

2016–2017 ANNUAL REPORT

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF SILVER SPRING

10309 New Hampshire Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20903



Rev. Elizabeth Lerner Maclay, Senior Minister (Outgoing)
Sarah Gonzalez, Director of Religious Education
Michael Holmes, Music Director
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Melinda Yalom, Church Administrator

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SENIOR MINISTER'S REPORT

Senior Minister's Annual Report 2016–2017

Dear UUCSS Members and Friends,

This has been a hard year in the life of UUCSS, and the church has walked through the challenges with growing awareness of the challenges and opportunities before it. Strengths throughout the year you lifted up were strong attendance at worship services and religious education programs for children and youth, renewed appreciation for the depth and breadth of the music program, efforts by the board to respond to needs and wishes of the congregation for discussion and clarification of unfolding events, and the commitment of so many to the health and future of the church.

I want to express my great appreciation for the caliber and commitment of the UUCSS staff team. DRE Sarah Gonzalez, Music Director Michael Holmes, Church Administrator Melinda Yalom, Church Sexton Juan Vargas and RE Assistant Michael Knaapen and the rest of the team have been staunch, resilient, creative, resourceful, devoted and faithful to this community and in the service of our faith, as they always are. This year those dynamics and gifts were especially important and especially welcome, as was the strong bond among us on the team.

The Lay Ministry team was restarted, with a retreat and follow-up training that has helped create a new and renewed lay ministry team with wide range of experience and gifts, and a shared sense of vocation and responsibility. I very much appreciate the immediate willingness of seasoned lay ministers Marcia Joiner, Allison Leaver and Beverly Schnetzler to come on board, along with the ready agreement of our new lay ministers Diana Walker, Jeremy Holt, Catherine Stephens, Charlene Davis, and Gretchen Wiederrecht. We have made efforts to better integrate the communication and networking between lay pastoral support and Jane Larrick, who has continued as the point person for Caring Circle efforts, organizing congregational support for UUCSS members and friends in need of meals, transportation and other logistical support.

Much of my time this year has gone to organizational support and pastoral care, along with additional time spent on usual church programs that took extra time and care because of the complicated dynamics and narratives unfolding within the church and those unfolding beyond the church in national politics and regional responses to those national events. We saw some new relationships and possibilities unfold in nascent connections to neighboring congregations and interfaith justice efforts. There is foundation there for further such engagement if UUCSS wills it.

I want also to express appreciation and great respect for Erik Leaver and Meredith Massey for their unwavering commitment in leading and supporting this year's Annual Budget Drive. The unfolding of this year made it both a tough and a critical year for financial support in the church, and their leadership was essential and strengthening.

The Diversity Team had a year of introspection and exploration of the identity and mission of the team. Their work may change going forward; I wish them very well as they chart a path for their next steps and evolution and am grateful for the many years of partnership, learning and fulfillment I cherished with this group.

The board has worked very hard for this church and its welfare. I appreciate their efforts to serve and lead during this challenging year and am glad to see perhaps new appreciation on the part of the congregation for board members and their willingness to serve.

UUCSS is a congregation with many strengths that endure, even in this time of change and challenge. Real and exciting opportunities lie before it. I hope the coming years will be a time of healing and care and growth that will make for a long and strong future together.

In faith,
Rev. Liz Lerner Maclay, outgoing Senior Minister

DIRECTOR of RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Director of Religious Education's Annual Report for 2016-2017

For the UUCSS Religious Education Program during the 2016-17 church year there have been many highlights, challenges, and opportunities. As I am finishing my last year as the Director of Religious Education at UUCSS, I am proud of how strong the RE program is and how well placed it is for continued growth and development.

Highlights:

- We hired Michael Knaapen as the RE Assistant and Youth Ministry Coordinator.
- We offered Kindergarten-1st grade OWL for a class of five children.
- 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 Committee Retreat on 4/22/17, attended by members of the Children/Youth RE Committee and UUCSS Board of Trustees.
- We held a wonderful RE Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast on May 21st 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 offered a Coming of Age program for eleven 9th graders.
- We offered 7th-9th grade OWL for eleven participants, two UUCSS members and nine visitors.
- We offered four workshops in the spring on science, kindness orientated crafts, public speaking skills, and clothespin dolls.
- The RE Committee and Michael Knaapen successfully lead the RE program during the first DRE Sabbatical in the history of the congregation!
- The high school youth group deepened its ties with the Green Sanctuary Committee, nominating a youth representative to the committee and participating in the GSC led worship service on 4/30/17.
- The Purim multigenerational worship was a very successful service, and many would like it to become an annual tradition.
- The Religious Education Committee gained two new members, Rachel Mears and Kathy Hollis.

Challenges:

- Unbalanced attendance between the two services has led to overcrowded classrooms during the 9:30 service and poorly attended classes at the 11:30 service.
- The low attendance at the 11:30 service has led to decreased volunteer satisfaction and a less welcoming environment for visitors.
- There could be a deeper connection between the high school youth group and the rest of the UUCSS Community, both the adults and younger children and youth.

Opportunities:

- The RE Committee plans to offer a Spiritual Activity Box for children attending the 11:30 service and will not offer RE classes for middle school and younger children during this service as a one year trial run beginning in the fall.
- Michael Knaapen will be the Summer RE Coordinator this summer.
- A new Director of Religious Education will be hired this summer, with new energy, new ideas, and new wisdom to share.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah Gonzalez, Credentialed Religious Educator

MUSIC DIRECTOR

Music Director's Annual Report for 2016-2017

2016-2017 was the most emotionally taxing and lengthiest church year in my memory at UUCSS. The loss of our two ministers and DRE necessitated my program to step up and provide a "Balm in Gilead" for a spiritually ailing community. I and members of the music committee felt that duty as we discussed how much we care and love this congregation, and during the process, we experienced greater musical depths, in such a satisfying way.

Our two residencies with David Smith and the Natural Rhythms Trio demonstrated the health of that ongoing program, while I and the committee decided to put the Suite Treat annual music fundraiser to rest, at least for a year. We did this to gear ourselves more toward an outreach focus. The Strathmore Montgomery County East County Initiative got off to a very promising start, as we were involved in three of their Corridor Concert events, including a public performance at St. Andrew's Lutheran Church with two prominent African American Gospel groups, and hosting another concert in May with the World Jazz Choir, Chai Dynamics, and the Rochelle Rice Quartet. Through Strathmore Hall, we have made so many important connections in the community, and we want to expand those efforts dramatically in the coming church year.

From my report last year, here is some background about the ECI of which we're a part:

"The CEO of Strathmore Hall had some special meetings with me and the music committee to discuss our involvement in their East County Initiative, where the music directors of several local churches near the Rt. 29 corridor leading all the way up to Howard County are getting together to share ideas, their audiences, and their venues for a very ambitious community development effort. We hope that this will become longterm, fruitful, and will result in greater visibility for UUCSS."

As the final program staff left standing, I look forward to the challenge ahead of rebuilding UUCSS's identity retaining traces of the old, and inviting in the new. I am very much looking forward to working with our newly hired Interim Minister Rev. Evan Keely, and I'm sure that it will be a very creative and fruitful collaboration!

Respectfully submitted,
Michael Holmes, Music Director

PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Annual Report from the President 2016-2017

This has been a challenging year, but the changes this year has brought have also presented us with opportunities to move ahead in building the church we all want and dream of. The departures of Rev. Leon, Barbara Eyman, Rev. Liz, and Sarah Gonzalez are a real loss to our community. They all gave so much of themselves to, and have had a lasting impact on, this community. I feel the best way we can honor the contributions they have made to UUCSS is to carry forward the good work they did—to take advantage of the opportunities to reevaluate our identity and reinvigorate our sense of direction.

We have taken an important step in our efforts to work through this transition, hiring an experienced interim minister to assist us through this process. Rev. Evan Keely will start as our interim minister on August 1, 2017 and serve for a period of 2 years. We feel his range of experience, belief in the social justice mission of faith communities, interest in working toward multicultural and multiracial community, and ability to work with a variety of congregations make him well prepared to help us through this period. We also have confidence that he will help us maintain our traditions and the strength of our programs, and to keep our momentum going on newer issues and programs this congregation is passionate about. It will require us to work hard and work together, but it should be an exciting period of development.

The Board held a series of listening sessions and meetings in the wake of Rev. Leon's resignation. In addition, to help the Board chart the path ahead, the Board formed an Advisory Task Force. The Task Force was charged with engaging members of the congregation, ensuring a broad spectrum of perspectives, to better understand what we need and what we can do to address those needs. The Task Force sought input from people through a variety of means and recently provided its report to the Board with its findings and recommendations. I would like to thank the members of the Task Force, Don Berkemeyer, Hugh Dennis, Maggie Hayes, Al Nathan, Carolyn Savadkin, and Corita Waters, for their hard and thoughtful work, and give special thanks to Catherine Buckler and Kubby Rashid, the co-Chairpersons of the Task Force. The Board is processing the feedback provided by the Task Force and will make the report available to the congregation and provide a forum for discussion of the recommendations.

The Board also sought assistance from outside our congregation in discerning the best path. We worked very closely with Megan Foley, with the Unitarian Universalist Association, before, at the time of, and after the resignation of Rev. Leon. This spring, the Board obtained extremely valuable input from Rev. David Pyle, also with the UUA, on a transitional staffing analysis and recommendations. While budgetary constraints mean we will not be able to pursue a number of the changes immediately, it gives us some excellent fodder for planning going forward. We also engaged a consultant, Rev. John Janka, to assist the Board in assessing governance and related issues, and to identify steps to improve our ability to work together.

As discussed in more detail in the Dream Builder's report, during the past year we have been doing the hard work of shifting from dreaming about how to transform our buildings and grounds to preparing to actually make those changes. The preparatory work for the first phase, addressing deferred maintenance problems in the Sanctuary such as replacing failing heating and air-conditioning equipment and repairing roof and wall damage, is well under way. The next phase will require the congregation to look at the information the Dream Builders assemble about the options that are possible with the resources we have and determine how to proceed.

The Board has continued to work on long-range financial planning and to implement measures, such as designating a portion of the funds from the capital campaign as an operating reserve, to allow us to be good stewards of the finances of the church. We also worked to recruit individuals into leadership roles relating to our church finances, specifically the Treasurer, Co-Chairpersons of the Annual Budget Drive, and Co-Chairpersons of the Dream Builders. The Board worked to enhance our oversight role, reviving the process of evaluating the senior minister, to have a shared understanding of priorities between the minister and the Board. We took steps to increase the congregation's access to information, such as creating a public Dropbox folder to share important information with the congregation.

One example of the strength of our church community from the past year that I find particularly inspiring was our response to when our neighbors at the Episcopal Church of Our Savior were the subject of a hate crime. I can still picture the stream of people forging a bridge between us with chalk messages, along New Hampshire Avenue. And the service conducted at UUCSS by their Rector, Rev. Harvey, earlier this year was an inspiring testament to the change faith communities can bring in this world.

I would like to sincerely thank my fellow Board members. The Board has had a lot to work through and their commitment and hard work have put us on good footing. They have all also provided thoughtful, patient, and wise assistance and counsel to me in stepping into the role of President mid-term and in the midst of much transition. I would particularly like to thank the members who are rotating off this year: Carol Hamilton, Janne Harrelson, Beverly Schnetzler, and Doug Weisberger. I would like to extend a special thanks and deep gratitude to Barbara Eyman, who resigned her position as the President in late February. Barbara's work and leadership to help guide this church through a difficult period was exemplary. I know her presence is greatly missed. Last, but certainly not least, I want to thank the members of the Board who will be continuing the work of the Board to seize the opportunities to continue to make our way forward during the next year, Miranda Bradley Lisa Schumaker, Sharon Snyder, and Fred Teal.

Respectfully submitted,
John Henderson
President, Board of Trustees

FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT/CORPORATE

Planning Committee Annual Report 2016–2017

Planning Committee's 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. This committee did not meet during the 2016-2017 church due to the pressing demands of issues facing the board including Leon's resignation and its aftermath, as well as the resignation of Barbara Eyman as board president. In addition, one of the board's at-large members, Beverly Schnetzler, took on the Operations Council liaison role.

Leadership Retreat

Our Annual leadership retreat included congregation's board, committee chairs, staff as well as representatives from the advisory task force, racial justice task force, diversity team and dream builders. It was held January 2017, and facilitated by Judith Bauer. We held the retreat in the UUCSS Sanctuary to minimize our expenses. The retreat focused on a number of key issues that were determined through input that the board gathered from church leaders by survey. These included decision-making and authority, next steps for the capital campaign and goals for the church.

The board also held two retreats during the year, one in September and one in January. The first focused on relationship building and the second on the issues of power, authority and accountability.

Interim President

I served as the board's interim president after Barbara Eyman resigned in February until John Henderson was elected by the congregation as the board's president in March 2017.

Updating policies

No additional review of policies and procedures were completed during the church year. The board learned that UUA Central East Regional staff member David Pyle is available to work with congregations to review their governance models as well as policies and procedures. I recommend that UUCSS utilize this resource in the future.

Strategic Plan

The church's current strategic plan: *Deepening Our Roots; Spreading Our Branches; Reaching Toward Justice*, originally spanned from July 2012-June 2017 and was extended through June 2018. It was determined that trying to make progress on mission, vision and long term planning during this year of challenge was not advised. Working with our interim minister, UUCSS will have the opportunity to consider its identity, as well as future goals and aspirations.

Cluster Representative to UUA CERG Capital Cluster

I served as UUCSS' representative to the Central Eastern Region's Capital Cluster. Cluster representatives from congregations in the greater DC metro area meet once a month (virtually) to share information about issues and events. While I unfortunately was unable to attend many of these meetings because of my work travel schedule, I did share email notices about issues and events in the wider UU community with the UUCSS community on a regular basis.

Respectfully submitted, Carol Hamilton, First Vice-President/Corporate

SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT/PROGRAMS

Annual Report of the Program Council 2016-2017

Highlights:

1. In an effort gain a better understanding of each other and learn ways to work effectively as a team, we did an opening activity which taught us about each other's leadership style
2. The communications committee migrated and launched the new church website.
3. The program council has gone back to sharing committee reports in order to raise awareness of committee activities and to identify collaboration opportunities.
4. We updated the charity of the month procedures after consulting with the Finance Team.
5. UUCSS hosted a movie for the 2016 Immigration Film Festival.
6. The membership committee worked with Finance and other volunteers to update the membership database.
7. We brainstormed ways to make the committees more visible to members/new members without feeling overwhelmed. The plan was to have different groups share a coffee hour each month. The implementation stumbled with the departure of Rev. Dr. Dunkley.
8. The Music committee was active with the Strathmore East County Initiative and the a-cappella group, choir and house band have all performed at Strathmore events this year.
9. We planned the 2017-2018 church calendar and identified volunteers to run key church events.
10. We discussed possible changes to the Oral announcements on Sunday with the worship committee and offered them feedback.
11. We planned a Program Council BBQ to continue relationship building as to end a challenging year with some levity and fun.
12. Adult RE organized another successful quiet day.
13. Green Sanctuary created a "tips for greening" page for church events and renters.
14. Green Sanctuary ordered and located storage space for a supply of green event plates, cups, etc. This was funded by a donation from the board and the worship committee.
15. Green Sanctuary has a member from YRUU, Matthew Rice, as a member.

Challenges:

1. Program Council deeply felt a loss with the departure of Rev. Leon and we spent some time discussing and recovering as a group from this change.
2. The Program Council's budget was flat again this year and we had a conversation around whether the council should have a single budget and divide the money up as a group as events and the year unfold or have the individual amounts each committee currently have. In the end it was decided to leave things the same .
3. Adult RE started to plan a social justice summit with members of the board. This is still in the works but there were conflicts and this will be need to be revived in the near future.
4. David Miley of Adult RE decided to take some time away from responsibilities at the church so we are recruiting new folks to run the committee.
5. We had meetings where we discussed the covenant and how we can improve communication with one another.

Opportunities:

1. Continue to build community and improve communication at program council. Develop ground rules for communication at meetings. Possibly write our own covenant.
2. Increase collaborative programming: Continue to share goings on between committees and make time for committees to begin to plan church programs together.
3. Re-implement the aborted plan for committees to share information with members during coffee hour as an opportunity to build community.
4. Help the committees and other groups plan and create greener events that better reflect our UU values.

Submitted by Miranda Bradley, Second Vice-President/Programs

THIRD VICE-PRESIDENT/FINANCE

Finance Committee Annual Report 2016–2017

Operational issues dominated my work this year, as we realized that the accountant and accounting procedures we implemented prior to the Capital Campaign had let us down under strain and we needed to take unusual steps to ensure that each pledger's separate Annual Budget Drive and Capital Campaign pledges were correctly recognized. Teresa Meeks, our Collector, used her own careful records to compile and distribute contribution statements for tax purposes. An initial attempt last spring for me to hand off the duties I had been performing as Treasurer unfortunately did not work out, so I continued to handle the church's expenses through the first several months of my board term. Thanks to Beverly Schnetzler (who offered unbidden to find a new volunteer), Olivia Pickett agreed to take on this important work and has been doing so handily since mid-winter.

The main contributor to our difficulties was simply that the accounting firm we engaged in 2015 did not seem to gain enough familiarity with our needs over time and did not reach out for clarification when needed. Reverend Liz offered to reach out to her colleagues in the area seeking a bookkeeper with experience in a similar congregation, who could be a collaborative member of a tightly integrated finance team. We soon got a lead on Cedar Lane's former bookkeeper, who was deeply appreciated for his work in a staff position there. Bruce (Marquette) began working with us under contract as a bookkeeper in early April, spending one full day in the office each week. I have been able to be present for significant amounts of that time as we work out approaches and procedures. Responsive and effective communication within the team has allowed us all to resolve issues with little delay. We will begin to focus on regular reporting to the Board and Councils once all processes are in full swing.

We will begin using the pledge tracking capabilities of the church's database system over the summer. This will be more secure, accurate and easy to use than the current method. We will populate it with two years of pledges and payments so the next ABD will have some history behind it. The information related to pledges will not be accessible to all database users but will be restricted to those directly involved in ABD management.

We will strive to provide pledgers with quarterly statements so everyone is aware of their progress toward fulfilling their pledges and the Board of Trustees is aware of progress in meeting projected income. We will begin collecting the data that will allow a more faithful estimate of collection rates for future budgeting.

When the pledge database is ready we will be in position to open a separate bank account for Capital Campaign income. The board is committed to ensuring that this revenue is collected, held and disbursed strictly separate from operating funds.

We will also soon switch to a less expensive yet better targeted payroll service provider. The current provider has little familiarity with ministerial tax issues and has an antiquated, trying employee interface. Churchpayroll.com is specific to our needs, client oriented, and user friendly.

Current Income and Expenses

The fiscal year ends on June 30, 2017. As of May 31, we had collected 80% of the budgeted pledge income of \$490,360 (assumed 97% fulfillment of \$505,526 pledged). As May is the 11th month, i.e., 92% of the fiscal year, this is behind the budget; however, typically payments for the concluded fiscal year continue to come in after June 30. At closing of FY15/16 collections were also at 80%.

As of May 31, total expenses were at 87% of budget. Income from all sources was 83% of budget.

Comments

UUCSS is long overdue for more professional involvement in financial and human resources operations. We hope that pledges will soon recover and allow us to hire staff with responsibilities that alleviate the volunteer time spent handling the day to day aspects of making collections and payments so we can focus on keeping the board and leadership well informed.

The ceaseless efforts of our Treasurer Olivia Pickett and Collector Teresa Meeks merit another expression of my sincere thanks to them. When you see them please offer them your thanks as well. Several members of the church have offered to be of help going forward, and in the coming year I hope to define more roles among which the burden of our financial management can be shared.

Submitted by Lisa Schumaker, Third Vice-President/Finance

FOURTH VICE-PRESIDENT/PERSONNEL

Personnel Annual Report 2016-2017

Personnel issues at UUCSS this year have been challenging. In March, Barbara Eyman and I were informed that Reverend Liz and Reverend Leon were no longer able to work together in their ministry. While we made every effort over the next three months to resolve the conflicts between our two beloved ministers, in June we turned to the Board for advice on the matter. After struggling with the issues for most of the summer, Reverend Leon announced his resignation in September, 2016.

For the remainder of the church year, Reverend Liz, the staff, and the Board made every effort to fill the void left by Reverend Leon's departure. His departure left a number of ministerial responsibilities unmet and ultimately burdened Liz's schedule. Because this was not healthy for Liz and not useful for the congregation, the Board began to explore the possibility of hiring additional staff to begin in September 2017. In January, Barbara Eyman and I asked Rev. David Pyle, the Congregational Life Consultant and Governance Program Manager for the Central East Region of the UUA, to provide the Board with a draft transitional staffing plan. David has had considerable experience with other UU congregations providing consulting regarding staffing, as well as other governance issues. We requested that David provide a number of transitional options that would help us better and more efficiently organize and govern the congregation, and relieve Liz and lay leadership of certain burdens. David reviewed many documents and spoke with staff and lay leadership in researching for his proposal. David provided a draft staffing plan to the Board in March. One of the options that the Board seriously considered was hiring a Congregational Church Manager. Such a hire would be responsible for congregational operations, staff supervision, and financial management. We believed that such a staff position would meet several goals: it would relieve Reverend Liz of operational and staff responsibilities, thus freeing her to concentrate more fully on ministry and leadership within the congregation. It would also relieve our lay leadership of burdensome financial responsibilities that were leading to severe burnout among our volunteers. Other potential full or part-time staff positions that the Board considered were a communications, database, and/or website coordinators. Unfortunately, for this coming year, because of a lack of funding, we will not be able to add any additional staffing. We are hopeful that future funding will make it possible for us to reconsider additional staff. This is an important goal given the incredible responsibilities placed on our volunteers, especially our VP of Finance.

Reverend Liz has recently announced that, after seventeen years of dedicated service to UUCSS, she too will be leaving as of June 30, 2017. She has posted on the UUCSS Facebook, and in other media, her schedule through July, 2017.

After learning of Reverend Liz's resignation, the Board convened a congregational meeting to determine if the congregation agreed to enlist the help of an Interim Minister before embarking on the search for another settled minister. The congregation agreed with the Board that an Interim Minister would facilitate a healthy transition. An Interim Minister Search Committee was appointed -- Charles Alexander, Miranda Bradley, John Henderson, Sharon Snyder, and Emily Tien -- and, after a search as defined by the UUA, we have chosen an Interim Minister, Reverend Evan Keely, who we trust will guide the congregation through the next two transitional years.

Our beloved and respected Director of Religious Education (DRE), Sarah Gonzalez, has also announced her departure from UUCSS. The Board is organizing a Search Committee to begin our search for a new DRE and we anticipate having a new staff member in place for the new church year, beginning in September. In September, 2016, we hired Michael Knaapen as our new RE Administrative Assistant. Michael is well-liked and respected by the staff, the RE committee, and the UUCSS RE students. Michael's position has been part RE Assistant and part Youth Coordinator. He supports the high school youth programming, spends every Sunday with YRUU, and also supports our YRUU volunteer facilitators. We are excited that Michael will remain at UUCSS through this next year as his contributions have been many and varied. Michael has also accepted the position of Summer Re Coordinator so that the RE program will have consistency through the summer.

Melinda Yalom, our Office Administrator, has been working a 30-hour schedule this year and we have adapted to her reduced hours. Melinda has asked the Board to use her full vacation time to take a month off this fall (September 10-October 9, 2017). We agreed to the request given Melinda's tenure with UUCSS and her continuing dedication to her work, even though this is not the best timing given that our Interim Minister will be starting in August. However, Melinda requested the extended time with plenty of lead time to make coverage arrangements. Moreover, Melinda has already made arrangements for coverage of certain of her responsibilities and is continuing her efforts in this regard. The Board will inform the congregation as soon as complete coverage has been arranged.

We were pleased that we were able to give Juan Vargis (our Sexton), and Phi Thi Thach, and Michelle Rossman (our Nursery Assistants) an end-of-the-year bonus again this year for their continuing dedication to UUCSS. Liz also took the staff out for their annual Holiday lunch in December. In spite of financial restraints, the Board decided that it was important to give the staff a 1% cost-of-living increase this coming church year, 2017-2018. We are fortunate that we were able to do so, rewarding a hard-working staff if only in a small way.

We will continue this year to provide the staff with annual Compensation and Budget Statements. These statements include an explanation to each staff member of his/her individual compensation and benefits. Finally, just a word about our wonderful music staff: Michael Holmes, our Music Director and Phyllis Stanley, our Pianist. The music program this year has been exemplary and uplifting during these hard times. Michael and Phyllis have contributed countless hours to our community and have been instrumental in keeping us centered and happy.

We are extremely grateful to the entire staff for keeping UUCSS running and moving forward in spite of the difficulties that we faced this year.

Respectfully submitted,
Sharon Snyder, Fourth Vice-President/Personnel

BOARD COMMITTEES

DREAM BUILDERS

Dream Builders Annual Report 2016–2017

Membership - The current active DreamBuilders team consists of Jim Paoletti and Fred Teal (co-chairs) with Marty Atias, Brian Beard, Rob Dahlstrom, Laura Ellis, Larry McAneny, Doneby Smith, Sara Tarr and Rev. Liz. Lerner Maclay (*ex officio*). Others have helped us along the way. Meetings this fiscal year have been held on the 1st Wed. of each month beginning on Nov. 2, 2016.

The Dream - Since its inception in the summer of 2013, DreamBuilders has held numerous meetings with various groups within the congregation to define their dreams for the future of our church campus. New buildings were envisioned with increased beauty and functionality and expectations were created for significant improvements to existing spaces. There was great optimism about the potential for growth and financial commitment by the congregation. After all our dreams were included in our Conceptual Master Plan, the full cost of the plan reached about \$10,000,000. Financial advice given us by James D. Klote Associates before we began our planning with Studio TwentySeven Architecture (S27), advised that a congregation our size could expect to raise about \$2,500,000 from a capital campaign.

The Reality - We obtained pledges of \$2,150,000 from our capital campaign. Due to expenses for fundraising, architect's fees, reserving funds for adjacent property purchase, the creation of a flexible operating reserve and a greater rate of pledge attrition than originally assumed, we now estimate that \$1,500,000 will be available for the entire project. These figures do not include an estimate of capital pledges from future new members.

Direction from the Board of Trustees - Recognizing the difference between dreams and reality, this past fall the Board of Trustees asked the DreamBuilders team to do the following:

- Develop a reality-based approach going forward
- Involve the congregation in the decision making process
- Reserve the major elements of our Conceptual Master Plan for the future
- Hire a general contractor to help us
- As a first phase, fix deferred maintenance problems in the Sanctuary such as replacing failing heating and air conditioning equipment and repairing roof and wall damage
- As the next phase, focus on renovating the Community Building
- Provide minor upgrades to the Administration building and Fellowship House, if critical
- Keep all plans within budget limits
- Determine how to improve functionality, energy efficiency and appearance during our planning process

Our Response - We are responding to the Board of Trustees challenge but the process of winnowing our dreams down to an affordable level is difficult. The DreamBuilders team is moving forward in the following ways:

1. **Seeking a commercial energy audit** to identify areas in our buildings which might need energy conservation measures. Unfortunately, after developing a Request for Proposals (RFPs) and obtaining several, we discovered that no firms were willing to do only the energy audit work without being hired to correct the deficiencies they identify. This whole process was time consuming. Our plans now are to have all energy improvements identified and implemented by our general contractor – soon to be selected.
2. **Negotiating the terms of a sole-source contract** with a contractor recommended by the architect and, at the point of contract signing, being informed that we would need competitive bidding. This required us to develop an RFP and undertake a competitive procurement. Developing the RFP, identifying good potential bidders and evaluating bids has been time consuming.

3. **Seeking “Green” financing** – Since many of the upgrades and improvements we desire will result in improving energy efficiency, we are investigating the possibility of obtaining a loan(s) through the Montgomery County Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) program. The advantages of such a loan are: possibly a lower borrowing rate with a 20-year term and a simple twice yearly repayment program. One requirement for getting a C-PACE loan is to provide information on how much our operating budget will be reduced by using more energy efficient approaches. This requirement was a major reason we sought the commercial energy audit mentioned above. Our baseline energy consumption information has already been documented in the Conceptual Master Plan and we will work with our general contractor to develop the information needed to apply for such a loan.
4. **Seeking General Contractor** - This fall, S27 Architecture advised us that we must have a general contractor to provide support going forward. Working with the architect, this contractor will help us refine, evaluate and price in detail the highest priority elements selected in previous planning. This definition and pricing will allow us to choose those things we can both afford and are of highest value to us. Once we have presented the results of this process to the congregation and received approval, our contractor will work with the architect to create detailed specifications and schematic drawings to permit obtaining competitive subcontractor bids. The contractor will then identify potential subcontractors, solicit their bids, help us to evaluate them and oversee all construction and/or renovation activities. Our RFP to obtain a general contractor was developed and submitted to 3 local firms on April 28th. Responses were received on May 19th and a selection is in process. We hope to complete Sanctuary Building repairs before the end of the summer and then turn our attention to Community Building issues this fall.

Congregational Involvement and Reporting – Our church and our faith in each other have been tested over the past year, and our congregation is undergoing a transition period. Events and stresses have caused leadership change, membership turnover, budget anxieties, and project delays. Project information to the membership slowed accordingly. However, during the coming months, we will keep members informed of our progress through monthly reports. When our planning is complete, we will hold a congregational meeting to review the most desired options and have the congregation select one for implementation. The DreamBuilders as well as the Property Committee, are dedicated to moving forward for the benefit of the church and its members, to make critical and necessary improvements to the infrastructure, systems, and aesthetics of our buildings and grounds so that our rebuilding can be both physical and spiritual. In addition to making our spaces more comfortable, functional, and beautiful for our members, renovations will increase our rental values, thereby easing some of the fiscal burdens on the membership.

Submitted by
Fred Teal, Dream Builders Co-Chair

OPERATIONS COUNCIL

Operations Council Annual Report 2016-2017

Purpose:

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

Members:

- Beverly Schnetzler, Board Liaison
- Marty Atias, Co-chair, Audio Visual Technology Committee
- Brian Beard, Chair, Property/CIA Committee
- Rob Dahlstrom, Chair, Administrative Operations Committee; Co-chair, Audio Visual Technology Committee
- Nancy Dougherty, Chair, Information Technology Committee

Highlights:

- The Operations Council (Ops Council) has met nearly monthly this year with an at-large board member as our board liaison, Beverly Schnetzler, who has been very helpful in coordinating our work with the board. The council consists of representatives of the Administrative Operations, Audio Visual Technology, Information Technology, and Property/Capital Improvements and Accessibility committees.
- The Ops Council has identified deficiencies in all our buildings, grounds, and equipment and is coordinating with Dream Builders and the Board of Trustees in planning for their restoration or replacement as decisions are made as to how to proceed with our building program.
- The Ops Council has discussed issues with rentals as to how they affect our buildings and operations currently and how that might change with modifications to our buildings. We also worked on how to set optimum rental rates and keep them updated. No specifics yet but we suspect that we are undercharging for rentals.

Challenges:

- We have not found a replacement for Mark Ferrenz who has chaired the Capital Investments and Accessibility Committee (CIA). With many members of that committee also on the Property Committee, we combined the two committees. An additional consideration was that Dream Builders is doing similar work to what CIA has been doing. We do believe that once the building project is completed, either the CIA committee should be reestablished or the Dream Builders should be made a continuing presence to perform the functions that the CIA committee was doing. When active, the CIA was identifying current and future maintenance needs and planning to remediate them. That information was used by Dream Builders in their renovation and deferred maintenance remediation planning.
- A continuing challenge is the planning and financing for 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. Our recent Capital Fund Drive should help restore our buildings but with the plans not yet finalized, it is difficult for us to proceed with our part of this work.
- 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. We suggested that this position be a VP functioning much like the Program VP does for the Program Council. Instead, the board has identified a board member to be a liaison to our council. This arrangement has really helped but it still falls short of what we requested and still see as a need.

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.

Submitted by Rob Dahlstrom, Acting Convener, OPS Council

ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

Administrative Operations Committee Annual Report 2016-2017

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
- Nancy Dougherty, database, office procedures
- Mark Ferrenz, telephones
- Ken Iobst, corporate office services, logical email addresses, electronic file system, web calendar,
- UNIX computing, computer security
- Lisa Schumaker, office organization, finance related issues
- Melinda Yalom, Church Administrator

Highlights:

- The new Operations Council structure has enabled us to focus more on office procedures and their documentation and the new membership database because the new Information Technology and Audio Visual Technology Committees have relieved us of the tasks that they now perform.
- We have transitioned to the new online membership database system, IconCMO. It is available to those who need access to our membership data but very few leaders are beginning to use it. Our old FileMaker-based system has been retired and is now only used for archival reference. We have successfully published up-to-date member-friendly directories from IconCMO. Recording attendance data in the new system is not as straightforward as it was with our old system that was customized for our use but we are working to finalize our procedures.
- We have worked with the Membership Committee, Finance Committee, Budget Drive Chairs, and staff to reconcile any differences in the membership information that each of us use and are working to establish procedures to maintain accurate and consistent member data.

Challenges:

- Lisa Schumaker has moved on to be the Finance VP for the board, which is a big loss for us, though she has been known to yell down the hall during our meetings while doing her finance work at the front desk. Clearly, replacement is not possible but we are looking to bring new members into our committee.
- We continue to 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 falls 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 has helped us keep these systems functioning until they can be replaced.

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 but our work on the new database has delayed any significant progress.
- 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.

Submitted by Rob Dahlstrom, Chair, Administrative Operations Committee

AUDIO VISUAL TECH COMMITTEE

Audio Visual Tech Committee Annual Report 2016-2017

OVERVIEW:

The AV Tech Committee continues to provide technical support for all regular and special services, congregational meetings, special concerts, presentations, and film screenings.

HIGHLIGHTS:

We supported two residency concerts this year plus workshops, meetings, and several rentals which included music performances.

We supported a Strathmore East County Initiative concert at UUCSS which went especially well. We expect to continue our partnership with Strathmore and other partner churches to provide cultural enrichment of our community and spark outreach engagement with neighbor houses of worship.

For the last two years we have been enjoying improved sound from the music stage with high quality loudspeakers on demo loan through one of Marty's manufacturers. **These speakers will have to be returned soon, however we have an opportunity to purchase them at a steep discount.**

The fall-back speakers are very mediocre small club /band speakers driven by an amplifier that is also on loan from Marty. Using these would be a significant step down in terms of sound quality and aesthetics. Their inferior sound will not adequately support the quality of musical performances the music committee has been working so hard to provide.

CHALLENGES:

The AV Tech Committee still consists solely of its co-chairs, Marty Atias & Rob Dahlstrom, with John Sullivan occasionally serving as backup. Until we expand the roster either by recruiting new volunteers, starting an internship program, or paying outside people, we run a very real risk of no availability for any regular or special service.

We have not been receiving notification from the office of bookings in the sanctuary for which AV support is required. With our minimal crew of just two people, this makes scheduling extremely stressful and risks leaving a special event or a rental without AV support.

Feedback and ringing (low-level feedback) from both the pulpit and the choir stage continue to be a very big problem causing diminished spoken word intelligibility and musical articulation, and the natural amplification of instruments such as the piano and acoustic drums. The cause is rooted in the room acoustics as we've discussed before. Until acoustic treatments for the sanctuary are budgeted, band performances will continue to sound louder and harsher than they should, and the pulpit mic to either be at a lower level or to ring. Ringing sounds like a tone that sustains between words and after speech has stopped.

The loudspeakers currently at the choir stage, including the subwoofer, are loaners and will have to be returned soon. We really want to purchase appropriate speakers for **both stages** and hang them to eliminate the floor stands and associated cabling for both safety, aesthetics, and to improve the sound. Many congregants have complained that these speakers block views of our quilts.

Wireless Mics- We are operating with very old, inexpensive systems for two hand held mics and loaner systems for the hands-free mic and another hand held mic. All the receivers are sitting on the mixer desktop with an ugly antenna farm that can be bumped into as people walk by.

Our stage lighting system is impossible to operate. The control position has NO VIEW of the music stage, the controls themselves are completely manual and chaotically organized, and they are inaccessible from the sound mixing desk, making them extremely difficult or literally impossible to operate during events when they are needed the most.

LOOKING FORWARD:

We need to emphasize the importance of volunteer recruiting for the AV crew.

We would very much like to improve the aesthetics and sound in the Sanctuary this year by mounting smaller speakers on the walls for the Pulpit stage, and hanging the choir stage speakers as well. We want to upgrade our wireless microphone systems to be more reliable, improve their sound, make them physically secure, and improve their performance.

We have been consulting with the Deaf Access Committee about their desire to post video of sermons on the church web site and social media. They did some test recordings early this season which showed only the interpreter and so would serve a very narrow audience. They were encouraged to bring the worship committee into the planning, to discuss video that would serve a larger audience. We know that churches who regularly publish well produced video of their services can do very well with them

Submitted by Marty Atias, Chair, AV/Tech Committee

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

Information Technology Committee Annual Report 2016-2017

The Information Technology Committee is a subcommittee of the Operations Council.

Its purpose is to provide guidance and assistance as well as to approve expenses related to computers and networking. Our IT related services are used by the administrative offices, church web server, and audio visual team among others.

Keeping our computers and other networking hardware updated and in working order is an ongoing effort.

Submitted by Nancy Dougherty, Chair, Information Technology

PROPERTY COMMITTEE REPORT

Property Committee Annual Report 2016-2017

The Property Committee members are Brian Beard (chair), Marty Atias, Rob Dahlstrom and Mark Ferrenz.

The Capital Improvements and Accessibility (CIA) Committee includes the four Property members listed above, and also Larry McAneny.

The Property and CIA committees work together. Property handles near-term maintenance needs, while the CIA has traditionally been concerned with planning for longer-term maintenance needs, as well as research and preparation for the potential purchase of an adjacent property. However, the CIA committee has not been active lately, with the Dream Builders team doing the current planning for longer-term and large-scale maintenance and/or remodeling needs for our buildings. There have been no recent developments or news concerning the search for adjacent properties. Thus, the remainder of this annual report will only mention the Property Committee.

The following is a bullet list of Property Committee activities during the 2016-2017 fiscal year:

Landscaping/Grounds

- Organized Blue Jean Saturday church cleanup events, including a BBQ lunch for volunteers, for fall 2016 and spring 2017. Tasks included cleaning in Admin and Sanctuary buildings, tree and bush trimming, weeding, removing lots of invasive vines, and bagging the majority of the brush pile by the dumpsters.

- Removal of Infected Ash Trees – 4 dead ash trees infected with emerald ash borer were cut down and disposed. Paid \$100 for branch removal—the bulk of cutting and burning of infected wood done with volunteer labor.
- Previous contractor for cleaning out our storm drain, Magnolia Plumbing, seemed expensive and did not get good ratings in Consumer Checkbook magazine for their residential plumbing operation. Using advice and the list of approved contractors provided by the County, selected two new companies and requested bids, to compare with current contractor. Chose “Busy Service, Inc.”, and signed a 3-year contract, at a savings of \$500 per year. They efficiently cleaned the storm drain in mid-May.
- Power washed the walls, sidewalk and adjacent stairs, outside the SSNS lower entrance to the Admin Bldg, the day before their Truck Touch Day.
- Continued to remove invasive vines and add more plantings near NH Ave, and cut back overgrowth near Nature Trail—in addition to lots of other weeding and pulling of invasive vines.
- Moved gravel to fill in bare spots in parking lot.
- Shed – 8 volunteers helped construct new shed over multiple weekends. Will be used to store mowers, weed whacker, power washer, multiple hand tools and landscaping supplies, and potential future snow blower. Still need to finish painting inside and add security bar
- Mowed grass several times, when needed.
- Minor snow and sleet were taken care of with volunteer labor. Only one significant snow/sleet event, so only spent \$520 on snow removal for the winter. USA Landscaping is our new contractor for snow removal. (recommended by Rebecca at PBMS)
- Explored opportunity to get free trees planted, in a joint program by Alliance for the Bay and Interfaith Chesapeake. However, timeline was too short, too many requirements in the Memo of Understanding, and we need to do major landscaping to improve water management before we plant more trees.

Buildings

- Found new contractor for summer floor cleaning, at a significant price reduction.
- Identified source of ongoing sensor problems with Sanctuary fire alarm system: the back wall of the Fire Alarm Control Room was never sealed properly, allowing moisture to seep in. Will patch holes in fire alarm control room and install vented door.
- After annual Fire and Sprinkler inspection in April 2017, began having trouble alarms for a pressure sensor in the sprinkler system. Castle, our fire alarm and sprinkler contractor, has not been giving us good service, so we got the problem fixed by a new company, Fusion Fire (recommended by Jim Paoletti). They did an efficient job, and pointed out several things that Castle has Not been doing. Thus, we will likely sign with Fusion Fire Protection for our new contract, after getting one additional quote.
- The Sanctuary elevator was malfunctioning over a weekend, so we called Kone Elevator to send someone for an emergency call. Needed a follow-up visit to finish fixing problem, and Kone billed us for \$1200 in travel time (at \$500/hr) for the emergency call, in addition to the work on the elevator. Got recommendations from a couple other UU churches, and we are going to find a new elevator contractor.
- Replaced emergency light bulbs and batteries, adjusted door closure mechanisms, and made other minor repairs to address all of the issues mentioned in fire marshal’s inspection.
- HVAC in Sanctuary and Community Bldgs in need of major repair/replace. Both systems are not fully functional, very inefficient, and expensive to run.

Rentals

- Communicated regularly with Rebecca at PBMS and Janice at SSNS to address any concerns.
- Liaised with Janice at SSNS to explore options for maximizing the amount of time available for major remodeling in the Community Bldg. in the summer of 2018.
- Helped in advising on wording for rental contracts, to account for future construction.

- Worked with Melinda to resolve issues involving rentals.

Coordination with other Committees

- Worked with Green Sanctuary Committee in developing wording for new recycling guidelines.
- Advised Green Sanctuary on logistics for electronics recycling event, and lined up cones for parking.
- Worked with Green Sanctuary and Sunday Support to explore options for storing compostables, and suggested Fellowship Hall for bulk storage.

Pending projects

- Received long-awaited site assessment from the County Rainscapes Program contractor. Property Committee will review, discuss with our landscaping team of volunteers, and present a summary of tentative recommendations to the Board.
- Replace or repair, caulk and paint the ground floor window frames and doors of both the Community Bldg and Admin Bldg to make the buildings more airtight and energy efficient.
- Replace two light fixtures, replace key for towel dispenser, and treat drain in Community Bldg.
- Window washing, power washing sidewalks and buildings (especially water stains on Sanctuary)
- Repair holes in sidewalks

Ongoing Concerns

- Water management continues to be a major problem. Excessive water runoff from the buildings causes large amounts of gravel to be washed into the storm drain, requiring an annual \$1200 cost for cleaning it out to avoid fines. The south side of the Sanctuary needs significant landscaping/retaining wall work, or it will just get worse and could cause damage to the building. The lawn area used by PBMS gets too much drainage and often cannot be used by the children (or it gets torn up). It is essential that storm water management be included in the repairs to be done to the Sanctuary.
- Heating system in the Community Hall is old and unreliable, with only one of the two ganged furnaces still working.
- Coordinating with the Administrative Operations Committee, which is responsible for providing phone service for the church, to replace and update the old and unreliable phone system with one that meets the needs of our alarm and elevator communication systems.
- Heat does not work in Sanctuary Foyer, and entire Sanctuary level HVAC system is several years past its life expectancy.
- The sexton position is underfunded and not able to fulfill all the typical duties that we need the sexton to do.

Submitted by Brian Beard, Chair, Property Committee

PROGRAM COUNCIL

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Communications Committee Annual Report 2016-2017

The Communications Committee is in its second year, focusing priority on the UUCSS website. The goal has been to create a new dynamic website, with opportunities for different church groups and individual members to contribute content on a regular basis. At this point the website development is 90% completed, although the very nature of website development is that it's ever evolving and, therefore, not likely to reach 100% completion. Other areas of focus for the committee include social media and reinvigorating all-church communications, e.g., newsletters.

The work of the Communications Committee dovetails with all aspects of congregational life, and to be effective, requires active involvement from staff, church leaders, and all who have information they want to promote. The committee was represented at Program Council on a regular basis. A big thanks to Ken Iobst for his work moving our new website to the church's existing web server and reducing our hosting costs. Thank you to several people who wrote posts or contributed other needed information. However, we want to give special "shout outs" to a few: David Miley for writing several great Volunteer of the Month posts; the Green Sanctuary for being the most active committee on the new website; Scott Sleek for the many great photos that bring the site to life; the Audio team for helping us get new sermon audios posted to the website, often within just hours or days after the sermon; and Laura Nelson for pushing us along when we were slacking.

Challenges for the coming year include: attracting a few more core members to the committee, continuing to engage the different congregational members to be active contributors to the website, increasing UUCSS presence on social media, and developing plans for regular newsletter-type all-church communications.

To submit updates and posts to the website, contact: webmaster@uucss.org

Those who represent church groups or committees and want direct access to update and post to the website, or want to discuss any aspect of church communications, contact: communications@uucss.org

Submitted by Daniel Clark, Chair, Communications Committee

DEAF ACCESS COMMITTEE

Deaf Access Committee Annual Report 2016–2017

Committee Members and Primary Roles

- Angela Conant, chair 2015-Current
- Lisa Schumaker, budget management
- Miako Noel Villanueva, principal interpreter and interpreter co-coordinator
- Deborah Weiner, interpreter coordinator
- Melissa Clark, internal communications coordinator (former)
- Scot Ryder, technology coordinator (on leave)

HIGHLIGHTS

- DAC began recording the Sunday sermons interpreted by Miako Noel Villanueva, with the goal of placing them on the UUCSS website as a way to reach out to the Deaf community broadly, and provide an additional resource for Deaf members within the congregation.
- DAC welcomed Mary Beth Morgan, recent Gallaudet University graduate, to interpret RE and special events at UUCSS.
- DAC continued to provide interpreting services for Sunday sermons throughout the calendar year for UUCSS members and visitors and their families.
- DAC provided interpreting services for inreach and outreach events at UUCSS.
- DAC continues to support the goals and mission of UUCSS's Green Sanctuary at its committee meetings by serving vegetarian and vegan meals and using products that are recyclable.

CHALLENGES

- Following up with event coordinators to ensure that event information includes the interpreter request policy as stated in the Program Council handbook.
- Getting the UUCSS message out to deaf people and attracting more deaf people to UUCSS.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Attract more deaf people to UUCSS.
- Work with area UU churches to assist them in setting up a deaf access program.
- Work with UUCSS AV team to improve and expand technology to assist all members, including deaf members.

Submitted by Angela Conant, Chair, Deaf Access Committee

GREEN SANCTUARY COMMITTEE

Green Sanctuary Committee Annual Report 2016–2017

Members: Lori Hill and Doneby Smith, co-chairs; Maggie Hayes, Bruce McConachie, Olivia Pickett, Matthew Rice

Supporting and promoting congregation members'/individuals' efforts:

- Green Sanctuary sponsored collections of hard-to-recycle items as listed.
 - September - water filters
 - October - polystyrene
 - November - Halloween candy
 - December - Christmas lights
 - May - electronics (91 carloads, 4320 pounds equal to 172,022 hours of electricity!)
 - Corks - ongoing
- Expanding our committee - Matthew and Bruce have joined; Gretchen and Amy have left. We are happy to have a YRUU member, and hope for continued participation from YRUU in the future. We will be recruiting a new co-chair as Lori Hill is stepping down.

Greening our own operations:

- Re-establishing bona fide recycling- Effectively, recycling on campus had stopped. After much discussion with minister, sexton, property committee and our administrative assistant, we now have a clear, written policy for recycling on our campus. The policy is to be available in the Program Council Handbook. The challenge now will be monitoring so that we don't slip backwards.
- One sheet handout for sustainable practices and products for events held at the church- Lori has worked with many stakeholders especially the Operations Council to formulate guidelines for both internal use and renters to conduct "green" events. It is nearing a final form. The plan is to have the guidelines available on our website, so that all event planners would be directed by link to the guidelines as soon as they schedule their event with the administrative assistant.
- Moving to compostable disposable dinnerware- Kitchen cabinets have been cleared. YRUU has granted permission for overflow storage in Fellowship House. Funds have been promised from worship committee and the Board. 1000 of 6 items and 500 of 2 others have been purchased and stowed. Use of compostable dinnerware was debuted at Fellowship Dinner with Phyllis Ryder handling composting as bona fide composting of these materials requires industrial (as opposed to backyard-type) composting facilities. Next steps will be figuring out how to make the use of compostables sustainable both financially and logistically.
- Greening Catocin- A discussion was opened that included making vegetarian meals the default and using compostables. No decisions have been made yet.
- Sustainable building and renovation - Doneby has been attending monthly meetings as Green Sanctuary participant in the Dream Builders. See their report for details. There is agreement in principle on efficient and sustainable design and construction. One of the first tasks will be replacement of the aging HVAC system in the Sanctuary building with new, high-efficiency units.

Coordinating with other UUCSS social justice initiatives:

- With the loss of Rev. Leon last fall, the plan for a Justice Summit was put on hold. Currently, Al Nathan, who is on both the Diversity Team and the Racial Justice Task Force, is working on plans.

Education:

- There is ongoing work with webmasters to create functional Green Sanctuary pages which we hope will serve as both a communication and education tool to include a calendar of relevant external events, UUCSS green policies and procedures, tips for sustainable living, issue briefs and sample letters for advocacy.

- Community Solar presentation by Neighborhood SUN Oct. 16 – information was presented on the development of community-based solar gardens which will provide solar power locally through the grid via subscription.

Advocacy:

- Chesapeake Climate Action Network (CCAN) Polar Bear Plunge Jan 28 – Lori raised \$3635. Silver Spring Penguins (Matthew, Reilly, Brian, Garrett, Scott, Rory, Leo, Jesse, Alexis) raised \$1235
- At the Earth Day Sunday service, the collection was donated to a conservation organization, the Patuxent River Keepers.
- Lobby Day in Annapolis Feb. 13 -Doneby and Bruce participated. 3 of the 7 District 18 lobbyists were UUs. CCAN organized over 100 citizens including Bruce to speak with legislators from all districts.
- Fracking Ban bill postcard campaign- Over two Sundays, 47 postcards in support of this bill (which permanently bans fracking in Maryland) were signed and sent to state delegates and senators from 33 congregation members. When Gov. Hogan expressed support for the bill, additional postcards from members were sent to thank him. Due in part to our support, the Fracking Ban bill passed and was signed into law.
- March for Science April 22- at least 15 UUCSSers attended
- People's Climate March, April 29- at least 19 UUCSSers attended
- Doneby has attended UU Social Justice (UUSJ) regional quarterly meetings. UUCSS will be hosting the next meeting, June 17.

Spiritual Development/Worship:

- Prayer for Water Protectors offered at the Sunday Service on Dec. 4
- Earth Day Sunday service April 23 was planned and conducted by Green Sanctuary in conjunction with Gaia Circle. We hope that this is the first of an annual UUCSS celebration of Earth Day.

Submitted by Doneby Smith, Co-Chair, Green Sanctuary

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Membership Committee Annual Report 2016–2017

The UUCSS Membership Committee has had a wonderful year of meeting new people and opening the church's doors to many looking for a new church experience. UUCSS gets many visitors each week. Our warm community is a safe and reassuring place for members, friends and visitors trying to make sense of this world. Most of the Membership Committee's work focuses on the church's strategic goals of building community connections, growing our congregation, and putting our faith in action.

The Committee worked hard this year to welcome visitors into our community, even during a difficult year inside and outside the church. The Committee staffed a welcoming table and offered an activity table and chairs at every coffee hour to reach out to visitors and members looking for information and to provide a place for members (including members with young children) to congregate and visit during that time. The Committee offered a UUCSS 101 introductory classes once a month to give those interested in UUCSS membership a chance to ask questions and meet other visitors. Most importantly, the Committee hosted five sessions of the Pathways to Membership class for those interested in joining the church.

The Membership Committee's work has paid off. Even during a year of change, 15 people signed our membership book (including one former member who came back) during this church year.

The Committee thanks our incredible Sunday Support team who greets members and visitors each week. The Committee also thanks the website team, who took our content and made a beautiful site for those

seeking our church to find information. These two teams are critical to building our community and putting our faith in action, and we are grateful for their service.

The Membership Committee also worked with a team of committed UUCSS members (Rob Dahlstrom, Erik Leaver, Teresa Meeks, Lisa Schumaker, and Michelle Levesque) and with Rev. Liz to review and improve the quality of our membership data. This group met for two long evenings to review our membership data and reconcile it with the Annual Budget Drive and financial data. I believe we have improved the quality of our membership database tremendously. After this data cleaning, and after this year's resignations, we had 15 people completely resign from the church since February 2016, and another 11 members who changed their status from member to friend. In that same time period, we have had 23 people join or rejoin the church with a net decline of 3. We know the months and year ahead will likely bring more change in our membership. I am working on making the tracking of this information easier so we can provide more accurate information for the church calendar year next year.

The Committee has many more ideas and looks forward to working with other Committees throughout the church to strengthen our church's ability to open its community to others. Working with the Interim Minister, the Adult RE Committee, our in-Reach team, and others, we plan to provide more opportunities for members to strengthen their connections in the church and explore Unitarian Universalist teachings.

I would like to thank the outstanding members of the Membership Committee this year: Linda Barrett, Dorothy Hale, Emily Harris, Maggie Hayes, and Jean Snell. They are a phenomenal team! I would also like to thank Jim Paoletti, our past chair, who supports the team when we need him, and Mary Kegel and Jiwon Kim who have also pitched in to help. Special thanks to Rob Dahlstrom and Melinda Yalom for their work to keep our membership data updated and Michael Knaapen for helping with visitor communication.

I would also like to thank all UUCSS members and friends who volunteer to make our church function so that UUCSS can enrich our lives and the lives of those who are still seeking a spiritual home.

Respectfully submitted,
Patti Poss, Chair, Membership Committee

MUSIC COMMITTEE

Annual Report of the Music Program 2016-2017

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. The activities of the Music Program contribute to the Strategic Plan Theme “Cultivate a rich spiritual life and build community connections.”

Accomplishments:

- The music program was a beacon of healing and unification for the congregation during the trials of the past church year.
- 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. All are welcome!
- A new, smaller, quieter drum kit was purchased, for which a set of cymbals is being pursued.
- The Music Committee organized two residencies with outstanding guest artists:
 - In October, David Smith from All Souls UU Church of Tulsa returned for a seventh 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.
 - In April, Natural Rhythms Trio (Elise Witt, Becky Reardon, and Terry Garthwaite) shared their "wonderful, unpredictable amalgam of talent and sound" through a singing circle/workshop April 1, a concert Saturday evening, and music for worship on Sunday, April 2.
- The Special Music team, led by Tina Borrer, lined up musicians for all summer services.
- Some choir members and the music director participated in the MUUSICA all-UU choir songfest at All Souls on May 6, with clinician and composer Rollo Dillworth. This included the world premiere of a song commissioned for the event, “America, the Dream.”
- The Music Program has been very active with the Strathmore East County Initiative. This is a community development project for the east part of Montgomery County to connect the dots between several churches in our area. The catalyst for this is the arts, of course, and they have big plans. The endeavors include education, massive Latin dances, choral festivals, student orchestra concerts, blues, and so much more. The A Cappella group represented UUCSS at an ECI Sing-Out mixer in October. The choir and the house band performed at the first ECI “Corridor Concert” February 25 with a gospel program highlighting our musicians, a Baptist church choir, and the renowned gospel musician and Wynton Marsalis mentee, Damien Sneed with Le Chateau Chorale. In May UUCSS hosted the third Strathmore Corridor Concert, “At the Intersection of World and Jazz.” It was a stunning afternoon of jazz and world music featuring the brand-new Strathmore World Jazz Choir, Chai Dynamics, and Strathmore Artists-in-Residence, including Rochelle Rice, jazz vocalist.
- The Music Committee purchased a performance license for the church to cover music at parties, or if our musicians play at another venue.

Challenges:

- Budget inconsistencies (between our accounting and the church accounting) for the music budget and the music fund have made tracking expenses difficult. We would like to avoid this in the future.
- We would like to find more effective ways to get larger audiences to our special events. The turnout for events in the last year is typically less than expected and quite unpredictable.

Opportunities:

- Strengthen our collaboration with the Strathmore East County Initiative, as noted above. We are excited about the potential for this collaboration to increase our outreach and our presence in the community.
- Seek outside funding to support high caliber guest artists and improve production values. Grant funding could be used to develop 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.
- Improve publicity for residencies and other events, both within and outside the church. Strathmore has committed to help with this.

Respectfully submitted,
Tina Borrer, Chair, Music Committee

OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Outreach Committee Annual Report 2016-2017

The Outreach Committee leads UUCSS in community engagement, helps promote church news and activities beyond the church family, works with Membership to bring new visitors to the church, and manages outward-facing communications of the church, including the church sign and portions of the UUCSS website intended for use by non-members.

The committee has been largely inactive for the past year and is looking for a new chairperson and members. Possible new activities include participation in this year's Takoma Park July 4th parade, Folk Festival, and development of activities, such as concerts, movie nights, guest speakers and other events, that will resonate with our local community and bring potential new members to UUCSS.

Ongoing activities include serving dinner at Shepherd's Table on the third Sunday of each month, and migration of outward facing website elements, like the sermon audio archives, from the old website to the new one. No outreach funds were spent over the past year.

Submitted by Bob Hirshon, Chair, Outreach Committee

RACIAL JUSTICE TASK FORCE

Racial Justice Task Force Annual Report 2016-2017

Racial Justice Task Force members: Eli Briggs, Daniel Clark, Al Nathan, Gwendolyn Rhodes, Phyllis Ryder, Susan Westenbarger

During this year of transition at UUCSS, the Racial Justice Task Force (RJTF) was more internally focused, working on developing a draft mission statement, which is listed below.

MISSION

Because we know that our lives and destinies are interdependent, the RJTF creates greater equality and racial justice in the world and in our congregation. We measure our progress in decades.

As we make decisions within our committee and within the church, we understand conflict as an important part of our process. We communicate our purpose and positions regularly. We seek out multiple views and are transparent about our guiding principles and logic. We create spaces for the congregation to speak; we put ourselves out there to listen both collectively and through individual conversations. We hold ourselves accountable to the congregation.

- In collaboration with other social justice task forces at UUCSS and in our denomination and through the local and national communities, we curate a range of social justice activities, from local to national, and with opportunities at different ages and levels of commitment;
- We build our capacities by working at the intersections that link our convictions with other justice concerns. This means, for example, working for environmental justice and to end brutality against transgender people of color.
- We engage the congregation through speakers, movies and small study circles and other methods to learn about issues and infrastructures of inequality, and to learn ways of being, ways to live in the deep intersection of our interdependence. We support the Worship Committee as they lead services that engage the congregation with issues and stories relevant to people of color including Hispanic, Native American, African American, and Asian peoples.
- We work with the Program Council, Board, Ministry, and other lay leadership to ensure that decisions and processes include a racial justice perspective.

Internal church events 2016-2017:

- In December 2016, RJTF held a well-attended (about 50 people) observance of Kwanzaa organized by Gwendolyn Rhodes and Eli Briggs. The focus on that night was the theme of self-determination. People shared their experiences of self-determination and learned about the themes and spirit of Kwanzaa and how it can relate to our UU faith.
- In addition, Gwendolyn Rhodes preached a sermon “Waiting for the World to Change” on February 19 about the power of love to heal and change the world.
- Communications and Dissemination of Opportunities for Action: We maintained a racial justice email distribution list of more than 100 people. Events in the DC area and throughout our local UU network are shared on a weekly basis.
- UU Legislative Ministry: UUCSS continued formal involvement with the UU Legislative Ministry of Maryland around criminal justice, paid sick leave and environmental justice issues.
- Plans were started for a Social Justice Summit bringing together all the groups/individuals in the church working on justice activities and/or interested in getting involved. Hopefully this summit will happen in 2017/2018.
- RJTF members have joined the Healing Task Force and are leading the Communications Committee to infuse racial justice into the internal workings of the church.
- In April, the RJTF circulated a petition to the UUA Board supporting funding as passed by the Board for the Black Lives of UU Collective. More than 40 people signed the petition.

- We also hosted a watch party for the Black Lives of UU “[Whose Faith is it Anyway](#)” panel and facilitated a brief discussion afterward. Approximately 30 people attended.

External actions, trainings, and other events 2016-2017:

- In November, when the Episcopal Church of Our Savior on New Hampshire Ave. was attacked with racist graffiti, the RJTF and Rev. Liz reached out to see how we could support them and advocated for a visible way to reach out to our neighbors which led to the sidewalk chalk event linking the two congregations.
- Several UUCSS members attended a direct action training sponsored by Showing Up for Racial Justice and Black Lives Matter held at Cedar Lane UU Church in January.
- We supported our neighbors and sister congregation in Columbia at their Black Lives Matter vigil.
- Several UUCSS members attended meetings/trainings about the possibility of becoming a sanctuary church.
- Several UUCSS members attended JPD-sponsored Jubilee Workshops and other anti-racist trainings.

Submitted by Eli Briggs for the Racial Justice Task Force

WORSHIP SERVICES COMMITTEE

Worship Committee Annual Report 2016-2017

Worship Committee members: Kathryn Leete, Rev. Liz Lerner Maclay, Esther McBride, Preston Mears, Jeffrey Noel-Nosbaum, Sally Porter, Edith Salazar, Carolyn Savadkin, and Carey Schneider (chair).

The Worship Committee this year took numerous opportunities to present faith and action from many points in the congregation, and to invite to our pulpit ministers from the wider community.

Points of Pride:

- Our 2016 Summer Series, “Aging from the Inside Out,” looked at growing older from the view of how it is experienced as individuals move through the years. Eight congregation members—Jeremy Holt, Robin Moore Lasky, Deborah Thornton, Rev. Leon Dunkley, Jim and Jo Paoletti, Sally Porter and Carolyn Savadkin-- from the decades of the thirties through the eighties led services exploring the topic.
- Labor Day brought a service led by Jamie Raskin, U.S. Congressman from Takoma Park, and friend of the congregation.
- A service led by Abdul Latif Bennett related the story of forgiveness that a Muslim congregation extended to the perpetrator of a hate crime against them.
- Rev. Robert Harvey from the Episcopal Church of our Savior, just up the road from UUCSS, accepted an invitation to preach, and we heard from Rev. John Crestwell, from the Annapolis UU church. Mark Hoelter, a former UU minister who lives in D.C., spoke in April.
- For the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., service, our own Edith Salazar and the Diversity Team presented “Are We Still Dreaming?,” based upon Edith’s fall trip to the US-Mexico border with the Unitarian Universalist College of Social Justice to bear witness to the traumas suffered by people struggling to escape poverty and violence and immigrate to the United States.
- Congregants Sara Tarr and Gwen Rhodes each led services in the winter that centered on life-changing events in their lives.
- The annual Jazz Service was led again by Bruce Kroemer and Robbie Kimball.
- Michael Holmes, UUCSS’s Music Director, created a service around the spiritual power of music.
- We continued our short but solidifying tradition of having a Hindu Kirtan, and honored Earth Day in April with a service led by our Green Sanctuary Committee and Gaia Circle.

- Jeffrey Noel-Nosbaum became the liaison with the Communications Committee, resulting in a consistent path for sermon texts to be posted to the UUCSS website, and better understanding of the ways for Worship to get out news of its offerings.

Works in progress:

- Stop-and-go on the policy for verbal announcements during the service, which has frustrated many congregants and had Board members improvising until something written can be implemented.
- A survey of the worship needs and desires of the congregation, begun in April, was put on hold with the announcement of Rev. Liz's leaving. It will be folded into the church-wide profile that is part of the search for a new candidate for ministry, when the church is ready to take that path.

Respectfully submitted,
Carey Schneider, Chair, Worship Committee

MINUTES FROM CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

ANNUAL MEETING

Unitarian Universalist Church of Silver Spring
ANNUAL MEETING
June 5, 2016

Welcome and Call to Order – Barbara Eyman, president of the Board of Trustees
The annual meeting of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Silver Spring was called to order at 1:15 pm.

Opening Words – Rev. Liz Lerner Maclay, senior minister

Approval of the minutes from 2015-2016 congregational meetings:

In accordance with UUCSS policy, the minutes from the June 2015 annual meeting and the September 2015 congregational meeting were reviewed and ratified by the Board of Trustees at the subsequent board meetings, and are contained in the 2015-2016 Annual Report, distributed to the congregation and posted in Dropbox.

PRESIDENT’S REPORT - Barbara Eyman

Barbara Eyman opened with reflections from the past year. The capital campaign was a huge accomplishment, raising over \$2M which showed generosity on everyone’s part. She gave thanks to the incredible team of volunteers, led by Erik Leaver and Jim Paoletti as co-chairs, and included the steering committee, stewards, and all the people who created the groundwork and are continuing to lead us as we head forward. She applauded all who attended small group sessions and participated in stewardship meetings. Those one-on-one meetings are at the heart of the campaign because it’s there that we share our hopes for the congregation and connections are strengthened.

Thinking about the annual meeting one year ago, we passed two major social action resolutions related to death with dignity and racial justice. The discussions during that meeting—rather stilted by adherence to Robert’s Rules of Order—were important but also painful, and the aftermath of that meeting was very hard. We now have that as a collective experience we’ve learned and grown from. That’s what make this congregation so special—our ability to grow and learn even in difficult situations, and that’s what will help us get through. We will face more challenges in the future, but it’s the community that helps us make it through.

HIGHLIGHTS 2015-2016 - Barbara Eyman

Barbara then opened the floor for people to share what they consider as especially important or meaningful for them from the past year, something they would like to lift up. Comments included:

- Music Program -
 - The performance of the “Missa Gaia/Earth Mass” with Jim Scott, held over Earth Day weekend, featuring choirs from UUCSS and the Mount Vernon Unitarian Church. The event was a joint effort between the Music Committee and the Green Sanctuary team.
 - The choir - Shout out for the camaraderie of the choir. Not only do we make fun music, but the support and friendship is really something to experience. Walking into rehearsal every Thursday is like coming to my second home.
- Capital campaign - For many people, addressing financial matters with the church they attend is often a difficult connection. However, just like a family, a church needs money to sustain its operations and realize its vision. You’ve done a fantastic job.

- Honoring the beginning and end of life - I'm honored by what the church has done in support of death with dignity. Rev. Liz Lerner Maclay was able to devote as much energy to it as she did because of the vote of this church. And at the other end, I love watching the little ones come up.
- Sunday Support - I want to take a moment to remember Janet Coffin who passed away this year. A team of 40 dedicated Sunday Support people bring welcoming and other similar support to the worship services every single week. Yay, Sunday Support!
- Church leadership and staff -
 - There are so many people behind the scenes. I would really like to thank Barbara Eyman. She stepped in as president under rather difficult circumstances and has done a bang up job.
 - The capital campaign has been difficult for me because it has brought out a sense of dissonance as we focus on drawing out our dreams but don't focus on drawing out our concerns to balance those. I've been trying to understand how to integrate it with my feelings for the church, and I've had a chance to talk about it with several key people including Barbara Eyman, John Robinette, Rev. Leon Dunkley. The fact that the leadership of this church is open to hearing that and open to taking it in is hugely valuable to me.
 - The staff - Every time I need something, Melinda Yalom is always there to help. If I send her something late, she gets it into the all-church email. The staff members carry such a large load. I remember when so much more had to be handled by volunteers and I appreciate their work.
 - Sarah Gonzales – Not only does she lead one of the best religious education programs anywhere, but she has been incredibly helpful on the program council; she helped set up an executive committee and has helped guide us. Thank you, Sarah.
- The Amadiyya Muslim–UU women's reading group – This is something I really value. We're now thinking of coming up with a joint service project.
- The auction – The auction is such a big community event, and it raised over \$30K. Thank you to Tina Borrer who led it. Here's to next year!
- The women's retreat – This year I was in a vulnerable place. I needed financial help even to get there. The women really ministered to me, and I was in much better shape when I left.

Barbara Eyman closed the discussion acknowledging that there is much more as yet unsaid and thanking everyone.

UPDATE ON POST-CAPITAL CAMPAIGN PLANNING – John Robinette, at-large member of the Board of Trustees and chair of Dream Builders

John Robinette reported that the post-capital campaign planning is focused on exploring financial opportunities, including a financial analysis prepared by Andrew Kleine. Recently, thanks to Doneby Smith and Doug Weisburger, church members met with representatives from Montgomery County to discuss PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy) funding. This is an exciting new development for UUCSS. PACE helps bring financing together for projects that either support clean energy or help with energy efficiency. It appears that almost all of UUCSS Phase 1A projects fit within the eligibility for PACE financing. With this new information, we'll be taking a look again at Phase 1A to determine what now makes sense to be included in that phase. The next steps include discussion with the architects and an application process with PACE. Dream Builders has not yet had a chance to meet to consider this new information. We anticipate addressing it this summer, reconfiguring Phase 1A, and also taking into consideration the things discussed during the March open meeting, e.g., communication.

PRESENTATION AND VOTE ON THE 2016-2017 BUDGET – Michelle Lévesque, vice-president for finance, Board of Trustees

MOTION: Adopt the 2016-2017 budget.

Moved by Tina Borrer; seconded by Laura Ellis.

Discussion: The 2016-2017 budget and accompanying budget commentary had been distributed to the congregation in advance via email, and hard copies were available at the meeting. Michelle Lévesque provided a brief overview of that information and entertained questions. In brief, the “ask” amount was \$536,673. We achieved \$505,526. Through savings in personnel (primarily, a staff member requesting to reduce hours and that request being approved), we’re able to meet all the budget needs identified and start the year with a planned \$2K surplus.

Questions from the congregation were:

- What is our history of paying our fair share to the UUA?
Response: For many years UUCSS did not pay our fair share; some years we paid 100%. This year we have 286 certified members; the fee is \$60 per member. For the past 3 years we’ve paid ¼ of our fair share and that’s the plan for the coming year.
- The auction income is reduced a bit in the 2016-2017 budget; why is that?
Response: This year’s auction was “off cycle” due to the capital campaign. Therefore, there will not be a full year between last year’s auction and the next one in November. Doing another auction so close to the last one, we thought it prudent to project a little less.

Following questions and discussion, Barbara Eyman called for a vote on the motion.

MOTION: Adopt the 2016-2017 annual budget.

Motion carried.

ELECTIONS FOR UUCSS LEADERSHIP – Jimmy Schreiber, Nominating Committee

MOTION: Approve the nominees for UUCSS leadership positions, and approve the board’s appointment of Beverly Schnetzler as at-large member of the board.

Moved by Deborah Thornton; seconded by Jim Paoletti.

Discussion: The names and bios of candidates had been distributed to the congregation in advance via email, and hard copies were available at the meeting. Jimmy Schreiber introduced the nominees to the congregation.

Board of Trustees (three-year term)

- Vice-President for Finance – Candidate: Lisa Schumaker
- Vice-President for Programs – Candidate: Miranda Bradley
- At-Large Member: Candidate: Fred Teal

- At-Large Member: Beverly Schnetzler, appointed by the Board of Trustees mid-year to fill a vacant position; appointment needs to be ratified by the congregation at this annual meeting

Nominating Committee:

- Candidate: Nicole Lévesque
- Candidate: George Meeks

Jim Paoletti called the question; seconded by Michelle Lévesque

MOTION: Approve the nominees for UUCSS leadership positions, and approve the board’s appointment of Beverly Schnetzler as at-large member of the board.

Motion carried.

Barbara Eyman thanked all those who agreed to serve, and expressed her appreciation to the Nominating Committee: Cynthia Curry-Daniel, John Henderson, Robin Moore Lasky, and Jimmy Schreiber.

APPRECIATIONS –

Rev. Liz Lerner Maclay expressed appreciation to **Ashley Burczak**, membership coordinator and assistant to the senior minister. Ashley is stepping back for personal reasons and we will miss her contributions. However, it's a real testament to her service of this church that she wants to become a member. It's wonderful that we welcome Ashley now as a member.

Barbara Eyman thanked the three outgoing board members, acknowledging that the whole board has been an incredible team.

John Robinette – The at-large position is sometimes thought of as a rather “cushy” job. Not so for John! He served as the board's liaison to Dream Builders, and volunteered to serve as chair when Phyllis Ryder's term ended. On the board, he has been a voice of wisdom and reason, and a valuable contributor.

Chris Lindsley – As vice-president for Programs, member of the executive committee, and chair of the Program Council, Chris has a minimum of 3 meetings per month. He has been an excellent vice-president for Programs, and has provided a strong voice in encouraging all congregants to find what their own gifts are for serving the church.

Michelle Lévesque – As vice-president for Finance, Michelle has done an amazing job of bringing our church finances to a much higher and professional level, working with outside auditors and bookkeepers, and overhauling our finance policies for the church. We were without a bookkeeper for a long time and so she had to do double-duty with that responsibility as well.

Chris Lindsley also expressed thanks to Beverly Schnetzler who organized the lunch before the meeting today.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion to adjourn was made by Deborah Thornton, seconded by Doyle Rice. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 2:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Janne M. Harrelson
Board Secretary

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Unitarian Universalist Church of Silver Spring CONGREGATIONAL MEETING March 26, 2017

Welcome and Call to Order – Carol Hamilton, Board of Trustees, acting president and vice-president/planning

The meeting was called to order at 12:00 pm.

The purpose of the meeting is to elect a new president of the Board of Trustees, filling the vacant term that ends in June 2018.

Carol Hamilton opened with a reading by Marge Piercy. She then asked people to rise if they have ever served on the board, chaired a committee, served on a committee, or in other ways provided service to UUCSS, and expressed her deep appreciation on behalf of the board. After a brief recap of Roberts Rules of Order, Carol opened the floor for the business at hand.

Lisa Schumaker made the following motion; seconded by Jim Paoletti:

MOTION: Approve the nomination of John Henderson as president of the UUCSS Board of Trustees, filling the vacant term that ends June 30, 2018.

Discussion

One member expressed her support for the candidate, John Henderson: “I am thankful that you’re stepping into this leadership position; the church is very lucky to have you”.

Hearing no debate, Carol Hamilton called the question and re-read the motion.

MOTION: Approve the nomination of John Henderson as president of the UUCSS Board of Trustees, filling the vacant term that ends June 30, 2018.

Motion carried.

Adjournment

Michelle Levesque moved to adjourn the meeting; Laura Ellis seconded.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 12:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Janne M. Harrelson, Secretary

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Unitarian Universalist Church of Silver Spring CONGREGATIONAL MEETING April 23, 2017

Welcome and Call to Order – John Henderson, president, Board of Trustees
The meeting was called to order at 12:44 pm.

The purpose of the meeting is to authorize the Board of Trustees to embark on the process to hire an interim minister, as stipulated in the UUCSS constitution. John Henderson, as chair of the proceedings, presented the motion listed on the agenda:

MOTION: Authorize the Board of Trustees to hire an interim minister with a salary of \$96,000 in accordance with UUA fair compensation practices.

John Henderson provided an overview of the interim ministry process, and referenced the recent all-church emails from the board that included a link to the UUA Transitional Ministry Handbook:
<http://www.uua.org/careers/ministers/transitions>

As indicated in that handbook, an interim minister agrees “to carry out the normal responsibilities of congregational ministry, including worship and pastoral care, and also assist the congregation in addressing the following interim tasks:

- claiming and honoring its past and engaging and acknowledging its grief and conflicts;
- recognizing its unique identity and its strengths, needs, and challenges;
- understanding the appropriate leadership roles of minister(s), church staff, and lay leaders, and navigating the shifts in leadership that may accompany times of transition;
- making appropriate use of regional, UUA, and other outside resources; and
- renewing its vision, strengthening its stewardship, preparing for new growth and new professional leadership, ready to embrace the future with anticipation and zest.”

As previously communicated to the congregation, the salary being recommended is in keeping with the UUA fair compensation guidelines, at the midpoint of the settled minister salary for a congregation of our size and in our geographic location. The pool of ministers seeking a position as an interim minister generally includes 4 categories: (1) those who are Accredited Interim Ministers (AIMs), with specialized training and experience in these kinds of transitions, (2) ministers in the process of becoming AIMs, (3) ministers with at least 10 years of experience, and also (4) less experienced ministers. The board firmly believes that hiring a religious professional who has the right set of skills to help lead us through this period is the best use of our resources, and this salary offer will put UUCSS in a strong position to attract an interim minister who has the experience and the skills we need.

The members of the interim minister search committee are:

- Board members: Miranda Bradley, VP/Programs; John Henderson, President; Sharon Snyder, VP/Personnel
- Non-board members: Charles Alexander; Emily Tien

Discussion

The floor was then opened for questions and discussion of the motion. The comments centered around several themes, as indicated below.

1. General support for the motion –

Congregants commended the board for moving rapidly on this matter. People noted that our previous experience with an interim minister was very positive, and that it’s worthwhile to invest the money to attract an experienced interim minister who will have the strength and the vision to help us through these next steps. People indicated they are looking forward to moving forward.

The question was raised as to whether or not the midpoint salary is actually high enough to attract the type of interim minister we want, or should we go higher than the midpoint. John Henderson confirmed that all our conversations with the people at the UUA have assured us that offering this midpoint salary positions us well, although, of course, there are no guarantees. We must also add in benefits (health, retirement, etc) to that salary figure. The board is comfortable offering the midpoint.

2. Discussion re: whether to hire an interim minister now or wait –

Some comments indicated that we consider waiting, and exist for a period of time without having any minister. It was posed that this may be the prime opportunity to experience who we are as ourselves, what type of “church” we want to be. Others indicated that it would be untenable for volunteers to take on even more responsibility, filling in for the many roles that a minister plays. On the other hand, it was noted that volunteer over-commitment could be addressed through a staffing structure that, even if it did not include a minister, included other staff who handled important responsibilities. Congregants expressed feelings that they actually do want a minister, someone to minister to us, to provide pastoral care, and help us through theological questions and the issues that lay behind such things as, what happens when people who are supposed to be working together cannot work together.

It was also noted that this is not the traditional job hire process. There’s already a pool of candidates. Now we have three weeks to look at the candidates and see who will be a good fit. We have a clear articulated need for having professional support over the next two years, and we need professional guidance to finish the healing process that we’ve started.

There was commendation on the search committee that the board has pulled together, and appreciation for the fact that the board has listened to the congregation and included non-board members on the committee.

3. Search Committee / UUA Timelines –

Concerns were expressed that the UUA timelines are too short given the importance of this position. Those tight timelines also affect the search committee, and may make it difficult for them to fully vet the candidates and feel confident that they are representing the views of the congregation. Comments were also made affirming that the members of the search committee know the congregation well and will, indeed, be able to represent that when considering the interim minister candidates. It was also noted that even though the UUA schedule is not ideal, selecting an interim minister is not about the theology of the church; it’s about communication, goals, and planned. It’s not a theological hotbox, per se, but a hotbox for things like social justice, education, and governance.

The question was asked whether the timetable could be extended? John Henderson responded that the UUA has a very specific set of timelines, and to avail ourselves of this system, we have to follow these timelines. As compressed as this process is, it’s better than the alternative. Having a religious professional in place in the near future to help us through the process of transition, to help us through setting out goals and determine where we want to go next, is critical.

A congregant called the question; and the vote passed with over 2/3 majority. At that point members who had not yet spoken but still wanted to comment were recognized by the chair. When all who wanted to speak for a first time had done so, John Henderson reread the motion before the congregation:

MOTION: Authorize the Board of Trustees to hire an interim minister with a salary of \$96,000 in accordance with UUA fair compensation practices.

Motion carried.

Adjournment

At 1:57pm, John Henderson concluded this meeting of the UUCSS congregation.

Respectfully submitted, Janne Harrelson, Board Secretary