

**Unitarian Universalist  
Congregation of Asheville**



**2016-2017**

# **2016-17 Annual Report**

## **June 2017**

### **Board of Trustees**

**Kay Aler-Maida, President; Kate Hartnett, Vice President; Dale Wachowiak, Clerk; Mariah Carey, Michele Gregory, Bruce Larson, Diane Martin, James Schall, Wendy Seligmann**

This year the Board of Trustees...

**R**ecognized that we have an unconscionable pay equity gap for our staff, especially the senior staff, and resolved on a process to better harmonize our goals and use of resources to resolve our pay equity issue. We began with the Experience of the Holy process to assist the congregation in articulating our core values, which resulted in:

#### **UCA CORE VALUES**

Connection, Inspiration, Compassion, Justice express who we are and what we do.

The process will continue in the fall as the Board works with the congregation to refresh our Mission and Ends Statements (goals). With these refreshed Mission and Ends we will be better able to harmonize our goals with our resources of people, money and property.

**E**stablished an ongoing Ministerial Review Task Force to collaborate with our called ministers in an annual review of their responsibilities.

**T**racked the achievement of our Ends Statements. Our current Ends are very expansive and do not lend themselves to practical metrics to measure accomplishment. Improving the focus of our Ends this fall will enable us to better establish metrics that will gauge progress toward achieving our goals.

**M**onitored, through regular review, the staff's adherence to the limitations outlined in the Governance Document with the good news that the congregation is well run THANKS to our excellent staff and dedicated volunteers.

# Leadership Development Committee

**Gay Lambirth, Chair, with Sarah Hartnett, Kristi Miller and Michael Vavrek**

The Leadership Development Committee (LDC) is a congregational committee that is charged with identifying, cultivating and developing leaders for the congregation.

The Leadership Development Committee

- Consulted with Board Leadership, the Executive and Director of Lifespan Religious Education.
- Identified candidates to fill Board vacancies that occurred during the year.
- Made recommendations at the Board's request for committees, facilitators and sabbatical convener.
- Hosted a book group discussion of the book, *Serving with Grace*.
- Identified candidates for Southeast UU Leadership Experience (SUULE).
- Identified topics and resources for future leadership activities .

# Lead Minister

**Rev. Mark P. Ward**

This church year feels in many ways like a time of flowering for this congregation. We entered it rejuvenated by the new practice of beginning each week of Sunday worship all together as a fully intergenerational community, and recommitted to social justice through an Open Space process where we attested to the work to which our hearts call us.

Each of these initiatives has helped give us new energy and purpose, which we have seen reflected in strong growth in Sunday attendance and a higher profile in the Asheville community. At the same time, this growth has stretched our resources and our systems, providing an opportune time for our Board of Trustees to lead us to help us clarify our values and better define the work that we claim.

If ever we needed proof that a liberal religious presence is needed in this community, this fall provided it. Turmoil over the election sent many people to our sanctuary, looking for a progressive, open-minded, open-hearted presence where they could bring their full selves. I'm proud that we responded by making room and welcoming these people, even with the crowding in our sanctuary, RE classes and small groups. Even amid political uncertainty, it's an exciting time.

Also, on several occasions our building has been a go-to place for progressive faith and community leaders and others to meet. We had a "Let It Shine" community meeting in December and we

were the terminus of a march supporting sanctuary for immigrants and marginalized people in March. We're building and deepening relationships with others in our community ready to work for positive change.



## **Worship**

Our summer worship experience in 2016 featured several strong offerings from members of UUCA, including Elizabeth Schell speaking on Black Lives Matter, Phil Roudebush addressing "Brewing Justice," and Sharon Van Dyke speaking to the power of personal narratives, as well as our annual Poetry Sunday and Water Service. We also enjoyed guests Rev. Erika Hewitt on "You Might Not Be A UU if . . ." and Rev. Mark Belletini on "Moving Beyond Belief and Unbelief." Associate Minister Rev. Lisa Bovee-Kemper addressed the topic "Out of Time" and I spoke on retelling the story of climate change and responding to fear.

Our regular worship year began in September with two Sunday services and the introduction of children for a Time for All Ages every Sunday. After a brief Call to Worship, we began inviting children to light our chalice. Later in the year we also began inviting them to ring a chime to introduce the Gathering Music. Then Director of Lifespan Religious Education Joy Berry or a volunteer storyteller offered a story, followed by the children being sung out to their classes with Hymn 362 "Rise Up, O Flame." We moved our announcements, welcoming and offertory to a spot after the sermon. There, we framed them as the Work of the Congregation, all the intentional practices – welcoming, communicating, and providing financial support – that help make ours a healthy, vital congregation.

The response to the change was mostly good, but a little disorienting to some, who were unaccustomed to having the children present each week. We have worked at making our presentations tight and the transitions smooth. Parents have expressed appreciation for this family time together at the beginning of each service, and it's been encouraging to see children settle down better as they become accustomed to how Sunday mornings go.

We began in September working with the worship theme of Covenant beginning with my sermons on from me on how covenant offers a path to help us face up to fear and come to know and care for each other as we truly are, and one from our Associate Minister Rev. Lisa Bovee-Kemper on "Learning to Live Together," followed by my sermon on Universalism's take on What Is Required invites us into love, even when we're struggling.

October's theme of Healing gave to explore how messages from the writer Brené Brown and pop star Beyoncé invite us to find a way forward into forgiveness. Then we considered the ways that the ancient Doctrine of Discovery had poisoned our relationships with native people, and then what the mythology around "White Trash" teaches us about the legacy of class that we live with. Lisa offered us thoughts on: "Living with Grief" and Director of Lifespan Religious Education Joy Berry offered the story "Butterfly Wings" for the focus of our Day of the Dead rituals.

In November as we explored the theme of Story I invited us to reflect on the words of poet Elizabeth Alexander and radio interviewer Krista Tippett to help us identify "The Mightiest Word."

Then we reflected on the Biblical parable about The Sower to help us think about “Waking to the Work,” after a surprising election result. Sylvie Delaunay and Paul Vandal helped us think about how we might “Restory Thanksgiving,” from the perspective of a French immigrant and a Wampanoag Indian. Guests Todd & Meg Hoke led us to consider “The Art of Being.”

December brought us the theme Presence, and we began with my sermon on “Wading in the Mystery,” followed by our guest Rev. Rebekah Montgomery speaking on a “Theology of Joy,” followed by Lisa on “Showing Up, Staying Put.” Member Elizabeth Schell’s “Parable of the Givers” was the center of our 4pm Christmas Eve service with our 9pm candlelight service centered on the theme “Don’t Be Afraid.” I was assisted by Worship Associates Louise Anderson and Nancy Heath in presenting three stories for our Christmas Day service: “A Stable Story,” “The First American Christmas Tree,” and “Jacob Marley’s Christmas Carol.”

We began the new year with a theme of Prophecy. For our New Year’s Day service I was assisted by Youth Worship Associate Isabel Horak in presenting a series of rituals that invited the congregation to consider what they wished to relinquish, to retain and to grow into for the coming year. Our Martin Luther King, Jr. Day service used the stories that Civil Rights leader, John Lewis, told in his graphic novel series, *March*, to urge us Back to Work on civil rights justice. Our member, Clark Olsen, led us on a personal odyssey wrapped around the music of Pete Seeger and then I offered the poetry of Walt Whitman as a prophetic guide.

For Identity in February, Lisa invited us to encourage creative thinking with “Four Humped Camels Everywhere” and how we proclaim our identities in “Tee Shirt Sunday.” Guest Katie Culbert spoke about “The Power of Forgiveness,” and Joy organized a Religious Education Sunday that presented much of the work that our Religious Education classes are pursuing.

In March for the theme of Risk, I explored “Living with Integrity in a Post-Truth Time” and then how we cultivate an attitude of “Kindness” in dealing with others. Lisa and our choir led us on how the musical, *Hamilton*, speaks to us to seize the moment we are given, and I invited us to explore how we recover the notion of “We” in a divisive time.

For April and the theme of Transformation I began with service reflecting on changes in the leadership of the UUA that invited us to consider how we are each caught up in struggles over the legacy of racism. We heard from guest speaker, Rev. Rosemary Bray McNatt, president of Starr King School for the Ministry, on the topic of “Becoming Ungovernable: Notes for the Resistance,” and the last sermon before my leaving on sabbatical reflected on what our Unitarian heritage teaches about “What Is Required” of us.

I write now in the last days before I leave on sabbatical. Worship planned for the time when I will be gone from April 17 to June 19 covers such topics as “Spiritual Survival” from Lisa as well as our annual intergenerational Earth Day Service and our celebrating the credos of our Coming of Age class. Guests scheduled for my sabbatical time include Rev. Guy Sayles, former senior minister of Asheville’s First Baptist Church and a current professor of religion at Mars Hill College; Rev. Duncan Teague, pastor of a start-up congregation in Atlanta, Ga., Abundant LUUV Unitarian

Universalist Ministries; and Rabbi Justin Goldstein, of Asheville’s Congregation Beth Israel. The May theme is Embodiment and the June theme is Joy.

I want to express my deep thanks and admiration for UUCA members who served as Worship Associates this year. They have brought so much to our worship with their formidable talents and their personal stories of wrestling with the topics of worship that I’ve invited them to address. They are Louise Anderson, Julianna Austin, Jane Bramham, James Cassara, Lisa Forehand, Jennifer Gorman, Nancy Heath, Isabel Horak, Charlie Marks, Stan Nachman and Sharon Van Dyke.

I also want to express my gratitude to Music Director Les Downs, who is completing his first worship year with us. He was up against a steep learning curve joining us in August just as the worship year was getting started. He needed to get a quick sense of what we are about and then bring together the adult choir after a tumultuous year. It was a challenging time, but his professionalism and commitment to this work has had a lot to do with building what is now a wonderful music program. Not only is he an uncommon talent as a pianist, but he has done a great job of building camaraderie and strong music production by the choir. It has added so much to the experience of worship each Sunday, and I am grateful.



### **Executive**

In addition to my role as spiritual leader of this congregation, I am also charged to act as its Executive. In this role I am accountable to the Board of Trustees, and ultimately the congregation, for seeing that the ministry of this congregation is carried out. The way that this happens is that the Board sets Ends Statements that lay out the main areas that they believe need to be addressed to accomplish our mission. Then, I lead the senior staff – Director of Administration Linda Topp, Associate Minister Rev. Lisa Bovee-Kemper and Director of Lifespan Religious Education Joy Berry – in developing goals to accomplish those Ends. That work is carried out by staff, lay leaders and volunteers. This year our goals centered on three areas: integrating families more deeply in the worship & spiritual life of the congregation; improving the retention of members; and broadening the group of members involved in meaningful participation in the social justice ministry of the congregation. We will report on progress toward those goals in July.

It’s been a challenging year for staff in light of the cutbacks we had to make to balance our budget last year, losing our full-time Communications Coordinator, about 20 hours from administrative staff and 10 hours from religious education. Our religious education staff was hit especially hard, having to take over family registration from the office and cope with a huge influx of new families. A new Religious Education Council is providing some help there, but volunteer needs in religious education remain huge, and more help is needed.

We sought in this year’s Annual Budget Drive to maintain staffing and programming for the coming year as the Board led the congregation in a process examining our values to help us decide how to best focus the resources available to us to the work to which we are called. We are grateful to ABD co-leaders Barbara Brownsmith Campbell and Cecilia Rawlings and their team for a strong, well-organized campaign that brought us near to our goal for the year.

But as we begin thinking about the 2017-18 worship year it becomes plain that we will have to spend some time reassessing our staffing structure. The Board's process this coming summer and fall will take us through the work of updating our Mission Statement and Ends Statements, which will give us the perspective we need to do that. I urge you to make your voice heard in that process so that it might best represent all the wisdom and care that we bring to this community.

It has also been exciting to see the flourishing of our Legacy Circle program due to the work of Beverly Cutter, Mike Horak, Stan Nachman, Jill Preyer and Mara Sprain. Their recruiting has brought the total number of people who have told us they are making plans for UUCA in their estates to about 50. You can find their names listed on the honor roll above the fireplace in Sandburg Hall. Please thank them for their forethought and commitment that help assure the health and vitality of UUCA for years to come and consider joining them in any way that you can. It's also been rewarding to see our congregation chosen to launch a pilot program for the UUA – the Wake Now Our Vision collaborative campaign – that will provide matching funds to every UU organization that is notified in the next two years that it will receive a planned gift. All the more reason to make that commitment now!



### **Passages**

Finally, I want us to be reminded of Members and Friends of UUCA who we have lost since July 1, 2016: George Bilbrey, Louise Curtis-Seidl, John Hancy, Jillian Johnson, Hans Kahn, Dorothy Kirschbaum, Mourice Loiselle, Scott McKay, Marion Mathews, and Martha McMullen. We remember them as friends and fellow travelers who gave much to this community, good people who will be missed and who we are proud to hold in loving memory.

## **Music Director**

**Dr. Leslie Downs**

I began my work as music director for UUCA in July, 2016. With the help of my music committee, Gwenn Roberts, Mike Ellis, Beth Gage and Langdon Martin, I selected music for the choir for the year. Throughout the year, I met weekly with Mark Ward to discuss the service themes with the idea of matching music with those themes. One of my goals was to bring in a wide variety of professional artists for the non-choir Sundays and I believe I did pretty well in achieving this. Another goal was to improve the quality of the choir's singing and to help them feel comfortable singing challenging music. This is an ongoing process. Lastly, with the help of many generous donations from congregation members, I was able to select a new piano for our Sanctuary.

My goal is to provide musical excellence in the services in order to enhance the worship experience of the congregation. I have tried to do this by coordinating the various components of each service and by programming a wide variety of styles of music, including classical, musical theatre, pop, folk and African-American spirituals.

Congregation members have said they appreciate how the music ties in with the service and they find the music uplifting.

## **Associate Minister**

Rev. Lisa Bovee-Kemper

### **Connections & Membership**

Staff: Rev. Lisa Bovee-Kemper, Venetia Zachritz

Leaders (and super volunteers): Paula Massey, Linda Bair, Charlie Marks, Judy Galloway, Michael Vavrek, Janice May, Bob and Eleanor Lane, Gene Lambirth

- Assisted Rev. Bovee-Kemper with the organization and dissemination of 3 series of New Member classes. Classes occur every 3 months from September through June.
- Maintained contact with new members and newcomers.
- With the assistance of Rev. Bovee-Kemper, recruited volunteers to connect with and guide new members during their first year.
- Maintained contact with member volunteers that connected with new members.
- Coordinated with volunteers to manage the Sunday morning Welcome Team before services.
- Coordinated, with Rev. Bovee-Kemper, 2 newcomer “meet and greet” potlucks.
- Recruited volunteers to develop a Young Adults (18-30) group both within the church community and the greater community. The information for this group is advertised primarily through social media venues (Facebook and MeetUp) with the hope of encouraging young adults to become active members of UUCA.
- Developed a survey for 1-3 year members to analyze member satisfaction.

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 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. New members are guided through the membership process with the help of a Connector and contact with their Connector is maintained for the first 3 years of membership. This allows Rev. Bovee-Kemper and me to address any dissatisfaction early and hopefully resolve any issues.

New members and newcomers have reported that they feel very welcome within the congregation. They feel that there are many opportunities for involvement both spiritually and

socially. New members appreciate the connection with an assigned individual as they navigate their way through their initial year. Newcomers have indicated that they enjoy the opportunity to meet other newcomers and staff at the potlucks and feel welcomed into the church community.



### **Congregational Care**

There are currently five active Pastoral Visitors working with Rev. Lisa Bovee-Kemper to provide care to congregants with acute or chronic illnesses, personal/family crises, or ongoing grief. These dedicated volunteers are Leigh Benson-Greer, Karin Eckert, Jill Preyer, Cecilia Rawlins, and Ephraim Schechter. We are grateful to Art Aaronson, Kristina Aaronson, Debbie Fischer, Colleen Smeekens, and Deloyce Wright-Porrata, who completed their Pastoral Visitor service this year. Rev. Lisa will be leading a training for new Pastoral Visitors and we plan to round out the group to between eight and ten by the beginning of the new church year.

Pastoral Visitors have worked hard this year to make the congregational care ministry here at UUCA more accessible and more visible in our community. They send cards at the holidays and when they hear about deaths or challenges in families within the congregation. They assist congregants with setting up Meal Trains and other assistance when recovering from surgery or illness or the birth of a child. A new email blast was set up this year, This Loving Community (TLC), which comes out on Monday afternoons, and feedback has been entirely positive, with congregants reporting that they feel they are getting more and better information about joys and sorrows in the community.

Soon Pastoral Visitors will implement some changes to the Sunday morning Congregational Care table, including having cards available for congregants to sign if there is an illness or death in the community, and a “Joys & Sorrows Book,” which will allow congregants to share their Joys and Sorrows with the Congregational Care Team on Sunday mornings.



### **Small Group Ministry**

**Leader: Joy McConnell**

At the beginning of the 2016-17 year, there were 8 covenant groups and 4 theme groups. There was also the Wayfarers’ Group, which met occasionally. In January, 2 covenant groups disbanded. In February a new theme group was started. As of April 30 we have 6 covenant groups and 5 theme groups. Thank you to all of our dedicated small group facilitators for the 2016-17 year: Louise Anderson, Nancy Bragg, Nora Carpenter, Martha Kiger, Bill Kleiber, Gay Lambirth, James Love, Paula Massey, Anna Olsen, Zaneta Summers, Ellen Welles, and Joy McConnell.

Last spring 4 members traveled to the Knoxville UU Congregation for a weekend of Small Group Ministry facilitator training sponsored by the UUA’s Small Group Ministry Network.

Something to note: We will be training new facilitators in order to organize new Covenant and Theme Groups for the 2017-2018 congregational year. If you are interested in being either a facilitator or a small group member, please contact Joy McConnell at joyelayne@aol.com or by calling 828-808-4710. We will be staffing a table on Sunday mornings starting this summer for the next season to recruit new people for existing groups which lose members and new groups which we hope to start in the fall.



### **Earth & Social Justice Ministry (ESJM)**

**Steering Committee: Nancy Heath, Dan Clere, Julie Ransom and Julie Stoffels, with staff support from Rev. Lisa Bovee-Kemper**

ESJM began the year with a successful Open Space Technology program called “Just Change.” Seventy people attended the day-long workshop that was held at Evergreen Community School with lunch, snacks, and childcare provided. Anna Olsen, Sue Walton, Sarah Hartnett, Dan Clere, and Rev. Lisa Bovee-Kemper organized the program, and Dan Clere did a terrific job facilitating. A number of new Action Groups began as a result of this collaborative event, identified as (new).

The Steering Committee has worked diligently to make sure that all of our Action Groups are connected and supported in their work, implementing liaisons from the steering committee to the groups, as well as a new program called Action Wednesdays, which is intended to assist Action Groups in getting exposure as well as making it easier for potential new volunteers to get connected to the work of the ESJM.

### **Anti-Racism Group Action (ARG!a)**

**Leaders and Super Volunteers: Elizabeth Schell, Cecilia Rawlins, Eleanor Lane, Joy McConnell, Michael Beech, Jan Beech, Anna Martin, Susan Steffe, Karin Eckert, Ruth Christie, Martha Moessler, and many more awesome folks!**

After putting much work into passing the Congregational Resolution in Support of the Movement for Black Lives, we met several times over the summer to determine how we could help the congregation live out its commitment. Since most of us were involved in many other justice projects (both within & outside of the congregation) we wanted to find ways to infuse the topic of anti-racism work into existing congregational programming.

- We created a Black Lives Matter theme packet for the congregation to use throughout the year - either personally or through theme or other groups - to help foster meaningful conversations and contemplations about racism within themselves and our institutions. This theme packet was made available via the coffee hour table in hard copy form and online through the congregation’s website.
- We continued hosting a weekly Anti-Racism Accountability support group on Friday mornings, 10-12, at 23 Edwin. Elizabeth usually facilitates with support from Joy and Cecilia when she is unable to be present. This group has now been meeting for more than a year.

It remains small, but has been a meaningful touchstone for several of us in keeping us rooted in this work. Several non-UUs have regularly participated and subsequently attended some worship services. The group remains an open space for both UUs and non-congregants to find regular support, encouragement, as well as challenge in doing anti-racism work.

- We maintained a weekly e-newsletter with information about upcoming actions, educational opportunities, and events relating here in Asheville. There are presently 62 people subscribed. People sign up through the Earth & Social Justice table at coffee hour.
- We've tried to maintain a presence at Coffee Hour via the Earth & Social Justice table - with educational handouts, flyers about Asheville Showing Up for Racial Justice (ASURJ) events, Black Lives Matter buttons, our sign-up list for people interested in joining the ARG!A or ASURJ mailing lists. This has been a space for some meaningful conversations with people who are still wrestling with the Black Lives Matter movement and other local racial justice issues.
- On the first Earth & Social Justice Action Wednesday, we welcomed Ms. Bettie Council for a conversation about needs of the black community in Asheville along with exploration of other projects.
- We collaborated with Asheville SURJ to host a Civil Disobedience/Direct Action Training at UUCA in August. About 40 people participated from the larger community with about 10 UUs among them.
- We encouraged people to show up at the monthly CPAC (Citizens Police Advisory Committee) meetings - to listen, get to know the process better, and also to speak out during the comment section about issues of concern in relation, especially, to over-policing and transparency. We are very blessed to have the dedicated Mr. Beech write up summaries of the monthly meetings to share with folks who are unable to attend to keep abreast of issues. We also worked with ASURJ to mobilize people to attend other public meetings where People of Color accountability partners had expressed a desire for white allies to show support and visible presence.
- We promoted the Hood Hugger tour and organized a couple of UUCA trips, encouraged financial support of complimentary trips for the Asheville black community during Black History month, and made a Hood Hugger tour available for purchase via the UUCA Annual Auction (ARG!a members donated money to cover the cost so that Hood Huggers would be paid AND the congregation would make money via the auction bidders).
- In April, we worked with the Asheville Friends to promote & financially support (through individual contributions) the viewing of the film, *13<sup>th</sup>*, with guest speaker, Max Parthas.
- We have sought to be a regular location of Asheville SURJ meetings (both educational sessions and larger meetings and accountability groups). The goal of this was not only to

assist ASURJ in finding space for their programs, but also to make these meetings and educational opportunities more accessible to UUCA members. As part of this initiative, we have been a monthly host of ASURJ's Calling In session which is an open educational workshop where participants role-play difficult conversations about race. Participants have come mainly from outside the congregation, but sometimes congregants have also attended. We have also hosted several Accountability through Action meetings when a People-of-Color-led organization and/or leader(s) presents their work and builds connections with participants. These meetings have ranged from 30-95 participants and included presenters from Word on the Street, Asheville Eagles Basketball League, Center for Participatory Change, Building Bridges, etc.

PLANS IN PROGRESS: Several projects we hope to get off the ground in the coming year:

- Workshops geared towards RE families about anti-racism education
- More in-house workshops and educational opportunities to explore white supremacy, Racism 101, and also related UU history (Elizabeth is planning to take many workshops at GA and bring back inspiration and materials!)
- Working with Building Bridges and REI (Racial Equity Institute) boards to bring more trainings to UUCA; we have also been asked to start another support team for enabling more REI trainings to come to Asheville. We are exploring our capacity to do this.
- Dining for CommUNITY: creating monthly dining groups that learn about and financially support local People-of-Color-led efforts
- Continue to collaborate with the Sanctuary Working group to support and promote UUCA as a Physical Sanctuary. This is intersectional work.

## **Hunger & Homelessness Ministry**

**Sally Carlson and Barbara Kruszewski, Coordinators**

### **1. ISAAC DICKSON FOOD PANTRY COLLECTION**

This year the Hunger & Homelessness Ministry held a food drive during the month of March to support the new food pantry at Isaac Dickson Elementary School. The committee collected nutritional food items that were easy for children to heat and eat. The items were donated by the congregation and then delivered to Isaac Dickson each Tuesday by a committee member.

### **2. HAYWOOD STREET RESPITE CARE CENTER **Coordinator, Barbara Kruszewski****

Our committee of approximately 29 volunteers have continued to serve one meal a month since 2014 (second Saturday of each month). Haywood Respite Care is organized and operated by volunteers of Haywood Street Congregation and provides a safe healing place for homeless men and women who leave the hospital, and need more time to completely heal. Three UUCA volunteers per month prepare a meal for 10, including a salad, main course and dessert (for 8 patients plus 2 assistants). We have also donated some used clothing to Haywood during January after holding a used clothing drive for homeless. We are always looking for new volunteers to join this group to help feed the homeless and sick.

3. SOCK DRIVE: In February 2017, UUCA Homeless/Hunger Committee held a Sock Collection of new socks for both men and women which was divided equally and given to Salvation Army, Beloved House, and A-Hope.
4. WINTER CLOTHING AND BLANKET COLLECTION: For 3 months this winter, the Hunger & Homelessness Ministry asked for new/gently-used blankets and clothing for homeless people. All items were delivered to the Pritchard Park Breakfast homeless attendees, and given to those in need.
5. PRITCHARD PARK BREAKFASTS **Coordinator, Gene Zimbalkin**  
Our group that feeds the homeless in Pritchard Park on four to five Sundays per year consists of 12 core UU members and 7 core Quaker members. This combined faith community is one of 16 that participates in these breakfasts. Scheduling is coordinated by United Church of Christ, which additionally on a weekly basis provides hot coffee, hot grits, paper plates, forks, etc. Depending on the time of the year our group feeds from 160 to 120 homeless folks. All food items are donated by group members. Additional resources from UU not required.
6. MANNA FOOD PACKING and FOOD DELIVERY **Coordinator, Joyce Wallis**  
Once a month, there is a group of approximately 10 people who work at MANNA FoodBank. The people who volunteer vary from month to month, but there are about 30 people involved in this activity at one time or another. Also we had a multigenerational work day at MANNA in April this year with 4 children and 5 adults participating. Parents and grandparents who attended were enthusiastic about having more work days scheduled in the future. In addition, we participated in the MANNA Food Pack Program, in which six volunteer drivers supported the MANNA food pack program by delivering a combined total of 300 pounds of non-perishable food each week of the school year to Isaac Dickson Elementary. We are now recruiting additional drivers to supply MANNA food for up to seven more Asheville area public schools.
7. LOVING FOOD RESOURCES is a local non-profit which provides food to clients with HIV/AIDS and Hospice Home Care. UUCA has supported this agency for at least 15 years. Loving Food Resources was the recipient of our Community Plate in March of this year. Nonperishable food donated by UUCA members is collected weekly by 2 UUCA members and delivered to Loving Food Resources.
8. UUCA PIE PARTY: Held the last Sunday in August, 2016, the Hunger & Homelessness Ministry held their annual pie party fundraiser. We successfully raised \$1,500 (20% to UUCA) and a check was mailed to MANNA. We had approximately 60 pies, including veggie, meat and dessert, made and donated by members/friends of UUCA. This annual event is our only fundraiser for the Hunger & Homelessness Ministry.
9. SUMMER FEEDING PROGRAM **Coordinators, Judy Mattox, Ann McLellan**  
It has been a successful summer lunch program! Buncombe County Schools provided over 50,000 meals. Forty volunteers from UUCA staffed three different low-income sites where we served lunches to children ages 2 to 18, Monday- Friday for 10 weeks. The lunches were

prepared by Buncombe County Schools and delivered to the sites ready for us to hand out. The schools provided folding tables and tents to each site. We also gave away books to the children. Many of them really loved getting books to keep. We hope to do this again in summer 2017. We'd love for you to join us!

#### 10. A GRANT DONATION

A generous grant of \$1,000 was given by No Child Goes Hungry, Inc., from Director Rev. Karen Rasmussen. Our Homeless & Homelessness Ministry was asked to decide the best way to use these funds. Two local schools were selected, Emma Elementary School, and Isaac Dickson Elementary were chosen to receive \$500 grant each, to be used for feeding hungry children. Both schools submitted a proposal of how they would use the grant money, and was approved by Hunger & Homelessness Ministry, as well as Rev. Rasmussen. Checks of \$500 each were mailed to both schools on May 12, 2017.

#### **Peacemaking Potluck: May 2016-April 2017**

##### **Bruce Larson, Coordinator**

The Peacemaking Potluck meets on the second Wednesday of every month in Sandburg Hall "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.

The activities of the Potluck vary from month to month. We gather from 6:00 to 6:15 pm, potluck from 6:15 to 6:45, and transition from 6:45 to 7:00. Activities take place from 7:00 to 8:15ish, after which we tidy up. Information about the Potluck is communicated through the weekly UUCA *Weekly eNews*, the Order of Service, and a monthly email "The Month Begins" by distribution list; the list has 58 addresses and is maintained continuously.

During the last year, we sought to: (1) read and discuss a peace-related book; (2) align more intentionally with the Earth and Social Justice Ministry of our Congregation; and (3) create a more sonically accessible environment for participants. Goals (1) and (2) were attained, while (3) is now less of a concern. During the twelve months covered by this report, we:

- Read and discussed *Acts of Faith*, by Eboo Patel. May and June.
- Discussed the direction and leadership of the Potluck. July.
- Viewed and discussed the 2016 Ware Lecture by Krista Tippett. August.
- Read and discussed *Between the World and Me*, by Ta-Nehisi Coates. September, October, and November.
- Shared "Stories of Peace." December.
- Viewed and discussed the 2016 Nobel Peace Prize lecture by Juan Manuel Santos. January.
- Viewed and discussed the 1964 Nobel Peace Prize lecture by the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. February.
- Read and discussed "Civil Conversations at Home and in Community" by Krista Tippett. March.
- Read and discussed *Just Mercy*, by Bryan Stevenson. April.

37 *distinct* people participated in the activities of the Potluck during the 12 months covered by this report. Average attendance was nine. The number of distinct participants decreased by six from the previous year and average attendance decreased by one.

In the upcoming year, we will complete our discussion of *Just Mercy* and continue with now-traditional events. In addition, we will (1) continue to align more closely with the activities of the Earth and Social Justice Ministry, while (2) developing knowledge and skills that can be used for dialogue within our congregation and beyond, especially around peacemaking.

**Muslim Connections Action Group (new)**  
**Colleen Finegan, Coordinator**

We have had three committee meetings and a couple of work-crew meetings. In March, we had a guest speaker from Furman University who spoke on "Understanding Islam and Muslims in the US." It was well attended, especially for a snow day- about 120 attendees. Several Muslim gentlemen from Asheville Islamic Center were also present. Middle Eastern snacks were served, cooked by committee members under the direction of UUCA member, Jamileh Mikati. We were invited to attend Friday services anytime at the Islamic Center, which we did on April 14. We met with some of the men of the center after the services. We are looking at a potential book discussion for our group and inviting members of the congregation and others. We are planning another group meeting on May 21 at which we plan to invite some representative members of the Islamic Center to see how we can connect effectively. We are searching the Asheville Interfaith group to see if other churches/ congregations are meeting with Muslim individuals/groups for discussions/dinners etc. We are also contacting the JCC and other congregations/churches to see what they might be doing.

**Education Inequality Action Group (AGREE) (new)**  
**Mary Alm, Coordinator**

AGREE started as an active group in January 2017. We've collected around 100 children's books to donate to programs at Children First and the YWCA. Cecilia Rawlins organized and facilitated a Dr. Seuss Birthday Party for 20 children at Woodridge Apartments in collaboration with Children First; each child received a wrapped present of a Dr. Seuss book. Cecilia serves on the Children First Board of Directors. Contacts also have been established with both the YWCA and the Asheville City Schools (ACS). The group is reading *Leading for Social Justice*, a book written by the researchers responsible for the "Integrated Comprehensive Systems for Equity" approach being used by the Asheville City Schools.

ACS has embarked upon an ambitious program to redesign their schools for equity, with a focus on racial equity. We are well placed to support that endeavor. Children's First primarily works with Buncombe County Schools, so they will help us focus our efforts there. AGREE has a natural synergy with Black Lives Matter, and we hope to leverage our future impact through cooperation with them. (Both Mary Alm and Elizabeth Schell have completed Phase I of training through the Racial Equity Institute of Greensboro, NC.)

## **Earth Community Circle Action Group (new)**

**Cochairs: T. S. Pennington, Sunita Patterson**

**Volunteers who have led specific projects: Jodi Clere, Dan Clere, Grace Curry, Joy McConnell, Bob Roepnack, Wink Zachritz** Several other members have attended most meetings, contributed to projects and discussions thus far, and are working on upcoming projects.

The Earth Community Circle formed in September 2016, renewing the effort put forward by the Green Sanctuary Committee in earlier years. We are energized by the level of activity to date, which we attribute to the diversity of interests regarding ecological justice and members taking the initiative to get things done by themselves or working in a subgroup of our Circle.

Things that we have accomplished and are currently working on:

- 1) Formed a subgroup to plan for a net-zero (carbon-neutral) UUCA campus
- 2) Had energy audits done for Jefferson House and 23 Edwin
- 3) Got an estimate for a solar photovoltaic system
- 4) Offered an adult education course on Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone's book, *Active Hope*
- 5) Planning upcoming adult religious education courses (a UU ethical eating curriculum and a simple-living course from the Northwest Earth Institute)
- 6) Two members of the circle helped with the Earth Day worship service
- 7) Planted 5 new garden beds around the playground on April 30th
- 8) Planned a greenway-cleanup day with Asheville GreenWorks on May 20<sup>th</sup>
- 9) Planning a planting day at Hillcrest with Asheville GreenWorks in the fall
- 10) Updated the UUCA Environmental Sustainability Policy
- 11) Updated information on the UUCA website
- 12) Ran an information/recruitment table every Sunday in April
- 13) Sending announcements to an email list of 50 congregants
- 14) Looking at participating in Energy Savers Network, which provides energy-saving improvements to low-income homes
- 15) Encouraging congregants to sign up for Duke's EnergyWise program and to get energy audits of their homes
- 16) Lending out two Kill-a-Watt electricity usage meters to help congregation members become more energy efficient in their homes
- 17) Participated in the March for Science and the People's Climate Rally
- 18) Encouraged congregants to contact legislators regarding environmental issues
- 19) Considering going through the Green Sanctuary recertification process
- 20) Connecting with other local environmental groups, including Creation Care Alliance, Energy Savers Network, Asheville GreenWorks, and Energy Innovation Task Force

Environmental justice is a necessity because without a viable planet, all social justice issues are moot points. There are very few social justice issues that are not affected by environmental issues such as climate change. Our work affirms the 7<sup>th</sup> Principle ("respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part"), and we are supporting the UUA's concern for environmental justice.

We are keeping environmental issues in the attention of our congregation to support their actions as individuals and our collective work as a congregation. The net-zero subgroup's discussions will influence facilities planning in the short and long term. The adult education class on the book, *Active Hope*, has been extremely meaningful for the six members who have participated in the class. The nicer garden areas around the playground will be enjoyed by everyone.

Because of past Green Sanctuary Committee work, Welcome Project efforts, and present efforts, our congregation received the 2017 Asheville GreenWorks Environmental Excellence Award for an organization, which gave us good publicity in the *Asheville Citizen-Times*. We were also one of the congregations interviewed in an article that appeared April 23<sup>rd</sup> highlighting environmentally-conscious congregations. We have received many positive comments and support from members of the congregation as we tabled the five Sundays in April.

## **Director of Lifespan Religious Education**

**Joy Berry**

**RE Council members: Louise Anderson, Nancy Bragg, Joy McConnell, Ann McLellan, Katherine Murphy, Gina Phairas, Missy Reed, Jim Steffe, Kelly Wedell**

**Lifespan Religious Education staff: Jen Johnson (LRE Assistant, 15 hrs/wk), Kim Collins (LRE Coordinator 25 hrs/wk)**

### **By the Numbers**

Sunday Religious Education Community - Growing!

- 234 total registrations for Sunday Religious Education
- 172 unique individuals (some are served more than once per Sunday)
- 193 children and youth registrations
- 41 total adult registrations
- Average attendance was 125-140 in Sunday Religious Education programs (a major increase, see below)

Sunday Religious Education Programs - There were 17 total groupings/classes this year on Sunday mornings for adults, children and youth (14 were offered all year; 3 were partial-year classes).

- Classes for students 5 and older required 2 volunteer leaders each - a total of about 28 total adult volunteers each Sunday

9:15 Religious Education Program

- Time for All Ages (Sanctuary)
- Nursery, PreK (childcare)
- All Ages Religious Education (2 activities per Sunday)
- UU Take on Miracles class (multiage)
- Our Whole Lives (OWL) for Parents and K-1 OWL

### 11:15 program

- Time for All Ages (Sanctuary)
- Nursery, PreK (childcare)
- Spirit Play for K-3rd (2-3 activities)
- 4th-5th UU Identity & Judeo-Christian Heritage
- 6th-8th Neighboring Faiths
- 7th-8th OWL
- 9th-10th CoA
- 10th-12th YRUU

### Adults in RE - Total registrations: 89

- 41 adults registered for Sunday All Ages Religious Education
- 48 adults registered for 5 additional classes offered at other times
- Non-Sunday Adult Religious Education Classes
  - Fall Seminar on Buddhist Meditation - 12 students
  - Hope, Humor, Hindsight - 10 students
  - Gentle Yoga - 12 students
  - *Active Hope* - 5 students
  - Spring Seminar on Buddhist Meditation - 9 students



### **Highlights of the Year for Children & Youth Religious Education**

• Many amazing parents and a smaller but deeply dedicated group of non-parents worked hard this year to make Sunday morning Religious Education programming happen--often going above and beyond the expectations they agreed to. They showed up religiously, giving their time and talent to ensure the essential faith development of our congregation's children and youth. Their willingness to serve reflects a capacity to see beyond their individual needs to those of our families and to the future of our faith community. Our congregation owes a debt of deep gratitude to those who consistently, with no fanfare and little acknowledgment, still choose to show up and tend to the growing souls of our children and youth.

• The marked increase in attendance meant that almost every week, we welcomed at least one (often 2-3) new families, giving tours of our religious education spaces and having in-depth conversations about our nationally-recognized, widely-emulated Religious Education program's offerings, goals and philosophy.

• Our Whole Lives (OWL) 7-8 was a very large class; likely UUCA's biggest to date. We had to turn away late registrants due to the space constraints of the parlor in 23 Edwin, which was uncomfortably tight for 17 early adolescents (plus 2-3 teachers) talking about sex.

• Coming of Age 2016-17 was the largest CoA class ever offered at UUCA: 17 students and 17 mentors, plus 4 leaders. Regular Sunday classes with 20 teens and teachers were very crowded, and we had no spaces large enough for CoA on the Sundays mentors attend class. We began renting space from the JCC for these days (they later stopped charging us for this use due to a reciprocating agreement between the two congregations' administrators).

- CoA students will attend the Unitarian Universalist General Assembly in New Orleans in June. Following our goals for greater integration of faith development and multiage connections, we worked hard to persuade adult congregants to attend GA and share a road trip there via chartered bus, and to completely cover the cost of that bus. Not only will CoA see and experience the vibrant UU community who gather each year at GA, they will take part in the youth caucus programming there, developed just for high school youth and run in great part by them.

- As part of the CoA/multigen bus trip to New Orleans, Rev. Mark Ward will lead a racial justice learning experience in Montgomery, Alabama. Our group will visit a handful of historic Civil Rights Movement sites, led by Mark in learning more about their connection to the ongoing racial justice struggle and to UUism. UUCA's contingent of youth and adults will spend the night and enjoy a meal and fellowship with the local UU congregation in Montgomery, who will host our youth in their church overnight, and have also offered some home hospitality for adults.

- Our nationally-recognized and highly-emulated YRUU program, a model of a new way in UU youth ministry, had a core group of committed teens this year. They helped meet the lack of adult RE volunteers by leading K-3 children in the Spirit Play MakerSpace center. They worked on the ongoing social justice project of learning about, building, and making decisions about placement of Little Free Libraries with the children and youth advisors. They enjoyed leading the activities and regularly showed real capacity for excellent leadership as they worked with kids in this activity.



### **Going Deeper, Getting Context: A Review of UUCA's RE-Visioning Goals, Changes to RE, and Current Outcomes**

All our programming this year grew out 2016's RE-Visioning process led by Rev. Mark Ward and DLRE Joy Berry. We created time and space to collaborate with the congregation on our present and future in Religious Education. We hoped to communicate and explore the idea that religious education programming, as we have known it, is just one part of faith development, a large, essential ministry of the congregation.

#### **Our Goals for Integrated Faith Development**

- Congregational: A key goal was to "pivot" to an integrated ministry of faith development wherein multiple generations are engaged in learning and teaching, moving away from a model wherein parents are mostly expected to teach RE classes, non-parent adults are an anomaly in the classroom, and children and youth are seen as the only learners (and as learners only).
- Children, youth, families: We wanted them to feel more welcome in worship, more involved in church life, and better connected to the whole congregation. We believed we would deepen their UU identity and commitment with a more inclusive approach to Sunday experience, honoring their unique needs.

- Non-parents: We wanted more non-parent RE leaders, including committee and group involvement in Religious Education. We believed that non-parent congregants would benefit from the faith development opportunities inherent in leading RE, and from connecting with children and youth, and would feel more committed to a church they see as growing and vibrant.

- Parents: We believed parents could engage in their own faith development by attending classes and worship on Sundays, rather than consistently being expected to teach RE. We believed they would experience a stronger and deeper sense of UU identity, connecting them more to other congregants and to our wider church community. We also believed they would be better prepared to continue supporting their family's faith development at home through the week, and more ready and willing to take on leadership roles in church over time.

### **Changes to the Religious Education Program**

- For Fall 2016, an all-ages program of activities and classes was offered at 9:15. This was in addition to a "regular" 11:15 lineup of RE groupings and classes for nursery-12th grade, which we retained. Activity groups and committees were asked to consider how faith development could be a key part of their goals for the year - planning intentional multigenerational events and collaborating with RE staff to create learning opportunities on Sunday mornings, inviting children and youth into greater understanding and relationship with the other parts of UUCA congregational life.

- We also made Time for All Ages an every-Sunday event, spending the first part of each service in a carefully planned experience of welcoming, chalice lighting, song, story, and ceremony. These 15-20 minutes are an important opportunity to intentionally welcome children and youth into the center of church life in our Sanctuary, doing the important faith development of learning our UU rhythms, rituals, and hymns. We also sought to welcome families and teachers into an inclusive, intentional, shared worship experience they did not experience consistently before this shift. Our goals were to support congregants of all ages in building skills for being in worship together as a gathered people, to help families worship together as a springboard for faith development at home, and to instill a love of the experience of UUism outside the classroom so that our children and youth feel a deeper, stronger sense of UU identity,

### **Evaluation of Outcomes from RE-Visioning**

#### **1. RE-Visioning Successes**

Sep-Feb attendance doubled when compared to the same period last year. Full year numbers reflect a 67% increase. Registration increased as well. We saw more families visiting and heard positive feedback about the new offerings from them; especially regarding being together for Time for All Ages each Sunday.

Forty-one adults registered for All Ages RE and attended at least once. Yoga and Hymnsing were well-attended and those leaders were capable and reliable leaders.

## 2. Success and Challenge: The RE Staff Experience

We offered the promised new approaches to programming despite a substantial cut to RE staff hours for 2016-17, and the fact that additional staff time was required for the creation and maintenance of the new programming, along with larger-than-expected classes, lower-than-expected non-parent involvement, and dramatically increased attendance all year. This felt like a huge success because we managed to do it; but it was also a huge challenge, resulting in lowered staff morale, an extremely stressed team, and a lowered sense of confidence and security in our roles.

We lacked the resources of time and energy needed to maintain optimal communication with congregants, we made more mistakes than usual, and rarely felt we had the breathing space to be as intentional and careful in our work as we would have preferred. The pay increase for the two RE support staff was helpful as a morale boost, but didn't solve the issues that the cuts to staff hours, increased workload, and lack of congregational recruitment made overwhelming.

The DLRE took on extra work (defined here as beyond 45 hours) most weeks this year, many times working 50-55 hours to catch up with emails and follow-up tasks that were impossible to get to during the regular work week. This year, a normal day at work included less time to process, prioritize, organize, plan, strategize, or reflect. There was less time to create, curate, observe, or evaluate programs, and less time to plan and offer appreciation and ongoing training and support to leaders; less time for pastoral care to families. We spent more time, instead, acting quickly to handle emergent issues, playing “catch up,” problem-solving on the fly, and actively recruiting just to make the next 1-2 Sundays happen.

## 3. RE-Visioning Challenges

Parents volunteered at about the same rate, although some took us at face value and took a break from teaching to attend worship or join All Ages RE, especially the Parent OWL class and Parent Covenant Groups. However, committee and non-parent commitment to leading RE classes and activities was no higher than before, leading to critical shortages and urgent recruitment on an ongoing basis; exactly what we hoped would change with our new expectations and programs this year.



## **Clarity on the Current Challenges and Consequences for Religious Education for Children and Youth**

The lack of recruitment for our popular, widely-emulated, and nationally-recognized—yes, it’s true and worth repeating that our RE programs for children and teens AND our summer programs are standouts in the UUA—Summer Sundays program, Mission: Makers! has led to our current recruitment of children and youth to lead the sessions, with only adult assistance. Although it is a powerful and theologically-sound move, it is also a chilling one, made because of an extreme need. Again, the Religious Education staff used hours of time and energy to come up with yet another positive-sounding, innovative solution to the chronic lack of committed adult leaders. The deeper truth is this: Outsourcing the leadership of RE to the children and youth whose faith development is our obligation is not a sustainable solution and should serve as a compelling wake-

up call to all congregants. It calls into question the capacity of this congregation to commit what is needed to provide religious education to its own children and youth. This challenge is emblematic of similar trends in the wider congregation.

Our Religious Education Council worked hard to understand and make decisions about how to solve the extreme challenges we faced, recruiting for Fall RE in April with little response from congregants. They decided to host a series of four “Real Talk” informational meetings over two weeks in early May, clarifying the consequences of low congregational commitment: major cuts to programming for which there is not full recruitment by the end of May. These consequences may seem appropriate but they represent a moral hazard for the congregation. A willingness to cut (rather than rally to save and sustain) excellent programming that has resulted in increased attendance and growth, because those most harmed by such cuts can't lobby, vote, or pledge, is not only indefensible. The decision to refuse to commit the time and talent that RE requires will also inevitably lead to fewer families coming in or staying long enough to commit the treasure that the congregation as a whole needs to survive.

## **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.

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**

We changed our insurance company and our database software this year. For both liability, property and worker’s comp insurance we changed from Church Mutual to Sovereign. This was precipitated by poor customer service due to a lack of steady personnel in our district, although they did pay on a claim well. For our database and connection software, we’ve been using ACS by

ACS Technologies. We changed to Realm, a cloud-based, much more up-to-date database system that is also a product of ACS Technologies. Interestingly, both moves saved us a bit of money.



### **Human Resources—First-Years Make Their Marks**

This year we experienced our new ¾-time Music Director’s first full year. Dr. Les Downs has impressed all with his piano prowess and his fabulous direction of our choir. Our new part-time bookkeeper, Becky Donald, has also made it through her first full year. During this time, we’ve learned that our accounting system is unnecessarily complicated and that the work of the bookkeeper occasionally takes even more than 25 hours per week (early on we raised the hours for this position from 20 to 25 hours per week). Plans are on tap to reconstruct the accounting system at the end of 2017-18 to make it simpler and more likely to be much more understandable to any new bookkeeper we might hire. And finally, our new 15-hours per week Connections Coordinator, Venny Zachritz, is finishing off her first year. Now that she’s made it through three iterations of Beginning and Connecting Point classes and a new database, she’s ready for anything.

In mid-year, when Just Economics published their new Asheville Living Wage rate, raising it to \$12.50/hour, it became very clear that two of our employees, Jen Johnson and Kim Collins, both in lifespan religious education, needed salary adjustments. Consequently, they both were given mid-year raises, Jen’s to stay ahead of the Living Wage, and Kim’s to more fairly compensate her for the management of our child care staff along with her other management duties.

Rev. Mark Ward is in the process of taking a 2-month sabbatical, returning on June 19.



### **Buildings & Grounds—Lots of Things Breaking**

I am pretty sure that the best decision I made all year was to recruit a team of Building Managers to handle everyday issues with the buildings. Deepest thanks to **Shel Altschul, Kevin Campton, Tom Dessereau, Dena Gettleman, Ian Fischer, Larry Holt, John McGrann, Tony Reed and Glenn White** for applying their many skills and time to our buildings.

We have two places from which to draw funds for paying for maintenance and repairs. We use the Buildings and Grounds line item in the operating fund to pay for all items under \$500. For items or repair projects that exceed \$500, we use the Capital Fund when the expenditure either increases the value of or extends the life of an existing asset by at least one year. If an item cannot be capitalized (it’s an accounting thing) then the Capital Fund can be used to pay for repair projects over \$1,000. This is true unless we have no funds in the Capital Fund. Then all repairs and maintenance need to be paid out of the Operating Fund. This happened this year—until we got two lovely contributions that added a total of \$13,000 to the Capital Fund.

Here are the year's purchases/repairs over \$200:

#### Main building – 1 Edwin Place

- Cleaning all floors and carpets in lower level
- Unsuccessful hunt for a roof leak (it stopped leaking but we don't know why)
- Painting of administrative (shared) office
- Painting of stairwell
- Dehumidifier for nursery room
- A/C repair for nursery room
- Screen(s) repair and replacement for lower level
- Insurance deductible for damage caused by storm-related power surge
- Added building-wide, heavy duty surge protector
- Two service calls to troubleshoot smoke alarm system
- New dishwasher
- Upgrading grounding of HVAC units
- New HVAC unit in Dir. Admin's office
- New pressure-reducing valve

#### 21 Edwin (Jefferson House)

- Lighting upgrade in a classroom
- New inducer motor for heating system

#### 23 Edwin

- Install new breaker box
- Seal bricks and window frames to prevent air and water leakage

#### **The Grounds**

Grounds work is always in the great hands and heads (they are awesome planners) of Nancy Herbert, Bill Agrella and often Ann McLellan. This has been a year of upkeep, with the only notable change being a re-location of a new gingko tree that had been planted at the parking lot median and was used to replace a tree in the front yard that had been felled by a windstorm last fall.

#### **Memorial Garden**

**Co-leaders Ruth Christie and Kathi Rice; Arthur & Kristina Aaronson, Dorothy Donaldson & Tom Richey, Barbara Kruszewski, Colleen Finegan, and Richard Kark.**

Team members, usually in pairs, volunteered during one week each month watering the interment bed and flower beds surrounding the Memorial Garden, planting, weeding, raking, pruning those areas and picking up the area between the Memorial Garden and Bond Street. Special projects this year have been adding stone under the plaques and refreshing the gravel walk around the interment bed.

Several folk have expressed to us their appreciation of our improving the appearance of the Memorial Garden and surrounding area.



## **Finance/Accounting & Fundraising – All Those Who Helped with Extra Fundraising Are Awesome**

### **The Annual Budget Drive (ABD) – “Upkeep, Connection, Action – U<sup>4</sup>CA”**

**The co-chairs of this year’s Annual Budget Drive were Barbara Brownsmith Campbell and Cecilia Rawlins.** They were specifically recruited to rebuild an ABD committee that had more or less disintegrated over the past few years. Their success was a wonderful thing to behold. Members of their supporting crews were Patty Davis Lee, Judy Harper, and Julie Stoffels for Event Planning; Bob Lane and Eleanor Lane for Visiting Stewards; Dan Phairas, Gina Phairas, and John McGrann for video production.

Here’s how it happened:

The fundraising goal was set at \$650,000, which was the amount we felt could sustain our staffing while continuing to wean ourselves away from the transfers we have been using for the past five years to support a full-time second minister and a highly experienced Lifespan Religious Education Director (this money came from a bequest from Marion Elmslie).

The ABD was segmented to target several different types of givers in the congregation. In early November, we held a very successful “High Contributor” reception that was both a thank you to our high-commitment members (financially, time-wise or both) and the first “ask” of the campaign. The presentation part of this event included compelling presentations from Barbara and Cecilia, followed by a talk by Rev. Mark Ward about the financial state of the congregation, followed by a Q&A period.

The kick-off Sunday for the official campaign was January 29. This included an appetizer buffet following the first service and a chili-cornbread lunch following the second service. The campaign’s awesome video was shown at both events. Print mailings and email mailings were used during several parts of the campaign, for both announcements about the start of the campaign and reminders. Visiting Stewards were to visit about 1/3 of the congregation, though penetration was not quite that high due to lack of Visiting Stewards.

On each Sunday of the campaign, a donor (or donor family) gave a brief “testimonial” as to what value UUCA had in their lives and why they support it with their money. Following services, congregants were encouraged to visit the back of Sandburg Hall where Barbara and Cecilia put together an eye-catching display of progress of the campaign and where an ABD committee member was assigned for answering any questions.

Advice and data analysis during and after the campaign, and follow-up after mid-March, were provided by Jerry McLellan and Larry Wheeler.

Here's what happened:

Despite running an excellent campaign, we did not reach our goal of \$650,000. The final figure came in around \$638,000. With fewer one-time gifts this year than last, the total income for 2017-18 will be slightly lower than the income was in 2016-17. No staff changes will be made, but staffing costs will go up slightly due to pension eligibility and health insurance payments. Also, mortgage payments of around \$13,000 will need to be paid as well. Consequently, two transfers are proposed to supplement the income for the 17-18 budget. One is to use about \$11,000 from the Elmslie bequest and the other is to use money remaining in the Campus Development Fund to cover the coming year's mortgage payments. Intentions are to spend the first half of 2017-18 re-imagining our staffing to better live within our income.

However, several enormously helpful things came as a direct result of the work by Barbara Brownsmith Campbell and Cecilia Rawlins:

- We now have an experienced, happy support team with members who are willing to do their jobs for one more year so that we can establish a rotation in the entire Annual Budget Drive committee.
- A timeline/to-do list that provides a map for accomplishing a similar annual budget drive.
- A zip file of all the handouts, articles and emails that were used during the campaign.
- A +/- analysis of the past annual budget drive with a list of suggestions and recommendations for future drives.

#### **UUCA Auction – Aloha Auction - November 12, 2016**

**Leaders (and super volunteers): Judy Galloway, Ann McLellan, Judith Kaufman, Steve Carter, Karen Morris, Renate Schuchardt, Paula Massey, Tory Schmitz**

The auction brought in a profit of about \$23,000, together with a year-full of parties, dinners, and services for the congregation. The buffet dinner was a fun celebration held at the Asheville Event Center for over 200 attendees with both silent auction and a live auction conducted by Allen Brasington. This is the largest all-congregation party of the year, a time to celebrate and get better acquainted with good food (catered by Moe's Barbecue) and drink while also creating additional events to come, and all while bringing in sizable income for the UUCA budget.

This year a greater variety of congregants attended, more young parents, more people who might not be able to afford large expenditures, but all who wanted to come together for fun and profit. Some events continued to be sold at coffee hours, adding attendance to auction events by newcomers.

#### **Used Book Sale, Holiday Craft Fair and Equal Exchange Coffee Sales**

These three fundraisers aren't in the same league with the auction, but all funds are appreciated! Thanks to the Book Sale leaders, Martha Shepard and Ephraim Schechter, Holiday Craft Fair leader, Sammy Fong, and Equal Exchange sellers, Judy and Pete Olevnik for adding money to our Operating Fund.

## **Building Rentals**

Our buildings provide 3 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 \$15,000 to our income, or about 2% of our total income. Our single largest rental is the ½-time cooperative preschool that uses 21 Edwin (Jefferson House) on school-day mornings. 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 include Guardian ad Litem, the Literacy Council, Campaign for Southern Equality, Tzedek Social Justice Fellows Community Forum, Racial Equity Institute, Youth OutRight, Mountain Area Interfaith Forum, Mountain People’s Assembly, Civil Disobedience Training, Clergy Interfaith Group, Building Bridges, and the UUA.

## **Finance/Accounting**

**The Finance Advisory Committee members are Michael Stevens (chair), Ann Cargill, Sammy Fong, Bob Lane, Ann Perry and Wink Zachritz.**

Our new bookkeeper, Becky Donald, spent the year doing great work while learning our overly complex accounting system. We intend to continue learning about the system this coming year with a plan to re-make (simplify!) the accounting system for the FY transition on July 1, 2018.

The Finance Advisory Committee (FAC) plays a critical role in maintaining the financial well-being of the congregation. In addition to providing advice and counsel to the Director of Administration, the Executive and the Board of Trustees whenever called upon, this group reviews our financial reports, each year’s budget proposal and the financial policies and procedures. The FAC also conducts a mini-review of accounting procedure compliance at least two times a year using the UUCA financial review checklist, ensuring in part that the financial procedures are followed.

This year we continued to invest some of our reserves in Self-Help Credit Union and a small share of our reserves (\$20,000) in Mountain Bizworks as socially responsible community investments. Mountain Bizworks money is not fully liquid as there is a penalty for early withdrawal--we re-invest annually. Our Endowment and Fund for the Future moneys are invested in the Unitarian Universalist Common Endowment Fund, which is a diversified investment fund seeking current income and long-term investment returns through portfolio allocation and professional asset management with UU socially responsible investing goals.

The proposed budget for 2016-17 is included at the back of this report. As of this writing, the bottom line for 2016-17 looks to be 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.



## **Communications**

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.

This year has been a challenge since we laid off our Communications Specialist. Nearly all website updating fell to either Tish Murphy or Linda Topp. Tish handles the weekly changes about worship services, and posts sermons. Linda Topp has done a reasonably good job of figuring out how to change or add pages, slides, widgets, menus and more!

Tish Murphy creates the *Weekly eNews* (Linda Topp usually edits), Jen Johnson creates the *Family eNews*, and Venny Zachritz creates this year's new This Loving Community weekly email. Joy Berry is best at posting to UUCA's Facebook page, Rev. Lisa is second-best, and Linda Topp comes in a poor third. Joy also administers the UUCA Family FaceBook page.

This has worked reasonably well although there are definitely broken places on the website and a desire to change the way we actually distribute our news (Linda is preferring to put it all on the website with just a brief weekly email with highlights only) but all that will have to await professional help.

	ADOPTED 2016-17	PROPOSED 2017-18	PROJECTED EOY 2016-17
<b>INCOME</b>			
Fiscal & Administration Income			
Sustaining Support - financial commitments	620,000	638,000	589,000
Reserve for uncollectible pledges (6%)	(37,200)	(38,280)	
New pledges, post paid pledges	23,680	18,930	17,500
Other Contributions (includes one-time gifts of \$18,000 in 2016-17) and one-time gift of \$3,000 in 2017-18	48,000	33,400	60,000
Distributions from both endowments (5%)	13,690	12,500	14,500
Other Income - Rentals, Fundraising, Short-term investment earnings, \$10K in Community Plate	70,300	70,300	76,500
5-Year Staffing Plan Transfer / Elmslie Bequest	-	6,600	
Capital Development Fund (for mortgage)	-	13,210	-
<b>FISCAL &amp; ADMINISTRATION TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>738,470</b>	<b>754,660</b>	<b>757,500</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
Worship and Music			
Outside speakers	2,300	2,500	1,800
Service supplies, Worship Associates	1,200	1,150	1,250
Music Program (accompanist cost included here in 2016-17)	10,200	8,000	10,200
<b>WORSHIP &amp; MUSIC EXPENSE TOTAL</b>	<b>13,700</b>	<b>11,650</b>	<b>13,250</b>
Lifespan Religious Education Expenses			
RE supplies and equipment	2,800	2,800	3,300
RE special programs (CoA, OWL, HymnSing, social justice)	1,900	2,200	1,700
RE volunteer vetting, training, appreciation	2,500	3,000	3,800
Adult education curricula and materials	400	100	-
<b>LIFESPAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION EXPENSE TOTAL</b>	<b>7,600</b>	<b>8,100</b>	<b>8,800</b>
Congregational Care & Connections Expenses			
Covenant/small groups, Pastoral Visitors, supplies	1,500	600	750
Membership development	2,000	2,100	2,000
Congregational events	500	500	85
<b>CONG. CARE &amp; CONNECTIONS EXPENSE TOTAL</b>	<b>4,000</b>	<b>3,200</b>	<b>2,835</b>
Outreach Expenses			
Earth & Social Justice Ministry incl. Community Plate distributions	16,000	16,000	19,000
GIFT Program (4% of income)	29,200	28,700	29,140
UU Relations	500	-	500
<b>OUTREACH EXPENSE TOTAL</b>	<b>45,700</b>	<b>44,700</b>	<b>48,640</b>
Governance and Congregational Support			
Advertising (and tech communications in 16-17)	2,400	-	1,900
All administrative costs, including computers and software, office-kitchen-hospitality supplies, copier leases and more!	40,450	40,250	45,600
Insurance (liability & workmen's comp)	11,200	9,800	9,500
Facilities & Equipment (includes cleaning service)	69,000	69,600	72,450
Mortgage Payment		13,210	
Staff and Volunteer Development incl. Leadership Development Com	22,460	18,860	19,100
Board Support	4,000	2,000	4,000
Bank/Credit Card fees for processing donations	2,100	1,800	1,850
Annual budget drive, planned giving, ABD fundraising expenses	20,100	19,100	20,200
Transfer for future Financial Audit	-	-	
Transfer to Sabbatical Fund	5,000	-	5,000
Transfer to Capital Fund	10,000	10,000	10,000
<b>GOVERNANCE &amp; CONG. SUPPORT EXPENSE TOTAL</b>	<b>186,710</b>	<b>184,620</b>	<b>189,600</b>
<b>TOTAL PROGRAM AND ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 257,710</b>	<b>\$ 252,270</b>	<b>\$ 263,125</b>
<b>TOTAL PERSONNEL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 480,500</b>	<b>\$ 502,390</b>	<b>\$ 492,280</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 738,210</b>	<b>\$ 754,660</b>	<b>\$ 755,405</b>