challenge for this age group due to field trips and closed OWL class.

Coming of Age (9th grade)

What does it take to run this program? Four teachers, 11 mentors, four chaperones, three staff members and UUCA donors/diners at Coming of Age fundraising events supported 10 youth this year.

This intensive program challenges youth in coming to a fuller understanding of themselves as they explore their beliefs, values and UU identity. The youth and families participating in this program are asked to make their faith development a big priority during the year. Requirements include: regular attendance at Sunday classes; participation in 3 retreats, 2 ceremonies, and a youth conference; planning and participating in the Coming of Age service; and fundraising and planning for a summer trip.

This year, families were given flexibility to choose their trip location and experience. Navigating that was not simple. They were clear they wanted to do hands-on service for their trip. Travel plans were coordinated by parents and guided and supported by staff. In June, they will be traveling to New York to volunteer and learn at the Farm Sanctuary, as well as explore Ithaca, NY and the surrounding area. Along the way they will visit three UU congregations. Four UUCA chaperones (not parents - more multigenerational connections being built at UUCA!) will accompany and journey with the nine youth.

Coming of Age provides an opportunity for youth and an adult who is NOT their parent to form a bond across the ages. It pushes youth to better define what being a UU means to them and how it is expressed in their lives. Coming of Age is not just for the youth. It is a time for teachers and mentors to reflect and deepen their own faith. This program embodies multigenerational faith development.

YRUU (Young Religious UUs) – (10th-12th Grade)

Our high school group met regularly this fall and winter. They enjoyed time together in the kitchen making and sharing a meal (sometimes with better results than other times). They used the video series, *30 Days*, to explore what it would be like to live as someone who holds different, and sometimes antithetical views from their own. They also planned and put on a worship service on the theme of Trust in February. Beginning in March, they met less frequently. We have struggled to find the right balance between youth-led and adult-led classes over the last couple of years. We have decided to go a different direction next year and use a curriculum instead of the more free-form structure we have tried the last few years. We hope to provide adult leadership while providing the space for youth to explore opportunities to be involved in worship planning, small group experiences, and other facets of congregational life. We were fortunate to send **Wendy Fletcher** to a youth advisor

training at the beginning of the year. Along with **Steven Reines, Susan Andrew, and Allen Currens** she worked collaboratively to guide our youth this year.

Social Justice Integration

Our goal is to become more intentional about integrating opportunities for learning through service and participation in social justice action. Midway through the year, we invited classes to incorporate at least one social justice activity into their classes, providing some options but leaving it flexible to classes. Activities included:

- 4th grade class participated in a park and neighborhood clean-up this spring.
- 5th-6th grade class served breakfast in Pritchard Park one morning alongside other UUCA and a UCC church. Additionally, class teacher Melissa Murphy wrote a timely lesson plan to incorporate the life and lessons of Clark Olsen.
- All Ages projects included:
 - Blessing Bags made this spring during a special program on a spring break Sunday. Families are eager to distribute these.
 - Creating cards for pastoral care concerns at UUCA.
 - Supporting food drives for Beloved Asheville following ICE raids in WNC and Loving Food Resources in November/December. **Barbara Kruszewski** led the All Ages program one Sunday to kick off the drive to teach the children about Loving Food Resources.

Our Whole Lives (OWL)

We were proud to offer 3 different levels of this comprehensive sexuality education program. This program is one of the best ways that we can equip our children and youth to navigate the complicated path of adolescence and young adulthood. Our Whole Lives does not just focus on biology and sexual relationships. It includes tools for healthy relationships, explores how to stay safe in this digital era, and discusses issues such as bullying and equality. We again offered the 26-week 7th/8th level of OWL that we consider a core curriculum. We also offered the 8-week class for K-2nd grade children in the spring. We took on the adventure of field-testing the revised curriculum for youth in 10th-12th grade this spring. OWL teachers are specially trained and highly dedicated to the mission of bringing this quality, nationally recognized program to our children and youth. Our OWL teachers this year were **Deb Turner, Shawn Landreth, Jennifer Gorman, Dan Phairas, Mike Murray, Langdon Martin** and **Jarrold Geoffrey**. Kim Collins also taught K-2 and High School OWL as well as coordinated all of our OWL programs.

Child Care at UUCA

We strive to offer quality child care for as many meetings and events as possible at UUCA. We truly believe that making things inclusive for parents is extremely important as we work towards whole-congregation, family ministry. We have hired several people this year as several others left to pursue other opportunities. We have consistently offered child care on Sunday mornings and Wednesday

evenings, and for other regular meetings and groups. We are currently hoping to work with Green Opportunities to hire some folks from their new child care training program. We are also looking into setting up some professional training for our current child care team in order to further improve the experience for our children, parents, and child care givers.

☪☪ *Adult Faith Development* ☪☪

Small Group Ministry

Small Group Ministry Coordinators: Iris Hardin and Paula Massey

UUCA's program of Small Group ministry is intended to foster individual human connection and faith development in a small group setting. These groups include Covenant Groups, the Buddhist Fellowship, and CUUPS (Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans).

Covenant Groups

We have different types of groups (e.g for women, families, elders) and drop-in groups for those who wish to try out the program. There are a total of nine covenant groups with 75 participants, including facilitators.

There is also a Men's Breakfast Group with a long history at UUCA that is not formally under the umbrella of Small Group Ministry. However, it meets participants' need for connection and spiritual deepening. We often recommend men looking for small group connections to this Men's Breakfast Group.

Joy McConnell, immediate past Chair, was instrumental in developing Small Group Ministry at UUCA. She was a valuable resource as we transitioned into this role.

(Submitted by **Paula Massey** and **Iris Hardin**) Our initial priority was to identify the current group organization – including the facilitators, members of the groups, and time and place of meetings. Once a database was set up, we began contacting members who had indicated an interest in joining a group and placed them accordingly. At the same time, we attended New Member Potlucks and New Member Connector meetings to inform and recruit into the Small Group Ministry. Notices appear in the Sunday bulletin offering information on “drop-in” Covenant Groups.

We held an “appreciation” brunch in the fall to introduce ourselves to current facilitators and to thank them for their service as well as learn more about the operation of their groups. This winter, we invited facilitators to a brunch to thank them for their ongoing commitments and solicit feedback about how we can best support them. One decision we faced was to determine if established groups should disband after a period of time. Groups at UUCA have tended to stick together for years, inviting new members to join as space becomes available. It

would be a cultural shift to have groups disband and reform each year. At this time, established groups are not in favor of such a shift.

Future work includes continued recruitment into the current groups, creating at least one more drop in Covenant Group, and providing training for facilitators. At this time, it appears we need at least one new group to accommodate men and/or mixed gender. We continue to send out the monthly *Soul Matters* packet to each facilitator and will be exploring the use of training materials offered from this valuable resource.

Spiritual Deepening Groups

In addition, UUCA provides gathering space for two spiritual deepening groups led by UUCA members:

CUUPS - Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans

Spirit Council: Nanette Manhart, Sherry Lundquist, Susan Foster, Mary Ann Somervill.

(Submitted by **Mary Ann Somervill**) Our goal this first year was to create rituals for each of the eight holidays or *sabbats* on the Wheel of the Year. The Wheel is a Pagan timetable based on an agrarian culture. Each of the *sabbats* has related life lessons as well as seasonal celebrations. Our rituals are scheduled the Sunday evening prior to the actual holiday, usually in the Sanctuary, but occasionally outside. Our ceremonies are always open to the public. All ages and genders are welcome. We have a potluck meal following the rituals, encouraging participants to become a community rather than just an audience. Our attendance ranges from 12 to over 50.

We have provided ritual work and other programs for the congregation. We shared a ritual in 2018 for Vespers during the Wednesday Thing. In addition, we sponsored a labyrinth walk, created a memorial service for the late president of the UU Women's Connection, and offered several presentations on Paganism for religious education classes.

We are pleased with the support and encouragement we have received. We feel honored to be part of the spiritual paths available to those at UUCA. We look forward to growth in programming and in numbers as time goes on.

Buddhist Fellowship

Co-Leaders Jim Steffe and Karen Waters

(Submitted by **Jim Steffe** and **Karen Waters**) This group supports UUCA members and friends in the study, exploration, and practice of Buddhism. It provides practice sessions and a forum to consider how the Dharma may enrich Unitarian Universalism. The Fellowship embraces all forms of Buddhism (secular and traditional), as well as all lineages and practices such as Zen,

Theravada, and Tibetan. The Fellowship gathers twice a month in the Sanctuary. The meeting starts with meditation followed by Dharma/UU sharing based on reading material shared before the meeting. There are 95 people on the mailing list. Average attendance is 12-15.

One highlight for the year was the March *Metta* (loving kindness) service presented by Rev. Ward. It was very well received and increased congregational awareness of Buddhism and the Fellowship. The Fellowship is listed as a Practice Group with the UU Buddhist Fellowship Sangha. We are one of five UU-Buddhist groups located in North Carolina. **Dennis Hoogerman** donated a very nice brass ringing bowl and striker to the Fellowship. Overall, we feel well supported by our ministers, staff and congregation.

Other Adult Faith Development Programs

In addition to our robust Adult RE offerings at the Wednesday Thing and Small Group Ministry, we offered five adult faith development options this year. In the fall, **Rev. Jeff Jones** offered a course on Unitarian Universalist history. Staff offered a special program designed for newcomers, but open to all, *UU Journeys*. This small group experience was an exploration of the different paths of Unitarian Universalism. It was offered again in the spring as part of the Wednesday Thing. In the winter **Rev. Jeff Jones** offered a class on Compassionate Communication. Rev. Claudia Jiménez facilitated *The Haunting Church* which encouraged participants to explore and process their religious past. Finally, in the spring **Rev. Jeff Jones** offered a class about public transportation in Asheville.

In April, **Martha Kiger, Bruce Larson** and Rev. Claudia partnered with Helpmate and Our Voice to screen *The Mask You Live In* about toxic masculinity and its impact on parenting, men and their relationships. The screening was financed through a donation on UUCA's wish list. It was open to the public. Forty-five people attended.

☪☪ *Professional Development* ☪☪

Lifespan Religious Education Coordinator (Kim Collins)

Kim attended her third Renaissance Module this year. Renaissance Modules are a professional development and education program for Religious Educators. Kim will also be attending General Assembly in June and is excited for even more opportunities to learn and engage with the wider community of Unitarian Universalists.

Religious Education Coordinator (Jen Johnson)

Jen will be traveling to General Assembly in June for the first time. She is excited to be exposed to wider UUA offerings and to dig deeper into the world of faith development.

Webinars:

Special Programs for Youth; Facilitator: Natalie Briscoe

Bringing Theme Based Ministry Home; Facilitator: Kimberly Sweeney

Leading Meditation with Children and Youth; Facilitator: Jaelynn Scott

Minister of Faith Development

Southeast UU Ministers' Association: A Retreat at The Mountain
First Year Ministers Seminar (UUA)
Racial Equity Training
Enneagram Women's Leadership Circle
Liberal Religious Educators' Association Fall Conference
Webinar: Theme Based Whole Congregational Worship
Mentor Training (UUA Religious Education Credentialing Committee)
Minister monthly cluster meetings as time allows

Director of Administration



Dr. Linda M. Topp

In general, the activities that are grouped under "administrative support" help the Executive stay within the Executive Limitations as laid out in the Board's Governance Document. Although the Board remains the responsible entity for the workings of the congregation, the Board has delegated all programming and administrative functions to the Executive while the Board maintains a very deliberate "watchful eye." This gives the Board time to do its most important work, that of working with the congregation to set the vision and direction for the congregation.

Administrative support entails 6 major areas of responsibilities: general administration, human resources, buildings & grounds, finance/accounting & fundraising, and communications. In addition, at the start of this church year I also became supervisor of the membership/ connections functions of the congregation, with 15 hours of support from our Connections Coordinator, Venny Zachritz.

The day-to-day work involved in providing administrative support for the activities of the congregation is not necessarily annual report-worthy. Details of specific areas of church administration are reported to the Board on an annual cycle that is part of the Governance Document. Here is a rundown of the highlights of our year.

☞☞ General Administration and Communications ☞☞

Much of the administrative work accomplished by your staff is done by Tish Murphy. She has responsibility for managing our database, Realm, which means she enters all giving information into the database and produces reports that are invaluable to the operations of the congregation. It's through her work that you and I know what your pledge for the year is, how much you've already paid on it and what other financial gifts you have given to the church. Tish also is the main point of contact for all telephone calls, visitors and rental inquiries. She is also responsible for producing many of the communications that you receive from UUCA, including the *Weekly* and *Worship eNews*,

the orders of service and the multitude of inserts that get created over the year, and many of the “blast” emails we send out. Tish also produces a monthly print newsletter (1 page) that we send to the 20 or so remaining congregants who do not use email.

The website is our key communications outlet. It is updated nearly daily and has become the repository of much information about this congregation. Whenever you have a question about operations, policies, procedures, programs or just about anything else, check the website. One easy way to do that is to use the search box at the top of the home page.

Tish Murphy handles the weekly changes about worship services, and posts sermons. Linda Topp manages changes or additions of pages, slides, widgets, menus and more!

Other communications responsibilities: Linda Topp usually edits the *Weekly eNews*, Venny Zachritz creates the weekly *This Loving Community*. Kim Collins is best at posting to UUCA’s Facebook pages, Rev. Claudia is second-best, and Linda Topp comes in a poor third.

☪☪ *Membership* ☪☪

Leaders: **Janice May, Anna Ward, Sally Witkamp, Nancy Bragg, Paula Massey, Barbara Campbell, Bill Clontz, Meg Clontz, Gay Lambirth, Eleanor Lane, Larry Wheeler, Iris Hardin.**

(Submitted by Connection Coordinator Venetia Zachritz) The Connections Coordinator’s main job is to assist members and newcomers to feel connected to the congregation. Statistics show that the greater the connection the more likely it is that members/newcomers will be active contributors of time, talent and money within the congregation, represent the congregation within the community and remain members for longer periods.

Both members and newcomers feel better connected to the greater congregation because of the Connections program. They are given the information for both spiritual and social groups in which they can participate.

This year a new program, outlined in our “The Path to Membership Guide,” was implemented to encourage potential new members to work on connecting with the congregation before becoming a member. Drop-in classes are offered once a month after both Sunday services and potential new members receive the “Path to Membership Guide,” have an opportunity to meet other potential new members, and receive additional information on how to become connected within the congregation. Within the Guide is a checklist of suggestions on ways to participate and get connected.

At this point, potential new members can choose to have a New Member Connector (volunteer) work with them and help them get connected. Once a potential new member has completed some or all of the suggestions in the Path to Membership Guide they are invited to attend a Membership Class, which is offered 3-4 times/year. During this event potential new members are given information on governance, leadership opportunities, faith development, and a chance to sample a small group experience.

In addition to the Path to Membership drop-in sessions and Membership Classes, the Sunday Welcome Team continues to be an integral part in welcoming newcomers. With the help of volunteer leaders, **Anna Ward, Janice May, and Sally Witkamp**, the Sunday Welcome Team is filled each week with additional volunteers that meet, greet and recognize newcomers and welcome them to service. All volunteers for this task are trained annually on how to positively connect with our newcomers.

Additional duties include organizing newcomer events; presenting one of the UU Journeys series; welcoming newcomers weekly via email; sending out the weekly *This Loving Community* (TLC) e-newsletter; annual updating of the Directory of Connections and Social Groups booklet; and alerting the Ministers about any member issues that come my way.

☪☪ *Human Resources* ☪☪

I don't want to say this out loud (gremlins in the universe may be paying attention), but there were no large staffing surprises in the past year. That's a first. We have a terrific staff so it's a very, very good thing when turnover is low. We did add Rev. Claudia Jiménez to our staff to function as our second minister in the place of Rev. Lisa Bovee-Kemper, and that transition went smoothly as all staff personalities meshed well. In order to help that process, the staff participated in an enneagram workshop near the beginning of the year. We all learned more about each others' work styles. And we finished the year with a "Start-Up Workshop" that invited UUCA leaders to think about the roles of the ministers and the work that is expected of each one.

☪☪ *Buildings and Grounds* ☪☪

Buildings Are Old. Things Break.

I could not do the rest of my job without the time donated by our Building Managers. Deepest thanks to **Clyde Hardin, Dena Gettleman, Ian Fischer, Larry Holt, John McGrann, Tony Reed, Bob Roepnack** and **Glenn White** for applying their many skills and time to our buildings.

Each year there are substantial recurring charges to the Buildings and Grounds accounts. These include bi-annual check-up/maintenance of all of our heating and cooling units, annual checks of our smoke alarm systems (Main and 21 Edwin), annual checks of alarm systems and fire extinguishers, monthly pest control, regular landscaping services, snow removal and gutter-cleaning which come to a total of approximately \$8,000.

Despite being afraid of bringing down the wrath of Fate, we are actually spending significantly less on the Operating Budget's Building account. Go figure. Here are the year's less-regular purchases/repairs over \$400:

Main building – 1 Edwin Place

- Foyer door repairs
- Electrical re-wiring from a short
- Sandburg Hall carpet cleaning

21 Edwin (wood)

- Flooding clean-up

- Flooding mitigation work at foundation

23 Edwin (brick)

- (none!)

The Grounds

Grounds work has been led (with a great deal of labor added) by **Nancy Herbert**, with help and support from **Bob Roepnack** and often **Ann McLellan**. With the “retirement” of Nancy Herbert, this area of the congregation’s work is leaderless. Consequently, we will need to hire a contractor to do the weeding and leaf-raking and mulching that in the past has been done by volunteers. This cost is not in the budget that will be approved by the congregation at the annual meeting.

Approximately \$2,750 was spent on tree care across the campus, specifically ash trees (the ash borer has arrived).

Solar Panels and a New Roof

At last year’s annual meeting the congregation voted to proceed with a plan to install solar panels on the roof of Sandburg Hall. But first we learned that we needed to replace the roof upon which the panels would be placed. (Because it was old—had nothing technically to do with the solar panels.) Well we did it!!! The 100+ panels began fully generating power in May, all paid for by the generosity of more than 100 donors. (The new roof was mostly paid for out of a surplus from last year’s budget since we had a late resignation from our full-time Director of Religious Education and did not replace her in that church year.)

Memorial Garden

Memorial Garden team: **Ruth Christie, Coordinator, Venny Zachritz, Ann Sanders Cargill, Shirley Boenheim, Phil Roudebush, Art Aaronson, and Richard Kark.**

(Submitted by **Ruth Christie**) The Memorial Garden Team planted ferns and hostas in the area between the interment bed and fence, added and maintained several large potted plants inside the Memorial Garden, fertilized and mulched the shrubs on the banks outside the fence, and watered the memorial garden and the flowered banks as needed. Newcomer **Billy Gray** has agreed to lead the team in 2019-2020.

Bob Roepnack managed a paid crew as they laid pavers for a walkway from the lower (RE) parking lot to the Memorial Garden entrance. We also purchased a new entrance sign (finally) that has our correct name (congregation instead of church—it’s only been about 7 years). These projects were paid for by this year’s Wish List donors.

☪☪ *Finance/Accounting & Fundraising* ☪☪

Finance/Accounting

Finance Advisory Committee (FAC): **Wink Zachritz, Chair, Ann Cargill, Sammy Fong, Bob Lane, Ann Perry** and **Clyde Hardin**.

(Submitted by **Wink Zachritz**) We have completed the conversion and update of our accounting system to a new chart of accounts. This has greatly simplified the booking of transactions.

In addition to providing advice and counsel to the Director of Administration and reviewing our financial reports, the FAC conducts biannual mini-reviews of randomly selected accounting transactions in several categories (payroll, accounts payable, bank statements) of the congregation's accounting system. Two mini-reviews were conducted this past year.

We continue to use Do Good Books (owned by Christine Magnarella Ray) for bookkeeping services. The accounting system was completely converted during the year and the arrangement with Christine for accounts and audits has functioned very well.

This year we continued to invest a small share of our reserves (\$30,000) in Mountain Bizworks as a socially responsible community investment.

The proposed budget for 2018-19 is included at the back of this report. As of this writing, the bottom line for 2018-19 looks to be well within the budget range. As is always the case, a few line items have gone over-budget for reasons that were unpredictable at the start of the year, and some lines will end up under budget. Additionally, we had higher contributions from nearly every source than we expected.

The Annual Budget Drive (ABD) – “We Believe...Putting Our Values into Action”

Co-Chairs: **Gina Phairas, Will Jernigan**.

(Submitted by **Will Jernigan**) This year's ABD team included **Dan Phairas** as tech-extraordinaire, **Iris Hardin** and **Judy Harper** for masterful event planning, Tish Murphy and **Jerry McLellan** for communications and statistical record-keeping, **Larry Wheeler** for follow-up coordination and Linda Topp for emotional wrangling and filling in where needed.

A 4% increase from prior year (\$707,000) was established as the goal, and the ABD team set out to develop a theme that would leverage the success of the prior year's drive (Stories of Us) without replicating it outright. A theme of We Believe was decided upon, with emphasis on turning our values into action - - connecting that which we hold most dear to how we invest our time, money and talents. We wanted each UUCA member to be able to make this connection at the institutional level (how UUCA enacts its collective values through faith development, social justice, etc.) and at the individual level (how I give time, money and talent to the work of UUCA).

To set the course, **Dan Phairas** and **Gina Phairas** put in an amazing number of hours to create a We Believe promotional video, which featured the tenets of our ABD theme told through the brief images and clips of our very own UUCA congregants. This video was shared at key ABD events, and helped to set the tone for value-based messaging.

Sustaining Connections Reception

The ABD team identified an objective to better connect with those members or friends that live in retirement communities (namely Givens Estates and Deerfield), especially those who are not physically able to come to UUCA for Sunday worship but have a history of being active or still wanting to support UUCA and its work into the future. Many of those individuals have invested in UUCA over the years, and have a connection and desire to see our work sustained. The outcome of the ABD team discussion was the idea to take the party to them. We arranged a reception event on-site at Givens Estates, and reached out directly to this target group to invite them to join us (with the gracious help of **Bill Clontz** and especially **Julie Stoffels**). The event was held in January 2019, with approximately 20 attendees, and included a message of connection from **Will Jernigan** as well as a message of the UUCA congregation's work from Rev. Mark Ward. Rev. Mark shared with the group that he was presently working with the youngest Board ever in his tenure, and this resonated well as it signaled the right direction for the church. Special music was provided by the Sandburgers (our house band) and Dr. Leslie Downs who provided an epic concert piano performance. Pledge forms were received from several attendees, some indicating a 'make it rain' increase in giving of 12%. This event was considered a success for repeating in years to come.

Leadership Reception

The Leadership Reception from last year's budget drive was a no-brainer to repeat this year. It was held in February 2019 and provided the opportunity to both thank leaders of the congregation and kick-start the "ask" of the campaign. Attendance was high with nearly 100 people participating in the event held at St. Mary's Episcopal Church. Attendees were invited based on their leadership in one of three areas: commitment of time, talent or financial resources; they received a "Save the Date" postcard as well as a written invitation.

To further the goal of connection, the ABD team used assigned seating to help ensure each table was diverse in age, type of leadership commitment, and role of volunteering at UUCA. The tables were then teamed up for a trivia game designed to help them get to know each other.

Rev. Mark Ward presented a message of inspiration for giving, which was serendipitously framed from the civil-rights-era story of Rev. Clark Olsen, whose standing-room-only memorial service had been held earlier that day. **Will Jernigan** shared his personal story of religious upbringing and how that journey led to UUCA, with a tie to the We Believe budget drive theme. Will also emphasized that UUCA congregant leadership was the reason for last year's successful ABD, and that this event was a big thank-you to those attendees. Cosmically appropriate, the Leadership Reception took place on Groundhog Day, and the call to action was to repeat what we'd done before.

The Sandburgers created a celebratory atmosphere with music, and door prizes were given out to encourage mingling after the presentations. All of the congregational leaders were active in this year's campaign. By the time of the Celebration Sunday at the end of February, these donors had contributed about 50% of our goal.

Celebration Sunday

The ABD culminated in a single event, Celebration Sunday, on March 3, 2019. In the week prior to the event, **Dan Phairas** and **Will Jernigan** did an invitational skit during the worship service, and **Will Jernigan** shared his personal story from the pulpit. The ABD team coordinated an event reminder

automated call and written invitation to all congregants and Dr. Linda Topp posted *Weekly eNews* reminders and blog posts about the event.

Gina Phairas and **Will Jernigan** led the service, with Rev. Mark Ward and Rev. Claudia Jiménez providing the institutional voices and connection to the work of UUCA. A UUCA youth, Bella Murphy, provided a reading, and **Brett Johnson** led the congregation in a reflective song, “If Not Now.” Dr. Les Downs arranged an amazing rendition of “Put a Little Love in Your Heart,” and somehow wrangled the UUCA choir, the All Ages Choir, the Sandburgers, and guest musicians to pull it off beautifully. Serendipitously Celebration Sunday was also the day to ‘throw the switch’ on our facility’s successful solar panel fundraising and installation project, so **Bob Roepnack** led a brief ceremony accompanied by “Here Comes the Sun.”

Banners of unusual size (BOUS) were donned across the Sanctuary, and conveyed core messages for the We Believe theme regarding our UUCA values. The BOUS were subsequently displayed on the building exterior, and have the added value that they can be used in future years.

Food and fellowship followed.

Celebration Sunday was a multigenerational, multi-modal celebration of the financial commitments of UUCA members, and culminated in the receiving of commitment forms while music filled the room.

Results

We’re not going to hit our numbers but that’s certainly not the only measure of success. Of course, hitting the target would be better.... Instead of a 4% increase over last year’s target (a number we did not quite reach last year, making the actual increase to \$707,000 larger than 4%), we did not increase at all over last year’s commitment number.

Looking ahead, the ABD team is working to establish a 3-year rolling team model, where a co-chair comes on in year 1 as understudy, takes a lead role in year 2, and stays on as an advisor in year 3. This will allow more spreading of the significant work of the ABD co-chairs, and allow institutional knowledge to be retained and leveraged year-to-year in the ABD campaign. And while it is inherently challenging, the ABD is actively aiming to engage younger leaders for the ABD co-chair and team roles, as well as more females, for strength of diversity and sustainability into the future.

Legacy Circle Committee

Beverly Cutter, Chair; members Myrtle Bennett, Mike Horak, Aubrey Le Fey, Mara Sprain

The Legacy Circle Committee completed its two-year “Wake Now Our Vision” planned giving campaign this spring. The effort generated more than \$2 million in documented planned giving commitments from members and friends of UUCA. Planned gifts include bequests, annuities and trusts that will eventually benefit UUCA and Unitarian Universalist organizations. As part of the campaign, the committee hosted a well-attended workshop on end of life planning and celebrated UUCA’s first-ever Legacy Sunday on November 11.

As a result of the successful campaign, UUCA was able to secure approximately \$138,000 in challenge match funding offered by the Shelter Rock Congregation (New York) as an incentive to document new planned gifts. This challenge match is unrestricted and will be received by UUCA in two installments in 2019 and 2020. The Board has discussed using the challenge match to retire the congregation's current mortgage and establish a new fund for social justice. The remaining amount is expected to be deposited in UUCA's Fund for the Future.

The Legacy Circle now has 91 individual members representing 62 households, or approximately 20% of our congregation. Their names are listed on the honor roll above the fireplace in Sandburg Hall. The committee continues to coordinate with the annual budget drive and meet with members and friends who have questions about including UUCA in their estate plans.

UUCA Auction – “The Best Party in Asheville”

November 3, 2018, 5-9 PM, Asheville Event Centre

Leaders: **Tory Schmitz** and **Ann McLellan**

Team: **Judy Galloway, Judith Kaufman, Steve Carter, Ann Cargill, Margaret McAlister, Karen Morris, Robin Loew, Ann Perry, Iris Hardin, Deb Holden**, Coming of Age parents and youth

The UUCA Auction Gala is the congregation's largest fundraiser, an opportunity for everyone to participate in community and connection throughout the year, and the best party in Asheville!

The 2018 auction set a new fundraising milestone, with a net profit of over \$30,000 to support UUCA.

- Ticket prices remained low, at \$20, with a “pay as able” option.
- Over 200 were in attendance at the gala.
- Both a silent auction and a live auction were held, using a professional auctioneer.
- Auction items included something for everyone – services, activities, dinners, parties, gift certificates, no “stuff.” Church members demonstrated great creativity in designing events and services!
- Early bidding for the silent auction items was held in Sandburg Hall on the 2 Sundays before the gala. This helped generate interest and excitement, and provided a means for members unable to attend the gala to participate.
- Food included heavy appetizers, desserts, a signature cocktail, wine, beer, and non-alcoholic options. We continued to use Green Opportunities for catering, which supports UUCA's social justice mission. Green Opportunities' mission is to train, support, and connect people from marginalized communities to sustainable employment pathways.
- Live music was provided by our UUCA “house band,” The Sandburgers, with a DJ for dancing after the live auction.
- Free child care with pizza was provided at the church.

New to U Jewelry Sale, Holiday Craft Fair, Equal Exchange Coffee Sales and Acoustic Journeys

These fundraisers aren't in the same league with the auction, but all funds are appreciated! Thanks to the New to U Jewelry Sale leaders, **Elaine Weinmann, Karen Waters, Susan Steffe, Yuki Damerville**, and **Ann Denton**; Holiday Craft Fair leader, **Sammy Fong**, and Equal Exchange seller/organizer, **Phil Roudebush**, for adding money to our Operating Fund. Each of them have shared

a great deal of their time and talents this year to improve our bottom line—and provide great offerings to our congregants.

Acoustic Journeys had two concerts this year, featuring The Heather Pierson Trio and The Piper Jones Band (featuring bagpipes, likely a first in the UUCA). After paying the NC admission tax, we split the “gate” 70/30, with the artist getting the larger share. These concerts raised \$607.00 for the UUCA. Volunteers assisting **Don Baker** were **Angie Baker** and **Paula Massey**.

Building Rentals

Our buildings provide three benefits for UUCA: they are home to our own programs and activities; they are a source of funds; they are resources we offer to the community. As a source of funds, rentals contribute about \$17,000 to our income, or about 2% of our total income. Our single largest rental is the ½-time cooperative preschool that uses 21 Edwin (wood) on school-day mornings. Second and third place go to WomanSong and the Asheville Chamber Music Series, respectively. Since the primary use of our spaces is for our offices, worship and programming, rentals come in second place when allocating space. However, we are also a source of free meeting space to non-profits serving people we feel can benefit from the gift. Groups that have occasionally or regularly used our spaces for free (or nearly free) include Democracy NC, Guardian ad Litem, Sustaining Essential and Rural Community Healthcare, CIMA, Narcotics Anonymous, WNC Workers Center, Beth Israel, and area UU ministers. We also provide very steep discounts for the WENOCA Chapter of Sierra club, WomanSong (rehearsing at UUCA for more than 25 years), Buncombe County Elections, Buncombe County Dept. of Human and Health Services, and Buncombe County Educator’s Association.

PROJECTED CURRENT YEAR (18-19) AND PROPOSED (19-20) BUDGET SUMMARIES

| INCOME | | PROPOSED 2018-19 | PROJECTED FINAL 2018-19 | PROPOSED 2019-20 |
|--|--|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Fiscal & Administration Income | | | | |
| 1 | Sustaining Support - financial commitments | 680,000 | \$ 594,750 | 707,200 |
| 2 | Reserve for uncollectible pledges (6%) | (40,800) | \$ - | (42,400) |
| 3 | New pledges, post paid pledges | 21,500 | \$ 28,400 | 21,900 |
| 4 | Other Contributions | 30,800 | \$ 56,450 | 35,000 |
| 5 | Distributions from both endowments (5%) | 15,000 | \$ 15,900 | 15,300 |
| 6 | Other Income - Rentals, Fundraising, Short-term investment earnings, \$18K in Community Plate | 81,400 | \$ 106,760 | 84,500 |
| 7 | Board-approved transfer from previously set-aside Elmslie Bequest for mor | 9,200 | \$ 9,200 | 12,600 |
| 8 | Capital Development Fund (for mortgage) | 4,000 | \$ 4,000 | - |
| 9 | FISCAL & ADMINISTRATION TOTAL INCOME | 801,100 | \$ 815,460 | 834,100 |
| EXPENSES | | | | |
| Worship and Music | | | | |
| 11 | Outside speakers | 2,400 | \$ 2,730 | 2,700 |
| 12 | Service supplies, Worship Associates | 1,400 | \$ 1,260 | 1,400 |
| 13 | Music Program | 10,000 | \$ 9,000 | 10,000 |
| 14 | WORSHIP & MUSIC EXPENSE TOTAL | 13,800 | \$ 12,990 | 14,100 |
| Faith Development Expenses | | | | |
| 17 | FD supplies and equipment | 3,000 | \$ 3,000 | 3,000 |
| 18 | FD special programs (CoA, YRUU, adults) | 1,500 | \$ 800 | 3,900 |
| 19 | FD volunteer vetting, training, appreciation | 4,300 | \$ 3,610 | 5,200 |
| 20 | FAITH DEVELOPMENT EXPENSE TOTAL | 8,800 | \$ 7,410 | 12,100 |
| Congregational Care & Connections Expenses | | | | |
| 23 | Pastoral Visitors, supplies | 1,150 | \$ 620 | 800 |
| 24 | Membership development | 2,000 | \$ 1,160 | 2,000 |
| 25 | Congregational events | 1,000 | \$ 1,420 | 5,000 |
| 26 | Wednesday Thing | 4,000 | \$ 7,360 | 7,800 |
| 27 | CONG. CARE & CONNECTIONS EXPENSE TOTAL | 8,150 | 10,560 | 15,600 |
| Outreach Expenses | | | | |
| 30 | Earth & Social Justice Ministry incl. Community Plate distributions | 24,000 | \$ 27,320 | 26,500 |
| 31 | GIFT Program (4% of income) | 30,800 | \$ 30,800 | 32,100 |
| 32 | UU Relations | 1,000 | \$ - | 1,000 |
| 33 | Advertising | 1,500 | \$ 1,050 | 1,500 |
| 34 | OUTREACH EXPENSE TOTAL | 57,300 | \$ 59,170 | 61,100 |
| Governance and Congregational Support | | | | |
| 37 | All administrative costs, including computers and software, office-kitchen-hospitality supplies, copier leases and more! | 73,300 | \$ 58,980 | 71,700 |
| 38 | Insurance (liability & workmen's comp) | 10,700 | \$ 10,220 | 13,600 |
| 39 | Facilities & Equipment (includes cleaning service) | 73,700 | \$ 67,480 | 76,700 |
| 40 | Mortgage Payment | 13,200 | \$ 13,210 | 13,200 |
| 41 | Staff and Volunteer Development incl. Leadership Development Com | 25,900 | \$ 28,910 | 28,400 |
| 42 | Board Support | 2,000 | \$ 1,100 | 2,000 |
| 43 | Bank/Credit Card fees for processing donations | 2,250 | \$ 3,280 | 3,000 |
| 44 | Annual budget drive, Legacy Circle, non-ABD fundraising expenses | 18,200 | \$ 24,000 | 21,600 |
| 45 | Transfer to Sabbatical Fund | - | \$ - | - |
| 46 | Transfer to Capital Fund (maint. & repair above \$1,000) | 10,000 | \$ 15,000 | 10,000 |
| 47 | GOVERNANCE & CONG. SUPPORT EXPENSE TOTAL | 229,250 | \$ 222,180 | 240,200 |
| 48 | TOTAL PROGRAM AND ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES | \$ 317,300 | \$ 312,310 | \$ 343,100 |
| | TOTAL PERSONNEL EXPENSES | 474,860 | \$ 451,061 | 479,400 |
| | TOTAL EXPENSES | 792,160 | 763,371 | 822,500 |