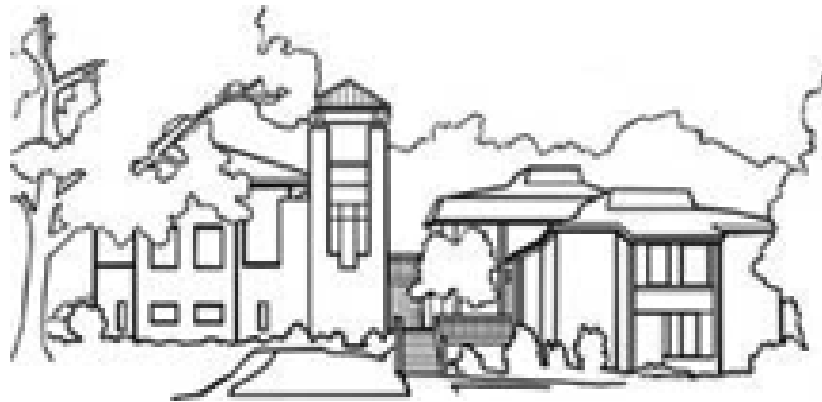


2014–2015 ANNUAL REPORT

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF SILVER SPRING

10309 New Hampshire Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20903



Rev. Elizabeth Lerner Maclay, Senior Minister
Rev. Dr. Leon L. Dunkley, Associate Minister
Sarah Gonzalez, Director of Religious Education
Michael Holmes, Music Director
Barbara Eyman, President, Board of Trustees
Melinda Yalom, Church Administrator
Ashley Burczak, Membership Coordinator & Senior Minister's Assistant

June 2015 (revised)

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ASSOCIATE MINISTER'S REPORT

Associate Minister's Annual Report for 2014 - 2015

Clara and Ellie brought a lot of light into the Sanctuary—Clara Meekins, the daughter of George Meekins and Nicole Veilleux and Ellie Wilmarth, the daughter of Steve Wilmarth and Jenny Kelly. They brought light when they participated in the 9:30 and the 11:30 services respectively as part of the Circle of Life service on May 17th. They helped to tell a story about a little girl, an old turtle and a broken truth.

In the telling of the story, in the play that took place in the Sanctuary, the little girl (the part played by Clara and Ellie) hug the old turtle. I played the part of the old turtle. I was very lucky. What was beautiful in that play, the moment that opened up to spirit was when the little girl and the old turtle looked at one another in wonder. I don't know Clara and Ellie particularly well but I have had chances to connect with them in their religious education classes.

I bring this up to make a comment about structure, a comment about the thoughtful architecture of the church. Last year, a change was made, not in my ministry, but in my contract. It had been written that the Associate Minister was to spend three of the four monthly Sundays "in the Sanctuary." Only one of these Sundays was the Associate Minister expected to preach. On the fourth Sunday, the Associate Minister was not expected to be on the UUCSS campus. All of this is commonplace but, by design, at no time on Sunday can the Associate Minister meaningfully interact with the children of the church.

So, a change was made and regular opportunities for interaction were created. So, when Clara and Ellie and the old turtle looked at one another in wonder, they were looking at someone with whom they were in relationship. It wasn't stiff. It wasn't cold. It was fun and when the hug came, it wasn't staged. It was loving and genuine. There are not stronger things that a church can teach.

How we choose to structure the Unitarian Universalist Church of Silver Spring truly matters. Our choices can create public opportunities for truth and love. Our world is sorely in need of these today. A wise woman named Annette Marquis once advised, "Don't let church work get in the way of the work of the church." Increasingly, we are choosing structures that create opportunities for inner deepening and outward growth. Both are functions of the breath. They are opposite expressions of spiritual respiration. They depend on each other. They are reflective of and necessary to the aspect of spirit that we call church.

When I breathe in, I breathe in peace
When I breathe out, I breathe out love

Increasingly, each morning that we sing this song together, we become more deeply aware that the "I" in the song is not just ourselves, but also the church. Where we are, what we are, how we grow and who we become is revolutionary in light of this understanding. [end of sermon]

As I see it, there are four main ministerial areas at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Silver Spring:

1. The ministry of ideas that we call theology
2. The ministry of word that we call worship
3. The ministry of action that we call service, and
4. The ministry of music and witness that we call prayer.

Theology

Largely, the esoteric theology of UUCSS lived out on Sunday morning. I will not use the Annual Report to comment on Sunday. There are better avenues for this feedback. However, I will note the absence of a Committee on Ministry from which this church might greatly benefit.

The Committee on Ministry model was developed in the late 1980s. Its title was usurped in the 1990s and many assumed that it was a new name for and a new version of the Ministerial Relations Committee but it is not. Ministerial Relations Committees were often charged with the task of resolving conflict. Committees on Ministry are charged with cleaving to the mission and the vision of the church. The mission and vision of a church are like the concept drawings for the building of a sacred garden. The strategic plans that follow from these enable the congregation to break ground. The mission statement of UUCSS is:

UUCSS is a welcoming community, a safe and sacred space for nurturing spiritual growth and lifelong learning, celebrating diversity, and bending the universe toward justice and compassion.

This is a beautiful description of who we are. It is a statement about the quality of our culture. It is not an action plan. It does not tell us where to plant the shovel. The vision statement of UUCSS is:

UUCSS is a safe, welcoming and loving community of seekers of truth and activists of faith. We strive to live our shared values of justice, equity, openness and compassion with ourselves, our families, our congregation, and our larger world. We commit to:

- Deepening, challenging and touching the heart...
- Sharing the joys and sorrows...
- Nurturing music and RE...
- Being good stewards of our environment...
- Embracing diversity...
- Dealing with conflict with trust and openness
- Creating opportunities for healing, learning, social action, fun and laughter

This, too, is a beautiful description of who we are. What would change if it was aspirational, if its features were visions of what could be and who we could become?

Right now, UUCSS does not have a Committee on Ministry (not to be confused with a Ministerial Relations Committee). The purpose of a Committee on Ministry is the upholding six basic ideas. They are as follows:

1. The mission of a church is the reason why a congregation exists;
2. The ministry of a church is everything that a congregation does to fulfill its mission;
3. The mission of a church is a congregation's reason for being;
4. The ministry of a church is how the mission is processed;
5. The mission and the ministry of a church are inseparable; and
6. Whatever the stated mission, the form of the church—the architecture of its leadership, the structure of its governance, its councils and committees—reveals the congregation's true mission.

In other words, who we are is not a function of who we proclaim but rather, the natural reflection of how it is we choose to live. If we are open and just, then let us say that we are so. If we are loving and kind, brilliant and strong, careful and quirky, let us say so. New friends are attracted to communities that know themselves and, more importantly, communities that know themselves play better softball. (That's a code. It means that

communities that know themselves have a lot more fun.) Who we actually are is an expression of our practical theology.

The practical theology of UUCSS is honest and beautiful. It is expressed in InReach and Creative Aging groups that are slowly growing in number. It is expressed through Adult Programs, all of them deep and excellent—from Quiet Day to the showing of *The Central Park Five* with the Diversity Team and the Racial Justice Task Force, from Jane Jackson’s Metta Meditation classes to the Baltimore response called *Touching Peace* with UUA/JPD representative Paula Cole Jones. It is expressed through all aspects of the ongoing work of the Program Council—particularly, this year, in its exploration of the meaning of volunteerism.

Chris Lindsley has done a masterful job of holding up before the congregation what it means to serve. After prompting a series of conversations with me, with wise elders in the church and with currently serving volunteers, Chris brought in two veterans—Phyllis Ryder and Alexa Fraser. A tearful conversation ensuing wherein it was determined that we, as leaders, could do a better job of asking the congregation a whole lot more about what it needs rather than simply filling the positions of the church “as it has always been.” To this end, Chris’s service on May 3rd canvassed the hopes and the aspirations of the congregation. He gathered the results for future use.

Slowly and organically, the purpose of the restructuring exercise that the Program Council undertook in years past is coming to fruition in networking and in collaboration. Rather than banging our heads together in a meeting, we are taking to the habit of creating events together. This was most clearly the case with the showing of *The Central Park Five* but it is happening in other areas as well. It is encouraging.

The practical theology of UUCSS expresses itself in the deepening of the Lay Ministry Team. We have begun a conversation and are developing a strategy for a three-pronged organization of this team—direct pastoral response in times of health crises (through Jane Larrick, Marcia Joyner and the Caring Committee), the Healing Circle team that holds its own gatherings and follows up on acute or urgent Joys and Sorrows and a tactical team of volunteers that responds with assistance for practical need at weddings, funerals, memorial services and the like. The Team has been doing wonderfully this year and one of its greatest achievements has been brokering issues of acute conflict within the congregation. How a church is or is not able to deal with conflict reflects the level of its spiritual maturity. As Sister Simone Campbell reminded us as she addressed the General Assembly in 2014, we must walk towards trouble. She said,

I realized that all of our spiritual leaders, when there are broken hearts or pain in our world, they have walked towards it. They walk towards the pain in order to embrace, touch, heal. Now, that means if the high-level leaders do that, isn't that the witness that we all try to follow? Now, I realize [applause] Thank you. That's really nice. I'm not used to having applause in the middle. That's really nice. There's a part of me that has always believed we can make a difference.

This is something that we are learning to embrace on the Lay Ministry Team.

Worship

The spiritual direction of the church continues as ever with two notable exceptions—the sermon called *Black Water Woods* delivered with Alexa Fraser and the sermon called *The Power of This Day* delivered with Alex Posner. Both of these were sermons that championed the stories of people within our communities whose life journeys inform or can inform the spiritual direction of this church. Before the Board chooses to champion an issue on behalf of the congregation, I should that it would be prudent for the congregation to have a chance to grapple with the ideas themselves. The *Death With Dignity* issue has been present before the congregation and can deepen the spiritual experience of the church if we allow it. *Death With Dignity* is not simply a social action issue. It is something that has dangerous and troubling aspects. It does not call us

to easy righteousness. The church can learn how to enter into the issue without first taking a stand. We worked together to soften the conversation and to prepare for the long-haul.

Service

There have been a series of service opportunities—the Climate Change Rally in NYC (attended by Leon Dunkley, Ken Iobst and Alexa Fraser, Nathan Fraser, Brian Wilmarth and Matt Levesque), the Selma/Harpers Ferry/DC Freedom Ride that is being planned for June, the Ferguson non-indictment responses, the Black Lives Matter Campaign and more. We have been intensely active. Further, we have been maturing the idea that our spirituality might reveal itself in ways that are impractical and inconsistent with our plans and bylaws...and that's ok too.

Prayer

We have been standing in witness for love and justice in our world. Non-urgently, we are holding many things before us and reflecting on what it is that we are called to do.

Most powerfully, we are bringing ourselves to financial integrity and compensational equity. Thanks in no small measure to Michelle Levesque and Sherry McGee, we are finding our integrity in ways that have served the ABD. Their great effort and accomplishment makes real what could otherwise be reduced to a platitude:

We Covenant To Affirm and Promote justice, equity and compassion in human relations.

It is powerful to know that our principles are real in the home.

Every blessing,

Rev. Dr. Leon Dunkley

DIRECTOR of RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Director of Religious Education Annual Report 2014 – 2015
(covers the RE Children & Youth Committee this year)

For the UUCSS Religious Education Program during the 2014-15 church year there have been many highlights, challenges, and opportunities. In addition to those listed below, I successfully completed the UUA's Credentialing program and received my Credentialed Religious Educator title.

Highlights:

- We offered K-1st grade OWL for the first time in UUCSS history for a class of ten children.
- We continued to create and publish the booklet *What's Happening at UUCSS* that includes not only RE activities but also information about events, activities and groups all around the church.
- We continued to send out the Weekly RE Nuus, a weekly newsletter with important information about the RE program.
- We held a successful Children and Youth RE Planning Retreat on 4/19/15, attended by members of the Children/Youth RE Committee.
- We held a wonderful RE Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast on May 3rd to the enjoyment of all who attended!
- We provided an excellent RE Program for preschool through middle school at the 9:30 service and for all ages at the 11:30 service. We also offered nursery care during both services.
- We reinstated Story for All Ages into our worship service once per month.
- We offered the Coming of Age program for thirteen 9th graders.
- We restructured the YRUU program to be more in line with the Six Pillars of Youth Ministry. These changes included holding Circle Worship for YRUU and COA several times per year.
- We started a Junior Signers program for RE participants.
- We wrote a new song to sing out the children after the Story for All Ages.
- We offered 7th-9th grade OWL for sixteen participants.
- We implemented a plan to offer interpretative services for RE participants.
- We created a children's library in the Triangle Room.
- We offered five workshops in the spring on yoga, crocheting, cooperative games, live action video, and American Sign Language.

Challenges:

- We are still working to improve the transition between Coming of Age and YRUU.
- The YRUU program is in need of more staff attention than I have available.
- Using shared space for RE classes is sometimes challenging.

Opportunities:

- We plan to offer 4th-6th grade OWL next year.
- We will have a Story for All Ages during our worship services twice per month beginning in September.
- The YRUU group will be traveling to Boston for a heritage trip next spring.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah Gonzalez, CRE

MUSIC DIRECTOR

Music Director Annual Report 2014 – 2015

Talent continues to develop and nurture among our church musicians. This year's Suite Treat was a perfect showcase for this, and I am pleased to see that church members are using our church as a forum for personal expression through music, at the very least. Another highlight from this year, as well as a personal triumph for me and for many choir members was the Clif Hardin's Requiem for All Souls Sunday. The choir continues to grow in size which is reflective of a recent bump in church membership. The house band has also grown in its pool of players, including area professionals who have been lurking in the church, and some considering joining the church. I see this as a powerful form of outreach! All things considered, it was difficult to work under budget constraints, as we learned in the winter that we had far less money to work with than we had realized. Nevertheless, we are carrying on with our endeavors and pushing forward with our music program CD project.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Holmes, Music Director

MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR

Membership Coordinator Annual Report 2014 – 2015

Membership this year continues to grow! Over the past 10 months, we have had 17 new members join, with 9 others planning to join and another pathways to membership class yet to come before the end of this fiscal year.

In November, we removed members who had not pledged from the membership rolls. This was the first time our on paper policy requiring annual pledge participation from members was fully enforced, and it resulted in a large apparent drop in membership. However, what the change actually did was allow us to establish a truly accurate list of active, pledging members. We can now accurately track membership trends, contact active members, and be clear on our true rate of attrition, which will allow us to be more effective in many areas.

Although the final cleaning of the rolls following this year's ABD won't be completed for several weeks, it appears we can expect approximately a 10% rate of member attrition this year. This is a healthy rate for a congregation, and a low one for a church in an urban area. I expect the addition of new members to outpace attrition this year, although the drop in membership due to fully cleaning our rolls obscures this in the short term.

While we do a good job of bringing people into membership once they visit, it has been a growing edge of UUCSS to reach out and encourage potential visitors. This year we expanded our use of social media to reach new potential visitors. Our Facebook page, which is open to the general public (the Facebook group is private), has grown steadily since I began more regular posting, and now has 235 followers--an increase of

over 50 new people since October. The reach of our posts had increased to an audience of several hundred people at times. Our Twitter feed has also gained new followers with increased posting and publicity.

I believe we should continue to reach out in this and other ways. About 10% of our visitors become members, so increasing the number of visitors could greatly increase our membership. I encourage the congregation to consider ways to conduct greater outreach to various local communities, and possibly allocate funds toward formal advertising, such as a billboard.

This year I updated our visitor materials to better reflect our current programs and better assist people in integrating into our community. We now have six pamphlets describing various aspects of congregational life, in addition to a pamphlet describing membership. In the coming year, I hope to add a few additional materials to clarify common points of confusion for visitors and members. I believe these materials will help draw new members who truly understand what membership here means, and who can easily jump into congregational life.

As UUCSS moves toward a congregational size that requires greater dependence on staff, increased small group ministry to maintain a sense of community, and potential changes to the worship routine, it is important that the church thinks critically about its vision for itself and its deepest identity and values. If we wish to grow consciously and successfully, it is important that we can articulate a strong identity. I encourage the congregation to develop a simple, clear statement that articulates the identity of UUCSS, so that we can bring in members who want to join in our vision.

The greeting program, through which members assist the Sunday Support team by getting visitors for one Sunday service each year, has now been in place for two years. Rev. Liz initiated the program based on the success of a similar program in her home church growing up. While the Sunday Support teams have found the additional help useful, one of the biggest problems with the program has been a high number of no-shows. To address this, I will be using a new system during the 2015-2016 church year, which will allow members to change their scheduled dates with greater ease and ensure that they receive additional reminders about the dates they are scheduled for. I hope this will result in us always having someone to greet visitors at the door, which is key to an effective outreach strategy as we work to grow.

The membership committee voted this year to begin a growth initiative in the Fall of 2015, which will focus on strengthening our outreach and visitor welcoming to increase growth in a variety of ways. In the coming year, we hope to involve a wider group of members in this work, and we hope our efforts will help UUCSS grow and strengthen even more. I believe that UUCSS has a life saving message of justice and spiritual growth to offer the world, and we are in a strong position to let that message expand even further.

Submitted by Ashley Burczak, Membership Coordinator

PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Annual Report from the President 2014-2015

What an exciting time! As I look back over the year—the fellowship we have shared, the passion and commitment we have sparked, the ties we have deepened, the dreams we have sown—I am struck by our growth and maturation as a community and our future potential. This congregation is truly special, and together we really can have that “amazing impact” we envision in our Strategic Plan.

This year, the Board of Trustees has been focused on laying a solid foundation from which to launch a major upgrade in our buildings and grounds next year. These efforts have taken many different forms:

Dream Builders: At an all-church meeting in October, the congregation formally entrusted the Dream Builders and the Board to hire and work with an architect to develop conceptual drawings that embody the commitments and priorities expressed by the community. Thanks to the tireless and creative work of Phyllis Ryder and her Dream Builders team, we are on track to do just that.

Capital Campaign: The board has been working closely with our Capital Campaign Chair, Erik Leaver, throughout the year to prepare for the anticipated launch of a capital campaign in the fall of 2015 to fund the renovations. With the advice of a professional consultant, we have been developing a plan for the campaign that will incorporate our ambitious goals, prudent stewardship, and spiritual values.

Annual Budget Drive: The wildly successful Annual Budget Drive is an important component of our preparations for the capital campaign and renovations ahead. In addition to the important priorities we are now able to fund in our operating budget (especially achieving equity in our staff salaries—woohoo!), the ABD success bespeaks of a larger love and commitment that we share for this community. Our enduring gratitude for our ABD co-chairs, Emily Tien, Jim Street and Erik and Allison Leaver, for their leadership, vision and dedication throughout the drive.

Prudent Stewardship: The board recognizes that if we are to go to the congregation and ask for long-range financial commitments, it is incumbent upon us to demonstrate excellent stewardship of the church’s financial, human, tangible and intangible resources. We have therefore been building upon the significant work of our predecessor boards to improve our stewardship in the following ways:

- *Finances:* Our VP for Finance, Michelle Levesque, has invested untold hours of her life over the past two years to upgrade our financial operations, as detailed in her separate report. It is hard to understate the importance of having reliable and accurate financial systems in place, especially as we embark upon a capital campaign.
- *Financial Planning:* With the help of Andrew Kleine, the board has been working on a long-range financial plan to help guide us through the years ahead, anticipating and making appropriate provisions for future needs so that we can avoid crisis-based financial governance.
- *Personnel:* Under the leadership of outgoing VP for Personnel, Kathy Lorr, we continue to professionalize our personnel operations, with the hiring of PayChoice to advise us on HR operations, the development of annual Compensation and Benefits statements for staff and ongoing work on updating our employee handbook.

- *Membership Data:* Membership Coordinator Ashley Burczak, Rob Dahlstrom and Jim Paoletti have been working with the Board to help us better understand and monitor our membership data, a crucial element of our long range financial planning.
- *Church Policies:* The Board’s Planning Committee, led by Corporate Vice President Carol Hamilton, has assumed the herculean and long overdue project of overhauling our church policies. Although this is still a work in progress, it is our hope that clear and up-to-date policies should ensure smooth church operations while empowering us to achieve our common goals.
- *Good Governance:* The Board has also focused attention on its own operations, working to ensure that we provide vision and leadership to guide the church while delegating appropriate authority to others. We have made efforts to focus our meetings, and to handle matters that do not require full board attention at our newly-scheduled mid-month Executive Committee meetings. This is freeing the board to spend more time on long-range, strategic visioning.

In addition to our focus on preparing the church for renovations and a capital campaign, the Board has also had several conversations about how best to support UUCSS members in finding our calling within the church. We seek to help members find a meaningful “ministry” that can deepen connections and provide spiritual, social and personal fulfillment, whether through social justice activities, work with our youth, music-making, serving on a committee, helping out in the office, etc. VP for Programs, Chris Lindsley led a beautiful service in May inviting us to think deeply about these possibilities, which produced a rich and varied list of personal “one thing” that attendees most want to do at UUCSS. We are an eclectic bunch! And of course, the Board spent some time preparing for Rev. Liz’s spring/summer sabbatical—but not much time, as Sabbatical Chair Alexa Fraser and her committee organized the process like a well-oiled machine, leaving very little for us to do or worry about. Thank you Alexa!

Last, but certainly not least, deep gratitude and recognition to Sherri McGee, who unexpectedly had to resign from her role as President early in the year, due to significant new work commitments. Sherri led the church with a calm, wise and steady hand for over two years, and we deeply appreciate all the gifts she shared with us during that time. And also to Carol Hamilton, who ably and gracefully stepped in as Acting President shortly after joining the Board. And finally, on a personal note, I want to express my appreciation to my fellow Board members. It has truly been an honor and pleasure to work with such a talented, committed, diverse and fun group of individuals!

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Eyman

CORPORATE VICE PRESIDENT

Planning Committee 2014 – 2015 Annual Report

Purpose

The board's planning committee is made up of the at-large board members and the corporate vice president. Its role is three-fold: plan the annual leadership retreat; keep the church's policies up to date and monitor the church's progress on its strategic plan. Our focus this year was on the first two items.

Acting President

The year began in an interesting fashion as I learned that the board corporate vice president becomes acting president if the current board president steps down. At my second board meeting, I needed to shift from an observing and learning role to setting the agenda and leading the meeting. *"life inevitably throws us curve balls, unexpected circumstances that remind us to expect the unexpected. I've come to understand these curve balls are the beautiful unfolding of both karma and current."* Carre Otis I was able to make this shift pretty seamlessly because of the wonderful support of our ministers, staff, the board and the rest of the church's lay leadership. Thanks to everyone!

Leadership Retreat

Our Annual leadership retreat included congregation's board, committee chairs, staff as well as the dream builders team and was held September 20-21. We were graciously hosted by the Ahmadiyya Mubarak Mosque in Chantilly, Virginia. The group deliberated over the good work that the Dream Builders had done over the past year to synthesize and clarify our values, and key priorities for building campaign. We also planned the series of congregational information sessions we held over September and October to prepare the congregation to vote on the resolution on October 19th.

October 19th congregational meeting

Barbara Eyman was elected president of the board to serve the balance of Sherri McGee's term. In addition, the congregation voted overwhelmingly in favor of this important resolution which supported the work of the Dream Builders and the board over the course of the year:

Whereas

- the Dream Builders Committee has spent the last year ascertaining the hopes and dreams of the Congregation and professional staff; and
- the Dream Builders Committee has translated those needs and desires into a set of commitments to guide design, construction, and upkeep, and priorities for improved space;

We, the members of the Congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Silver Spring, hereby affirm that these commitments and priorities faithfully represent the hopes and dreams of this Congregation; and

We, the members of the Congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Silver Spring, charge and entrust to the Dream Builders Committee and the Board the responsibility:

- to bring these commitments and priorities to an architect, and other professionals as necessary, and
- to select and present to the Congregation a set of conceptual drawings that the Dream Builders Committee believes best honors those commitments and priorities.

Updating policies

We are in the midst of an extensive review of the church's policies, procedures as well as other documents and documentation that serves to support the work of the church.

Our first order of business was simply to consolidate into one up-to-date document all the policies that had been approved by the board over the past several years.

We also will be bringing a few minor amendments to the church's constitution to the annual meeting in June to bring it into line with our current practice, including the church year, board terms, etc.

Still in progress is a more extensive updating and review of the church's policies. Our goal is to streamline the policy document, build in as much flexibility as possible while improving clarity of roles, responsibilities and accountabilities. The board must approve all policy statements. When we are done, our goal is to include only what is truly a policy statement, stripping out any procedural statements. Committees and staff are empowered to adjust procedures to meet the current realities and needs of the congregation.

Respectfully submitted, Carol Hamilton, Corporate VP.

FINANCE VICE PRESIDENT

UUCSS Finance Committee Annual Report 2014 – 2015

As I complete my second year I'm pleased at the progress we have been making in the area of financial stewardship. Much of the success is due to the fact that we have had two consistent members of finance committee tirelessly keeping the day-to-day activities of collecting funds and paying bills going while I adjusted the accounting records and reports and did the payroll. A huge thank you should be given to both Lynn Edmiston and Lisa Schumaker for the work they have continued to do year after year.

Completed Activities:

- Switching from cash basis to generally accepted accounting principles (“GAAP”) which will prepare us in the event we ever want to consider applying for a new mortgage or grants.
- Implementing fund accounting which is also standard for not-for-profit GAAP accounting. This allows us to track revenue and expense for all funds (e.g. music, Families LUUV, Book & Chalice) and not just the operating budget.
- Issuing financial reports (balance sheet, income statement for the operating fund versus budget, income statements by fund, detailed transactions by account) on a monthly basis to the board, program council, administrative operations council, finance committee and capital campaign committee. The financial package is available to anyone else upon request.
- Issuing pledge statements to all pledge units semi-annually.

Work-in-Process:

- Finalizing the engagement with the external accountant. This is much later than anticipated but I believe was necessary otherwise it would have cost the church beyond what we had in the budget.
- Review, update and/or create policies and procedures related to finance and accounting at the church.
- Refine the monthly reporting package.
- Review and submit application to obtain our own 501c3 status.

Financial Highlights:

- **Endowment Fund:** We've received \$3,045 in contributions to the fund this year. Thanks go to those who made these special contributions: Greg Harry, Cathy & Ed Johnson, Barbara Putney, Marty Atias & Tina Borrow and various members of the Kim/Sleek family in honor of Scott's parent's wedding anniversary.
- **Kevin Drewery Grounds Fund:** We withdrew \$110 from this fund to pay for some plantings which were needed on the grounds. The fund now has \$575 remaining in it.
- **Beatrice Robbins Youth RE Fund:** We withdrew \$2,975 of the fund in support of our Youth RE program. To the extent there are more expenses for the youth RE program this year more funds will be withdrawn from the fund. The fund now has \$1,090 remaining in it.
- **The Art Fund:** We added \$118 to the fund. These are proceeds from the craft fair held in early December. The fund now has a total of \$3,237 in it.
- **Capital Campaign Fund:** We have spent \$5,679 of funds related to the capital campaign and Dream Builders activities. These expenses will be covered by proceeds from the capital campaign and are thus held in a separate fund from the operating fund. There are additional expenses to be incurred in May and June which will add to the total before our fiscal year closes in June.

There are other funds which we track such as Music, Book & Chalice, Families LUUV, Women's Retreat but those funds are much more active and still a moving target for this year. As such I have chosen not to highlight the activity which will not likely be accurate by the time this report is published. A full accounting is available in the monthly financial package as mentioned above.

The Annual Budget Drive: The Seeds of our Dream

The campaign has concluded with the following results. Total pledges amount to \$518,468 coming from 207 pledging units. This is a 9.42% increase over last year's pledge drive results and exceeded the base budget goal by 3.5%. This will form the basis of our budget for next year which will cover the increases in healthcare costs, maintenance on our property and the professional bookkeeper. It is also planned to provide some equity to our staff who have recently been elevated to higher compensation status (e.g. credentialed DRE and experienced Associate Minister). Of the 207 who pledged, 105 increased their pledges from this year (2014 – 2015), 76 maintained their pledge levels, 20 decreased and we have 6 new pledge units. We have 18 pledge units outstanding as of the printing of this report and 13 pledging units have chosen to not pledge this year.

2014 – 2015 Financial Results and 2015-2016 Operating Budget

The year-to-date financial statements and the proposed budget for next year are in the process of being finalized. The Board anticipates that these documents will be circulated via all-church e-mail at least three days in advance of the Annual Meeting scheduled for June 7, 2015. Hard copies will be available at the Annual Meetings. I strongly encourage everyone to read the budget in advance of voting to adopt it as not all requested budgets could be adopted as submitted.

Submitted by Michelle Levesque, Vice President for Finance. (finance@uucss.org)

PERSONNEL VICE PRESIDENT

Personnel Committee Annual Report 2014 - 2015

UUCSS personnel activities were again very stable this year, in part because there is no room for expansion given our very limited staff office space. The steady strengths of our competent, responsible and reliable staff anchor the church and afford us the opportunity to meet more needs in line with our mission than ever before. The church continues to depend on staff to fulfill many of the basic responsibilities once delegated to volunteers and committees. The sabbatical of our Senior Minister, who currently serves as Chief of Staff, highlights the church's reliance on a staff that is extremely self-motivated and trustworthy. The Board's commitment to move in stages, one step at a time, toward creating an executive director position that would in part include personnel responsibilities remains a future objective that hinges on space and funding. This year's most significant personnel enhancement was the release of an annual personalized Compensation and Benefits Statements to each staff member. Replacing the former, much briefer annual Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) letters, these annual statements give staff a better understanding of the compensation and benefits they receive from UUCSS. Within a very tight budget, we were able to maintain all employees at guideline levels of compensation set by the Unitarian Universalist Association, but were not able to include a cost of living adjustment for the church year July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015. However, we hope to resume cost of living adjustments as soon as practicable in the years ahead.

The Compensation and Benefits Statements included an explanation of changes to the new UUA Retirement Plan, and issues related to insurance. The Board continues to plan for significant increases in health care costs. In addition, the Board has recognized the increasing importance of staff through certain holiday bonuses. After careful and close discussion of the importance of equity (as opposed to merit) increases for certain positions, the need for equity increases became a central theme of the UUCSS Annual Budget Drive. Specifically, we wish to provide our Religious Education Director, Sarah Gonzalez, now a Credentialed Religious Educator, and our called Associate Minister, Reverend Leon Dunkley, with equity adjustments that will allow us to appropriately and fairly compensate them under UUA guidelines.

Ensuring that our personnel procedures and management practices remain compliant with UUA requirements, state and federal laws, and other reasonable requirements remains a significant challenge. The human resource services provided by Sage/PayChoice, a web-based company that supports our payroll system, include access by our Vice President for Personnel to on-line assistance (HR On-Demand) and to expertise at an HR Helpline. Sage/PayChoice's legal review of our current Employee Handbook resulted in a new "start from scratch" template. This new template has been folded into significant portions of the Handbook that need to be retained as well as a number of pending necessary changes to our personnel policies. After these changes have been approved, the new and improved Employee Handbook can be released to staff.

Submitted by Katharine A. Lorr
Chair, Personnel Committee

PROGRAM VICE PRESIDENT

Report of the Council Chair 2014-2015

The program council again spent much of the year exploring the issue of church involvement, and coming up with a way to match members' interests and passions with church activities and events. This culminated with two services on church involvement on May 3, which generated a lot of feedback on what church members and visitors most want to do at UUCSS, and has led to a variety of people joining existing committees.

Highlights:

1. Made progress on matching members' interests and passions with church activities and events (church involvement or volunteering), in an effort to get more people involved.
2. Planned the church calendar for the 2015-2016 year, and have identified people to lead our major church events for the coming year, and started developing a process to identify and train future coordinators (leadership development).
3. Updating the Program Council Handbook to make it more current and more of a true resource document for church members.
4. Added Heather Dennis as Program Council Vice-Chair, a role that had been unfilled for the last three years.

Challenges:

1. Create a culture where it is easy for people to join church committees or activities that are meaningful to them.
2. How to leverage and support church members' interests in social action, and be clearer about what social action activities we as a church are supporting.
3. Establish clear processes for things like planning a church event, and communicating and promoting these processes to get people to use them.

Opportunities:

1. Increase understanding of Program Council committees and roles and how and why to get involved, which can lead to new people getting involved and new ideas being considered.
2. Use church communication vehicles to educate members about the work of the Program Council, to make it easier for people to get involved in Program Council committees or related activities and to get feedback/suggestions.
3. Tie events/programs/activities more closely to monthly church themes and other church priorities, such as social action focus areas, to reinforce and support the messages we hear on Sundays.

Submitted by Chris Lindsley

BOARD COMMITTEE

DREAM BUILDERS

Dream Builders Annual Report 2014 – 2015

Phyllis Ryder, Chair; Marty Atias, Melanie Berkemeyer, Patty Bryan-Taff, Rob Dahlstrom, Laura Ellis, and John Robinette

In October 2014, the Dream Builders presented the congregation with our overview of the dreams we had gathered, and you voted to charge and entrust to the Dream Builders Committee and the Board the responsibility:

- to bring [our church's] commitments and priorities to an architect, and other professionals as necessary
- and to select and present to the congregation a set of conceptual drawings that the Dream Builders Committee believes best honors those commitments and priorities.

We've been hard at work on these tasks.

After we interviewed five architectural firms, UUCSS engaged the services of Studio Twenty Seven. This DC firm matches well with our values. They have an established record for sustainable building, along with expertise in DeafSpace design, multi-use spaces, and designing campus plans.

This spring, Studio Twenty Seven conducted a thorough survey of our buildings and grounds to understand where we need to begin our work. We are now working with them to develop a campus plan that fits well with the commitments and priorities that the congregation set. While we have not finalized our plans, we are very excited about the creative and insightful options we have seen. Each time we meet with Studio Twenty Seven, we feel certain that we have chosen the right architectural firm and that we have a good process for turning the UUCSS dreams into a more tangible campus plan.

In the fall, we will have an exciting, forward thinking plan to share with you, along with a breakout of the potential costs. We are working closely with the Board, our Capital Campaign Chair Erik Leaver, and our Capital Campaign consultant Jim Klote so that UUCSS can present a clear financial plan alongside our campus plan. As the church year starts up again, we will schedule small group meetings to share the designs with you, and we look forward to hearing your feedback.

Submitted by Phyllis Ryder

OPERATIONS COUNCIL

Operations Council Annual Report 2014-2015

Purpose:

The Operations Council coordinates the activities of its five member committees.

Members:

Rob Dahlstrom, Chair, Administrative Operations Committee, Co-chair, Audio Visual Technology Committee

Mark Ferrenz, Chair, Capital Improvements and Accessibility Committee

Nancy Dougherty, Chair, Information Technology Committee

Marty Atias, Co-chair, Audio Visual Technology Committee

Vacant, Chair, Property Committee

Highlights:

The Operations Council continues to function on a trial basis. It consists of representatives of the Administrative Operations, Audio Visual Technology, Information Technology, Property, and Capital Improvements and Accessibility committees. It has been effective in coordinating the work of its member committees.

The Ops Council has identified deficiencies in all our buildings, grounds, and equipment and coordinated with the Dream Builders Committee in planning for their restoration or replacement.

Challenges:

Improving the maintenance and repair of our buildings and grounds and the computer and audio-visual services provided by our member committees. Our buildings have been a primary focus as they are not in good condition after having their maintenance underfunded for many years.

We need better communication with the Board of Trustees. When proposing the creation of the Operations Council, we requested that a board member act as convener for the new council and liaison to the board. It was suggested that this position be a VP functioning much like the Program VP does for the Program Council. During the trial period, the board has suggested that instead they have their members attend on a rotating basis. This arrangement has not worked and the board continues to have little knowledge of what we are doing and what the issues are with the buildings, grounds, and equipment. As a result, the needs of these areas continue to be given little or no priority.

Opportunities:

Though it could be better, we continue to find the new council structure helpful in coordinating and improving the operations functions of our church.

Rob Dahlstrom
Acting Convener

ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

Administrative Operations Committee Annual Report 2014-2015

Purpose:

Support the Ministers, staff, and church leadership in performing the administrative functions of the church.

Members:

Rob Dahlstrom, Chair, Membership and Auction Databases, Microsoft Computing

Melinda Yalom, Church Administrator

Ken Iobst, Corporate Office Services, Logical Email Addresses, Electronic File System, Web Calendar,
UNIX Computing, Computer Security

Mark Ferrenz, Telephones

Lisa Schumaker, Office organization, Finance Related Issues

Nancy Dougherty, Database, Office Procedures

Highlights:

The new operations council structure, still on a trial basis, has enabled us to focus more on office procedures and their documentation and moving more of our paper records to digital storage because the new Information Technology and Audio Visual Technology Committees have relieved us of their tasks.

We are continuing the trial of an online membership database system, IconCMO. It is available to those who need access to our membership data and some leaders are beginning to use it. We are continuing to use our old FileMaker-based system during this transition period.

We were able to publish an up-to-date member-friendly directory, which had been a challenge for some time, with the assistance of the Membership Committee and staff, and the availability of membership data provided by the new membership database.

Challenges:

We need clear, up-to-date policies on building rentals. Since rentals are administered by the church administrator, issues with rentals become a topic of conversation for this committee. However, the rental procedures and policies have been the responsibility of Finance, and when functioning, the Rentals Committee under Finance.

We continue to be involved in building issues, particularly failures of the old HVAC and alarm systems. Improved procedures for responding to these failures should help us keep these systems functioning until they can be replaced and minimize the cost of repairs.

Membership has been requesting changes to our member classifications that are confusing and difficult to implement in our old database.

Opportunities:

The Archive Closet is full and doesn't have room to safely store building drawings and other large items. We are beginning the process of cleaning out what we don't need and digitizing what can be stored on our church server.

Completing our conversion to the new online database promises to give church leaders access to membership information and simplify the maintenance of our membership data. Converting mailing lists and reporting

are a top priority. We continue to study the Web Services features of the new database, such as an online directory, to see if and how they might be implemented.

Rob Dahlstrom
Chair, AOC

AUDIO VISUAL TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

AV Tech Committee Annual Report 2014-2015

Accomplishments

With the generous support of the music committee we were able to purchase a new digital mixing and recording system and several supporting accessories in the past year. This new equipment allows us to work with more microphones, performs more reliably, has many more features, and sounds better. While these capabilities make it more complex, we've been able to program it to make routine mixing operations simpler. The multi-track recording features allows us to go back in time to improve live mixes or repair mistakes in the live mix such as mics not being turned on in time.

Also new this year is a high definition video projector provided by Sister Eden (Lori Hill & John Robinette) who is associated with the Green Sanctuary committee. I understand that they are considering an official donation.

With the help of church members who have volunteered their carpentry skills, we have been able to enlarge the risers flanking the Pulpit in response to our minister's request for a shorter path between their seats and the Pulpit and better visibility. This also offers a raised platform for our ASL interpreters should they opt to use it and for children's performances.

We provided services to support a number of very successful events this year, including the David Smith residency, a very successful Solstice concert residency which sold out the house, A Sunday service around Clif Hardin's Requiem featuring an orchestra accompanying the combined choirs of UUCSS and Cedar Lane, and the recent Suite Treat fund raising concert, which demonstrated the new mixing system's capabilities (by accommodating both sanctuary stages with 4 performance zones using 29 inputs) and our potential for high production quality events.

Challenges

While the new mixing system is a great new asset, it is but one component of the total sound system and what it takes to ensure the technical success of our services and events.

Speakers

While the two sets of main speakers that we are using for our two stages are not bad in and of themselves, they are aesthetically and functionally inappropriate for our space and application. We used a different set for the solstice concert (through a loan arranged by Marty) which were smaller, of higher quality, and included a sub-woofer, with a noticeable improvement. However having three permanent sets of big, black, floor standing speakers is aesthetically contrary to the room, inconvenient, and impossible to optimize for sound quality. Our three speaker processors (which tailor the speaker's sound for the room and help to minimize feedback) require replacement. One died this year, which was a loaner from Marty.

Microphones & Stands

We were able to purchase two high quality floor-standing choir microphones this year, which are valuable for expanded choir events and for recording. However we still need to upgrade the permanent hanging choir mics. For music events that involve bands or orchestra, we are utilizing loaner microphones and stands.

Acoustics

Acoustics continue to be a major problem. Microphones can “ring” to near feedback levels even during simple services, which is a spiritual distraction. This is due to the highly reflective nature of the room surfaces which also creates harshness during loud musical performances, an uneven distribution of sound, and distinct sound quality zones in the room. Emotions and discomfort ran high during David Smith’s Sunday service, with members of the choir complaining that the band was too loud for them to hear themselves sing, and the band complaining that they are playing so low in volume that they couldn’t hear themselves and threatened to quit.

Stage Lighting

Sanctuary stage lighting continues to be an issue. Burnt bulbs require climbing a 14 foot ladder and stretching high to replace them, we don’t have enough fixtures, it is time consuming to position them, the dimmer controls have no view of the music stage, and the way the dimmers are laid out makes it nearly impossible to operate them effectively during an event. There’s also no means of communication between the lighting control position and the sound mixing position.

AV Personnel

Producing high quality music events that feature many performers (orchestra, band, etc.) requires many man-hours to properly set up and adjust stage and sound equipment. For example, it took four days to set up for Suite Treat. Of our 5 AV volunteers, one is retiring, and two are available only on Sundays, (making meetings and continued training virtually impossible), leaving only two to cover all non-service events (with one travelling from Virginia). Prior attempts at adult recruitment, including the recent church involvement survey have been unsuccessful. One bright spot in this area is that three of our youths have expressed an interest in a summer apprenticeship program. As a recruitment enticement, Marty has offered to teach them the craft of stage and sound production, starting with their assistance during Suite Treat (where no regular AV team members volunteered). This is very exciting and promising for the long term; however due to their age, mobility limitations, other extra-curricular interests, and the time it will take to train them, their full participation cannot be relied on.

Opportunities

To our credit and despite these many challenges, we have shown that we have the capacity to produce high quality events that people want to attend and are willing to pay for, and that artists enjoy the experience of playing at our church. We have also shown that well produced and performed music during services and special events attracts and keeps new members. These present opportunities for more involvement, organization, expanded programs, and investment.

Submitted by Rob Dahlstrom & Marty Atias, AV Tech Co-Chairs

PROPERTY COMMITTEE REPORT

Property Committee Annual Report 2014 – 2015

The reorganized Property Committee now has four co-chairs: Marty Atias; Brian Beard; Rob Dahlstrom and Mark Ferrenz. The Landscaping subcommittee is led by Jean Alexander. The Capital Improvements and Accessibility committee includes the Property co-chairs plus Melanie Berkemeyer and Larry McAneny.

The Property Committee and the Capital Improvements and Accessibility committee work together. Property is concerned with near term maintenance needs. The CIA is concerned with longer term issues and maintenance planning.

Property advises and assists the church Administrator with resolving normal maintenance problems like: rusted out trash dumpster; fire alarm problems; broken front Sanctuary door lock; evaluate options for SSNS Little Library; parking lot flooding; rental policy;

This year the Property committee:

Landscaping

- Worked with staff, volunteers and contractors to clean out brush and vines and to add more attractive plantings
- Moved gravel to fill in puddles in the parking lots
- Did a Blue Jean Saturday and a Blue Jean Sunday to clean up and improve our campus

Buildings

- Worked to try to track down an equipment problem which appears, and disappears, in our fire alarm system
- Supervised repairs to our aging HVAC systems in the Admin Building, the Community Hall and the Sanctuary building and their thermostats
- Made many small repairs to our buildings

Ongoing areas of concern:

Landscaping

- Better equipment storage
- Better control erosion on our hillsides
- Continue to improve our plantings
- Improve drainage in the parking lot and around buildings
- Concerns around the “Mudsink” SSNS has set up in the playground

Buildings

- Community Hall heating is old, some units are unrepairable, and it’s becoming more and more unreliable
- Sanctuary Foyer heating no longer works at all (Foyer AC is ok)
- Sanctuary main HVAC units are working, but nearing their end of useful life
- Urgently need to create more storage space, (in Fellowship House?)
- Better track and then control our energy use
- Better track impacts of rentals on our property

Capital Improvement and Accessibility

- Researched costs of ground-source heat pump options for replacing our current HVAC units
- With limited success attempted to improve our understanding of how we use energy (gas and electricity)
- Did annual building walkthru's to identify maintenance issues
- Creates and maintains UUCSS Maintenance Needs spreadsheet of maintenance needs and estimated costs
- Evaluated possible usefulness of a nearby property (10403 New Hampshire Ave). We ultimately decided the house would not work as a temporary office without significant investment in upgrades beyond the basic purchase price

Submitted by Mark Ferrenz

PROGRAM COUNCIL

ADULT PROGRAMS COMMITTEE

Adult Programs Committee Annual Report 2014-2015

Members: David Miley, Chair; Rev. Dr. Leon Dunkley, staff representative; Meghan Mulvenna, Steve Webber, and Susan Westenbarger

Highlights

- Thirty-eight people, our largest showing to date, participated in the fourth annual Quiet Day, a morning of learning, meditation, and relaxation. Responses from members were highly positive. The congregation has come to expect and love this event.
- A Green Investing seminar was presented with a very lively discussion. This was in partnership with the Green Sanctuary committee.
- Jane Jackson led a multi-week Loving Kindness and mindfulness meditation series.
- A screening of clips from the *Central Park 5* movie was held with the Rev. Leon Dunkley leading a difficult and soul searching discussion on the film. This was in partnership with the Diversity Team.
- The book, *Twelve Steps to a Compassionate* life was discussed.
- Thought-provoking discussions on timely topics were held at Crossroads Coffee.

Challenges

- We continue to seek additional members. People join the AdultRE committee because of the passions they want to share, so we are looking for passionate people.

Opportunities

- We did not manage it this year, but we hope to host Death with Dignity programming next year.
- We are planning for a summer Sunday meditation series before summer services.
- We are exploring becoming part of the Immigration Film Festival. This means we, along with a number of other organizations, will show one or more films on immigration over a period in the Fall.
- After the success of the *Central Park 5* movie discussion and pot luck we are admiring ways to have more movie oriented events balancing between social action, green issues, spiritual development and other congregational needs.
- We are looking at an ongoing study group for *Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life*.
- It did not happen this year, but we are aiming for a blues event.

Prepared by David Miley, committee chair

DEAF ACCESS COMMITTEE

Deaf Access Committee Annual Report 2014–2015

Committee Members and Primary Roles

DAC has a rotating chair structure, with each member taking on two consecutive months as chair.

- Angel Conant, provides RE interpreting and coordinates with DRE
- Melissa Clarke
- Miako Rankin, primary interpreter and teacher of sign classes
- Lisa Schumaker, treasurer
- Deborah Weiner, interpreter coordinator

HIGHLIGHTS

- In lieu of our June 2014 meeting, deaf members and friends were invited to join us for lunch where we discussed our current efforts and future wishes. This is now an annual event.
- DAC welcomed new member Melissa Clarke!
- Angela Conant led a Junior Signers group on a monthly basis and also an RE mini-session on ASL. Several deaf children were happy to participate and help their hearing friends learn.
- DAC held the third annual silent dinner as an auction item. This event brings together people who may be previously unfamiliar with communicating without voice. Attendees at the next day's service got to see Michelle Levesque perform the non-verbal poem we created collaboratively with Terrylene's guidance.
- Miako led 2 simultaneous courses (six sessions each) of "About ASL" which were sold at the auction.
- DAC hosted two tours of Gallaudet University, one as an auction event and the other for the Dream Builders Team. This led to awareness of the architectural firm that was eventually selected for the proposed capital campaign/building program.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Reverend Leon has been sending his sermon transcripts to the webmaster at the same time as he sends them to the interpreter, so all his sermons are available on the website in both audible and visual form!
- Addressing access issues for the hard of hearing: DAC plans to begin monitoring the Assistive Audio Devices whenever they are in use so that we can address any problems that prevent access for the hard of hearing. We may request a brief pause in the proceedings until access can be restored.
- DAC will promote awareness that a microphone must be used for every speaker at a worship service or event. This will assist those who are using the Assistive Audio system as well as those who are not.
- It has been nearly ten years since we created the "ASL at UUCSS" brochure. We plan to update it and use a template to conform with other UUCSS brochures.

CHALLENGES

- Most event planners are now including instructions for requesting interpreting services with all promotions and publicity. One exception has been the presentation of films and videos. Notice of such an event should include whether the content is closed-captioned or subtitled. If not, DAC is always available to help determine how to make the event accessible to the deaf and hard of hearing.
- DAC hopes to establish a more integrated/institutional relationship with leadership and staff to encourage sustained awareness and effort regarding access for our deaf and hard of hearing members, friends and visitors.

Submitted by Co-chair: Lisa Schumaker

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Membership Committee Annual Report 2014 – 2015

The UUCSS membership committee continues to be the locus for welcoming visitors, helping continuing visitors to become members, and integrating new members into our congregation. We are moving forward to expand our service beyond the welcome, to help our members discover new connections and new ways to grow in the community.

In the area of welcoming our many visitors and providing them an introduction to the community and a pathway to membership, we have had a very good year with the excellent staff leadership of Ashley Burczak, our membership coordinator. We provide a smiling welcome to every Sunday visitor with the help of our Sunday Support teams. Ashley has revised our information pamphlets so that visitors have easy access to answers for their questions. For those who continue to visit, we have been offering our Pathways to Membership class monthly, followed by the opportunity to meet with our ministers and join the congregation's membership.

For new (and all) members, we have started to gather information on interests and dreams for involvement in the congregation. We have an interests form for new members when they sign the membership book, and a similar form was used with the steward visits during the Annual Budget Drive. We hope that as the new church database becomes more integrated and robust, we can add these interests files and more easily help people find their place within existing programs, or find the support to launch new ideas into growing programs.

In addition to Ashley, I would like to thank Deborah Ferrenz, Dorothy Hale, Olivia Pickett and Chris Cavett for their work this year. But I would like to thank all of our members and friends who are always part of the membership committee – if you served as a Sunday Greeter at the front door, provided some of the wonderful programming that enriches all of us, engaged a new visitor in conversation during coffee hour or gave directions to a stranger at a social event – these all help make UUCSS the truly welcoming community that it is.

Thanks!
Jim Paoletti, Chair

MUSIC COMMITTEE

Annual Report of the Music Program, 2014-2015

Committee Members: Tina Borrer (chair), Marty Atias, Bruce Krohmer, Bob McGaughy, Deborah Thornton, Ron Turner, Michael Holmes (ex officio), Phyllis Stanley (ex officio)

The Music Committee works closely with the Music Director, Michael Holmes, to plan and coordinate the music program at UUCSS. The committee is open to anyone who shares a passion for the musical life of our community, including musicians and non-musicians.

Accomplishments:

- The Sanctuary Singers (choir) gained several new members and continued to provide a wide range of high quality music for Sunday services.
- The A Cappella ensemble performs once a month and has attracted new members who do not sing in the choir.
- Our music program is becoming more intergenerational. The Children's Choir continues to perform a few times a year, and middle- and high-school youth are now performing music for the Coming of Age and YRUU services, and even sing in the adult choir from time to time.
- The UUKes group meets monthly to play ukuleles and sing songs and occasionally plays for services and other events. Several new members joined this year. All are welcome!
- In October and November, in commemoration of All Souls Day, the Sanctuary Singers performed Clif Hardin's moving "Requiem" with Cedar Lane UUC Choir and a small orchestra. We performed for Sunday services at UUCSS and Cedar Lane UUC.
- The Music Committee organized two residencies with outstanding guest artists:
 - In December, Artist-in-Residence Jennifer Cutting and her Ocean Quartet were a huge success. The standing-room-only concert, Song of Solstice: A Celtic Winter Celebration, was presented in collaboration with Green Sanctuary. This boisterous program featured British Mummer's play recitations, traditional English and French carols, foot-stomping Scottish & Irish fiddle tunes, 19th century broadside songs, and original seasonal compositions celebrating both the joy of the Season of Light and the introspection of the Dark Half of the Year. The solstice services on Sunday morning provided much-needed light in the darkness of winter.
 - In March, David Smith from All Souls UU Church of Tulsa returned for a fifth residency that again took the UUCSS music and worship programs to new heights. The Saturday workshop included broad participation from our congregation, plus music directors, and choir members from other UU churches in the area and many participants from the wider community. The 40-member choir for the Sunday services included many church members who do not consider themselves to be musicians.
Mark your calendars for October 24, 2015, when David will return for another special residency!
- The Special Music team, led by Tina Borrer, lined up musicians for all summer services.
- Suite Treat 2015 was an artistic and financial success. We raised over \$1,500 for the music fund, which will benefit the music program's production of a CD, that will serve as a calling card for UUCSS Music. The CD will be for sale (a great gift!) and will be sent to other UU music directors with invitations to license songs for performance. This year's Suite Treat theme was "With a Little Help From Our Friends," with all original music composed and performed by UUSCC members and friends. It was very well received.

Challenges:

- A 30 percent reduction in funding from 2014 made it difficult to maintain the quality of our program without going over-budget. The proposed budget for 2015-2016 presents the same challenge.

Opportunities:

- Seek outside funding to support high caliber guest artists and improve production values. Grant funding could be used to expand our arts programs for music, film, literature, dance, folk arts, visual arts, and other disciplines, to include additional residency programs, workshops, a coffee house concert series, educational programs, community youth programs, partnerships with other non-profit organizations, etc.
- Continue to expand the diversity and quality of music performed by UUCSS musicians.
- Increase collaboration with other committees to ensure that the music program engages the entire congregation.
- Increase outreach to and connections with the wider community.
- Improve publicity for residencies and other events, both within and outside the church.
- Conduct congregational surveys to get feedback and suggestions regarding the music program in general and events such as residencies and Suite Treat.

Respectfully submitted,

Tina Borrer, Chair

OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Outreach Committee Annual Report, 2014-2015

The primary work of the Outreach Committee this past year was to complete design and installation of the new church and tenant signs on New Hampshire Avenue. This is now complete, though we still plan to add some low-maintenance landscaping.

Outreach also is in charge of maintaining the UUCSS website, and this year we formed a small task force to work toward migrating our content to a new Wordpress design with improved content management features. Meanwhile, the webmaster maintained the current site, responding to frequent requests for updates and changes.

Outreach distributed UUCSS press release sheets, calendar announcements, contact lists and logos to groups publicizing activities, and assisted in publicizing several events.

We did not participate in community events such as parades this year, but are ready to do so in the coming year, starting with the July 4th Takoma Park Parade, if we can get sufficient interest.

The committee could use new leadership and members who could organize participation in more community events, such as parades in Hyattsville and Silver Spring, look for opportunities to engage with area colleges, and generally raise the profile of UUCSS in our community.

Submitted by Bob Hirshon
Chair, Outreach Committee

WORSHIP SERVICES COMMITTEE

Worship Committee Annual Report 2014 - 2015

Members: Steve Hirsch, Jeffrey Noel-Nosbaum (Outgoing Chair), Sally Porter, Kubby Rashid (Sunday Services Calendar), Carolyn Savadkin, Carey Schneider (Incoming Chair)

Ex Officio: Rev. Liz Lerner Maclay and Rev. Leon Dunkley

Mission: The Worship Committee (the Committee) serves as a communicating and organizing body to assure worship services and opportunities, whether led by invited outside speakers, church ministers, staff, or members serve the needs of the congregation.

Highlights:

By the end of June, the Committee will have found and supported worship leaders, ministers, and speakers for almost fifteen Sunday services, including two directly led by the Committee's individual members or the Committee as a whole. Of these services, less than ten required finding someone from outside the UUCSS community.

The Committee appreciates Rev. Leon stepping forward to cover additional services during Rev. Liz's sabbatical. This has made the Committee's job much easier despite the compressed time schedule to prepare necessitated by the schedule for the upcoming capital campaign.

The Committee decided to move towards a slightly new structure starting in the fall. The Committee divided its work between two functional areas in close coordination with each other. The two areas will include a coordinating and logistical function and a liturgical support function. The members of the Committee will focus on either one or both areas.

Challenges and Opportunities:

As for all committees, the recruitment of members remains a challenge. The Committee seeks new members to balance the perspectives and strengths of the existing Committee members and to better reflect the congregation. The Committee hopes that the new structure will provide for new and existing Committee members to participate in their areas of passion and expertise with a lesser individual commitment required from each member.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeffrey Noel-Nosbaum

Worship Chair

MINUTES FROM CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

UUCSS 2014 Annual Meeting Minutes - June 1, 2014

Board member at large John Henderson chaired the meeting, calling it to order at 1:03 p.m.

Year-End Reflections

- Board President Sherri McGee reflected on events and accomplishments of the past year, including the following:
- The call, start-up weekend, and installation of Rev. Leon Dunkley to be our settled associate minister. (There will be opportunities in the coming year to build on our covenant with Rev. Leon.)
- The Dream-building process, spearheaded by Phyllis Ryder, as a precursor to our upcoming capital campaign. (Phyllis' team includes Marty Atias, Melanie Berkemeyer, Rob Dahlstrom, Laura Ellis, and John Robinette.)
- Erik Leaver tapped to lead the upcoming capital campaign. (Erik announces that he has recruited a campaign team that includes Janet Coffin, Alexa Fraser, Ken Iobst, Margo Kelley.)
- Congregants shared other big events from the past year, including the Fellowship Dinner hosted by the Gentlemen's Club, Suite Treat, the Buskin & Batteau weekend, the fall retreat at Rev. Liz and Tim Maclay's home, the rummage sale, the Mosaic Maker's conference that several UUCSS members attended in Tulsa in November, the service with the women from the Ahmadiyyan Muslim community in Silver Spring, the landscaping work led by Jean Alexander, and more.

Recognitions

- Membership coordinator Ashley Burczak and administrator Melinda Yalom for work and dedication.
- Heather and Hugh Dennis for chairing the Annual Budget Drive with grace perseverance, and good humor.
- Collector Lynn Edmiston, Treasurer Lisa Schumaker, and Administrator Melinda Yalom for their help with finance work this year.
- Outgoing board members Eli Briggs (vice president for planning), Rachel Vanarsdall (secretary) and Scott Sleek (at large) for their service to the congregation.

There will also be discussion this year about how to better engage volunteers at UUCSS

Budget discussion and vote

Board Vice President for Finance Michelle Levesque presented the 2014-15 annual budget. Items of note include the following:

- The ABD was very successful, raising \$472,600 from pledges. (The goal was \$491,000).
- We are able to remain at fair-share compensation rates for our staff and were able to increase music director Michael Holmes' hours to 30 per week. However, there were no cost of living adjustments for staff. (One staff member's salary was raised solely to remain within UUA's recently modified fair share compensation levels.)
- We are contributing \$4,770 to the Unitarian Universalist Association, short of our fair share of roughly \$17,500. We are unable to return to full fair share levels in this year's budget. We hope to return to fair share levels as soon as possible.

- Our bookkeeper, Elaine Miller, who was an independent contractor, has closed her business. Her expenses were not in our personnel budget, but this year we have budgeted to hire a staff member for 5 hours per week. We will save money by bringing the bookkeeping in house. We also now have accounting software on our new database.
- Collections from Sunday services have fallen below what was budgeted last year. Recognizing that people no longer carry cash as regularly as they used to, the board is discussing ways to increase collection rates on Sundays.
- Lea Carlson and Frank Robbins, both of whom passed away this past year, contributed money to the church. Lea's contribution is earmarked for the endowment fund and Frank's will go to RE programming.

Daniel Clark said he supports the budget, but expressed concern about the long-term health of the congregation's financial status.

Michelle put forth motion to accept budget as presented. The motion was seconded and the budget was unanimously passed.

Nominations

Tamara Bowman from the nominating committee announced the slate of new leadership candidates, which are as follows:

Board

- Carol Hamilton, Vice President of Planning
- Janne Harrelson, Secretary
- Alisha Dixon, At Large

Nominating committee:

Jimmy Schreiber and Mark Ferrenz

Tamara made a motion to accept the slate. The motion is seconded and unanimously passed.

Capital Campaign

Phyllis Ryder discussed the Dream Building process, noting that she erected some posters in the foyer to show the feedback the committee has received over the past months about the kind of spaces we would like to have. Over the summer, the team will be leading a prioritization process in preparation for the Oct. 19 vote. Informational meetings will be held Sept. 28 and Oct. 10.

Erik Leaver announced the capital campaign team has identified consultants that have worked with other area congregations on their successful capital campaigns, and will be interviewing them in the coming weeks. Later this summer the team will look at the scope of the Dream Building data as part of a feasibility study. Communications will be a key part of the campaign, noting that a couple of people have already volunteered to help with that aspect. Other members are invited to help with communications.

Alisha Dixon questioned how the board believes it can raise the money given that we did not reach our pledge goal for the year. Erik noted that consultants, after interviewing up to 30% of church members, may determine that a capital campaign isn't feasible for us. But he noted that the congregation in prior years has shown remarkable dedication to investing in infrastructure.

John adjourned the meeting at approximately 2:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Scott Sleek

UUCSS Congregational Meeting Minutes - October 19, 2014

Carol Hamilton, acting Board president, called the meeting to order at 12:17 pm.
A quorum was present. Rev. Liz Lerner Maclay opened with a poem:

"The Contract, A Word from the Led", William Ayot

*And in the end we follow them –
not because we are paid, not because we might see some advantage,
not because of the things they have accomplished,
not even because of the dreams they dream
but simply because of who they are:
the man, the woman, the leader, the boss
standing up there when the wave hits the rock,
passing out faith and confidence like life jackets,
knowing the currents, holding the doubts,
imagining the delights and terrors of every landfall;
captain, pirate, and parent by turns,
the bearer of our countless hopes and expectations.
We give them our trust. We give them our effort.
What we ask in return is that they stay true.*

First order of business: Election of president of the Board of Trustees

Carol Hamilton introduced the first order of business, electing a new Board president to serve out the balance of Sherri McGee's term, through June 2015. Carol extended our appreciation to Sherri for her work during two years as president of the Board which were significant years in the life of the church. Highlights included our work on marriage equality, and the hire, call, and installation of Rev. Leon Dunkley. At the beginning of 2012, we accepted our second strategic plan. Sherri led the Board in planning implementation of that plan, a lot of that work is culminating in today's meeting and the work we are doing going forward. In addition, Sherri led the Board in addressing significant governance and operations issues. Carol thanked Sherri for her service to the church as Board president and in so many other ways. The congregation gave Sherri a standing ovation.

MOTION:

Carol Hamilton moved that Barbara Eyman be elected as president of the UUCSS Board of Trustees, completing the balance of the vacant term, through June 2015. The motion was seconded by Erik Leaver (and numerous other people simultaneously).

Discussion: Seeing none, the motion went to a vote.

Result: The motion passed unanimously, including three (3) absentee ballots, all in favor.

Second order of business: Dream Builders Covenant

John Henderson introduced the second order of business, mentioning our member-to-member covenant as preface for the discussion to come.

The members of the Dream Builders Committee are: Marty Atias, Melanie Berkemeyer, Patty Bryan-Taff, Rob Dahlstrom, Laura Ellis, John Robinette, and Phyllis Ryder (chair). Phyllis led a presentation from the committee about the results of the Dream Building process to date. They specifically reviewed:

- "From Dreams to Reality!" Flow Chart
- "Who We Are Is How We Build: Our Commitments as We Re-Create Our Campus
- Priorities Recommended by the Congregation for UUCSS Buildings and Grounds

- Dream Builders Covenant – to be voted upon

The Dream Builders shared its distillation of the top priorities identified by the congregation over the past year. These priorities were endorsed by the Board of Trustees and the Program Council at the Leadership Retreat on September 20-21.

The presentation was followed by a period for question and answer. Discussion was then followed by a call for the question and the congregational vote.

MOTION:

Carol Hamilton read the motion; seconded by Jim Paoletti.

Whereas

- the Dream Builders Committee has spent the last year ascertaining the hopes and dreams of the Congregation and professional staff; and
- the Dream Builders Committee has translated those needs and desires into a set of commitments to guide design, construction, and upkeep, and priorities for improved space;

We, the members of the Congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Silver Spring, hereby affirm that these commitments and priorities faithfully represent the hopes and dreams of this Congregation; and

We, the members of the Congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Silver Spring, charge and entrust to the Dream Builders Committee and the Board the responsibility:

- to bring these commitments and priorities to an architect, and other professionals as necessary, and
- to select and present to the Congregation a set of conceptual drawings that the Dream Builders Committee believes best honors those commitments and priorities.

Call for the Question:

Alexa Fraser called for the question. The motion to call for the question was seconded and passed by a majority in favor, with three (3) opposed and one (1) abstention. According to our church constitution, anyone who has not yet had a chance to comment may still do so, and John Henderson recognized those members who had not yet spoken but wanted to comment.

Vote on the Main Motion:

The motion had already been moved and seconded. It was then put to a vote.

The motion passed by a majority in favor (including three absentee ballots in favor), with one (1) opposed and one (1) abstention.

Carol Hamilton thanked the Dream Builders Committee for their thorough, diligent work on this, and thanked the congregation for their active participation in the process.

Rev. Leon Dunkley closed by congratulating the congregation on this “beautiful process”. He also shared an announcement that further magnifies UUCSS as a well-respected congregation: Rev. Leon has been invited by the General Assembly Worship Arts Team to co-lead the opening worship service at General Assembly in 2015. The news was received with great applause.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 1:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Janne M. Harrelson, Secretary