

2015-16 Year-End Summary



This document is prepared with a historical perspective in mind. It includes details about programs that we wish to track in case someone in the future has questions such as, “When did we start having a service auction?” or “When did we change the YRUU (Young Religious UUs—our youth group) format?”

At the same time, anyone who reads the entire document will have a reasonably good idea of the depth and breadth of programming here at UUCA.

Note that in policy governance, all programming of the congregation is led by the Executive, who is the leader of all paid staff members. In our system, that means that every committee, team or group in the church has a staff liaison that works with them as a consultant and guide. Therefore, this report is organized the same way. Individual staff members have included reports of each of their teams, committees and programs. Additionally, the Board of Trustees and the Leadership Development Committee have reports in this document.



Lead Minister Rev. Mark Ward

The 2015-16 church year has been a time for catching our breath after our immensely successful Welcome Project, which accomplished the most extensive renovation of our campus since the expansion of our main building in the early 1980s. The results are both stunning and transformative: stunning in how they have brought this campus and its systems into the 21st century with style and grace, and transformative in how they have helped us live into values we have long proclaimed but had a hard time realizing, including:

- Accessibility – The plazas and ramps leading up to our building, raising the Sanctuary floor and adding a lower entrance to the Sanctuary on the same level as Sandburg Hall as well as including an all-gender accessible restroom has created welcoming space for people with all kinds of mobility challenges, affirming our commitment to the inherent worth and dignity of everyone.
- Safety – A significant part of our construction budget went for renovations (many of them behind the scenes) that improved our fire safety, including stronger, more secure interior and exterior doors, low-energy house and performance lighting in the Sanctuary, and our first-ever smoke & fire alarm system.
- Earth-friendly – Even though our project added hardscape to our property, our drainage leads to new rain gardens that will recharge the groundwater, rather than direct rainwater away, where it would contribute to this neighborhood's flooding ills. Also, our new plants are all natives that, once established, will require little care and help model use of those plants for the neighborhood. The areas of lawn that we mow are significantly reduced. The installation of LED lighting across the project reduces electrical use.

Accomplishing this transition was a big lift, and it is already paying off in increased visibility for the congregation across the Asheville area. Our spaces are not only much more open and accessible, but they work for large gatherings of all sorts. How might we leverage the use of this much improved space to accomplish our values? It's a good question for us to consider.

The challenging part of a project like this, of course, is money. Throughout, we were especially grateful for the assistance of UUCA member **Bob Roepnack**, who served as manager of the project and helped us save money wherever we could and keep the work on deadline. But we ran into a perfect storm in the construction business: between the time that we made the estimates for this project and raised our money and began construction, the marketplace exploded with new hotels popping up on every corner downtown it seemed, along with many other projects. The cost of

construction materials went through the roof, as did the cost of construction services.

That, together with some unanticipated extra costs, pushed what started out as a \$750,000 project up to a \$1 million project. Your amazing generosity helped us bridge the lion's share of that, leaving us to propose a relatively small mortgage to cover the remaining gap.

It's been exciting this year to see some of the first tendrils of new ministry emerging now that our building work is done, especially in the areas of Religious Education, Social Justice and Small Group Ministry. In Religious Education, led by **Director of Lifespan Religious Education Joy Berry**, we began with newly revised Youth Programming and ended with an RE Visioning process that will guide us in the continued transformation this coming year into a Family Ministry that serves us all. In Social Justice, an interim steering committee working with **Associate Minister Rev. Lisa Bovee-Kemper** revamped the structure of our Social Justice work, covering many different projects, events and activities. And thanks to the guidance of **Joy McConnell**, our congregation now supports more small groups – covenant groups and theme groups – than at any time in our history – 17.

WORSHIP

As always, a good share of my work was focused on preparing and presenting compelling worship each week. We began with summer worship, which, in addition to our usual lay-led Poetry Service, included guest appearances by Rev. Gordon Gibson, who spoke of his experience with the Civil Rights movement in the South, and the Revs. Kerry Mueller & David Hunter, who spoke to “Not Worshipping the Tea Pot,” as well as a service from me on “How We Mourn,” and from Lisa on “Practicing Trust,” as well as our annual water ceremony.

During the regular worship year we focused once again on themes that also connected with our Small Group Ministry. For “Invitation” in September, Lisa invited us to reflect on the limits of our First Principle in asking, “What About Hitler?” and I opened our fall worship season in our renovated space with our new worship furniture with a service on invitation entitled “Come in, Come in.” My annual forgiveness service centered on lessons from the Pixar movie, *In and Out*, and also saw us welcome the Rev. Dr. William Barber, II, President of the North Carolina NAACP, to our pulpit.

For “Letting Go” in October, I explored some of what we might learn in our struggles over race through Harper Lee's *Go Tell a Watchman*. While I led Sunday morning worship at The Mountain at what I felt was one of our most successful congregational retreats ever, Lisa led the worship theme of “Lamentation.” We also touched on how we approach the virtue of reverence and our faith in the vote.

For “Ancestry” in November, I explored in a two-sermon series how we UUs might discover “A Useable Jesus.” Lisa invited us to consider “A Recipe for Gratitude” and Sally Beth Shore gave us “The View from the Borderlands,” reflecting on a UU Service Committee trip she helped lead to the US-Mexico border.

For “Expectation” in December, we reflected on the life we live “While Making Other Plans” and the “Great Expectations” we bring into the holiday season. Lisa invited us into the Winter Solstice and we finished out our year with two Christmas Eve services, including a “No Rehearsal Christmas Pageant,” and our “Singing out the Old Year and Singing in the New.”

“Resistance” in January brought us a New Year’s ritual and reflections on the meaning of the Flaming Chalice and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as a prophetic figure, and our opportunity to reflect on what it means to grow up.

For “Desire” in February, Celtic Harpist Sue Richards and I collaborated on a service organized around Denise Levertov’s poem, “A Tree Telling of Orpheus.” While I was in Cuba, Lisa was assisted in the pulpit by clergy colleagues and UUCA members **Rev. Sarah York and Rev. DiAnna Ritola.**

For “Liberation” in March, I offered some reflections of learnings from Cuba and explored how we find “Solace in Solitude.” Lisa and I collaborated on a service challenging us to consider the future we wanted for our congregation, and we closed with an Easter view of “Awakening.”

In April for “Creation,” I invited us to consider what “Building a New Way” might look like and members of the Building Your Own Theology class, led by **Jane Bramham and Juliana Austin,** presented stories of their own journeys. Lisa explored the Wesleyan Quadrilateral and Joy Berry and I centered our annual Earth Day service on all the ways we make connections.

May, with “Blessing,” brought us a reflection from Lisa on the life and music of Pete Seeger, our annual Youth service, featuring three of our youth joining the congregation – **Helen Abbot and Isabel and Molly Horak** – and bridging four of our graduating seniors – **Molly Horak, Destin Newfont, Joseph Patterson and Emma Wachowiak.** And we explored how “The Blessed Rage for Justice” can be a positive force and how we might understand “The Third Reconstruction” that Rev. Dr. William Barber, II has proposed. Guest Byron Ballard joined us for a service on how we might bless each other.

MUSIC

We will finish our regular worship year in June, with “Simplicity” as our theme and our annual Music Sunday. Speaking of music, I want to express my deep gratitude to **Interim Music Director Melody McGarrahan** who stepped into a challenging role with grace and good humor. It’s not easy juggling the demands of a large choir and the scheduling of many guest musicians. Melody was organized, creative, compassionate and forbearing. We were lucky to have had her guidance during this time of transition. I’m also thankful for choir member **Ashley Renfro** stepping in to help out as Assistant Choir Director and to accompanist **Ghilman Brock** who balanced UNC-A classes with his duties here to provide a musical foundation for the choir and beautifully crafted music for worship.

This time of transition also put pressure on our Adult Choir, but they stayed with it and stepped up to give us beautiful music. Thanks to choir members **Juli & Shel Altschul, P.J. Brito, Juliana Austin, Ned Cabaniss, Judy Clouse, Mary Cornielsen, Beverly Cutter, Karin Eckert, Mike Ellis, Wendy Fletcher, Colleen Finegan, Beth Gage, Doug Hibshman, Joyce Hooley-Gingrich, Kassie Hughes-Lampros, Richard Kark, Norris Orbach, Laura Palermo, Ashley Renfro, Jeff Robbins, Jacquelyn Schechter, Carol Shultheis, Ann Thompson, Debbie Ward and Suzanne Williams.**

Also, thanks to members of the Music Committee who put in many hours reviewing some 30 applications and doing phone and in-person interviews for nine of those for the Music Director position, resulting in our hiring of **Dr. Leslie Downs**. Music Committee members included **Chair Gwenn Roberts, and members Mike Ellis, Beth Gage, Kassie Hughes-Lampros, Langdon Martin and Jeff Robbins.** Finally, I’m grateful for the talented and creative team of Worship Associates, who not only add so much to our worship experience with their individual voices and reflection but also help with the many logistical details that make worship work. This year’s Worship Associates were **Juliana Austin, James Cassara, Jennifer Gorman, Patricia Morell, Stan Nachman, Virginia Ramig, John Stoffels, Sharon Van Dyke, Bob Wilson, and youth worship associate Destin Newfont.**

EXECUTIVE

My role in our governance designates me both as Lead Minister and Executive. As Executive I am accountable to the Board of Trustees to see that Ends Statements that the Board establishes are achieved. The Board, in turn, derives its Ends Statements from our Mission Statement and feedback that it receives from the congregation. So, the goal of this system is to assure that the work of your staff and lay leaders achieves what you as the congregation want to see happen. Here’s how the Board currently frames its Ends Statements:

Within Each Congregant:

We Seek

- Embrace principles, values and practices which explore the sacred in the world and the mystery of existence.
- Gather together in worship which guides and sustains our individual and communal response to the sacred through multifaceted creative, artistic and musical experiences.

Among the Congregants:

We Care

- Feel welcome and connected with each other.
- Share generously of our personal resources of time, talent, and money.
- Honor and support each other in times of celebration and need.

Beyond the Congregation:

We Work

- Act meaningfully and visibly in community service, advocacy and education.
- Serve as a beacon of liberal religious thought and action.
- Offer our space for events which serve a varied audience and inspire community dialogue.
- Partner with other congregations and organizations in support of shared objectives.

All our ministries seek in one way or another to accomplish these Ends, while at the same time not exceeding the authority that the Board gives us. So, I regularly report to the Board on how what we do achieves those Ends and meets the limitations that they set for us. It's worth noting that as formal as this system sounds, the day-to-day reality is that the Board and I collaborate pretty closely on the direction we are going so that we stay focused on the mission that you, the congregation, ask us to pursue.

In my role, I serve as staff leader, worship director and overall manager, responsible for seeing that the church is running efficiently, effectively and within its budget. But, again, while I accept the responsibility for this work, I rely heavily on key staff to make it happen, particularly **Director of Administration Linda Topp, Associate Minister Rev. Lisa Bovee-Kemper, and Director of Lifespan Religious Education Joy Berry**. They, in turn, rely heavily on other staff and lay leaders to accomplish their work. It very much takes a village to make this place go.

I have to say, though, that this was a year where that village was tested. The initial testing came with the Welcome Project. As exciting as it was to see the project take shape, the construction activity did a lot to disrupt our schedules – first, navigating

the campus was a challenge as one area after another was torn up, and then we had to adjust our plans depending on what was being done to the building.

STAFFING/BUDGETING

The next testing came in developing the 2015-16 budget. Feedback early in the Annual Budget Drive process made it clear that financial commitments would be down in the coming year. Linda and I reviewed our options and concluded the shortfall was significant enough that we would have to explore personnel cuts. We had known for some years that our full-time position of Communications Specialist was a bit of a luxury. Few congregations devote anywhere near the resources that we did on such a position. But we also believed that growing our communication capability, especially in cyberspace, was key to the growth and vitality of this congregation. Also, the high level at which **Jules Smith** performed led us to try in any way we could to protect the position. The problem though, was that there was no fat in the budget, no staff member who was not performing crucial functions. We were reduced to a kind of triage, and that put the Communications Specialist on the chopping block.

It will be a challenge in the coming year to adjust to the reduction in our staffing in this area. Some of Jules' essential duties will be taken up by other staff, but the change means, among other things, that lay leaders who wish to produce brochures or posters will have to create them on their own. We won't have staff time to do it. We are determined to devote staff communications work to our electronic media, especially our web site. We also look forward to working with a new Social Media Team to find ways to expand our presence on line.

Other staff hours will be reduced in 2016-17, too, with **Director of Administration Linda Topp's** hours cut from 40 to 30 hours per week, and our new **Bookkeeper, Becky Donald**, working 20 hours per week, fewer hours than **Financial Accounts Manager Christine Magnarella Ray** worked before leaving for Colorado. We plan to fill the other position that Christine filled – a 15-hour Connections Coordinator – this summer. Also, hours for **Lifespan Religious Education Coordinator Kim Collins** were reduced from 35 to 25 hours per week. All of this is a way of saying that we will be running very lean in the coming year and will be looking for help on key projects. So, please say "Yes" when the call goes out for volunteers.

CONNECTING

Amid these cutbacks one area where we have grown this year is in the attention we have given to helping our members get better connected to the congregation. We are blessed with living in a progressive city where Unitarian Universalism has a strong

appeal, and so we bring in many visitors and newcomers seeking to join our congregation. But the problem in the past for many people was that in this large congregation, once they joined they found it difficult to make connections that made them want to stay, and so in recent years we lost about as many members as we gained.

This year we implemented several initiatives to change that. We began at the level when most people enter our community, on Sunday morning. Teams of people were assigned on Sunday mornings to keep their eyes out for newcomers and engage them in conversation, so they are sure to have met up with at least one friendly face. Then in the newcomers class (Beginning Point) we recruited members to serve as Connectors to follow up with newcomers and talk with them about getting involved during their first year of membership. Finally, we created another team of Connectors to check in with people who've been members or friends for three years to make sure that they are finding their way.

To help members at all levels understand what high-commitment membership looks like, staff created the Luminary Program. The program is premised on the idea that the best way of assuring that we accomplish our mission is by helping members participate fully in the life of the congregation. So, we identified five areas that we felt were central to the life of the congregation – Attending Worship, Spiritual Deepening, Living Our Faith, Serving Our Congregation and Fair Share Giving – and we asked members to look for ways to participate in each one. We allotted a certain number of points to different activities, based largely on the time commitments involved, and announced that members who had accumulated at least 170 points by June 1 would be recognized as Luminaries. We look forward to recognizing those people at our annual meeting. We are gratified to learn that other congregations, having learned about this program, are considering starting a similar program of their own.

We remember, of course, that the point of all this is not the points, but to invite our members into all dimensions of participation here that we believe will contribute to their own spiritual growth; help them live the values that are core in their lives; and invite them into lives of compassion, integrity, service and joy.

PASSAGES

Finally, I take note of Members and Friends of UUCA that we have lost since July 1, 2015: **Ruth Beard, Dick Harger, Ann MacPherson, Judith Moore, Marilyn Morris, Karl Quisenberry, Evelyn Smith and Ann Upton**. We remember them as friends, inspirations, fellow travelers who gave much to this community, good people who will be missed and who we are proud to hold in loving memory.



Associate Minister Rev. Lisa Bovee-Kemper

Rev. Lisa Bovee-Kemper has selected May-July of 2016 for an earned sabbatical leave. During her absence, many volunteers have stepped in to help keep the many programs that fall under Lisa's watchful eye running along.

CONGREGATIONAL CARE

by Jill Preyer, Interim Leader

This year we wrote a Congregational Care Policy which describes the roles and functions of the Congregational Care Team. The policy clarifies roles and responsibilities for congregants in crisis. The roles and responsibilities of the Pastoral Visitors involve care which may be brief or long term depending on the circumstance. The Pastoral Visitors wrote a covenant which was revised in October of 2015.

There has been a concerted effort to train members of our congregation in the education and completion of Advance Directives both in our UUCA community and the wider community. Members of our trained group have done educational presentations locally at Mission, MAHEC, and social and community groups in Buncombe and western counties. In September Lisa held a training event for local clergy encouraging them to train their own congregants to complete Advance Directives.

In April there was a service for Infant Loss and Remembrance.

Fiber Friends have been active making and distributing numerous blankets, prayer shawls, lap robes and new baby items which are gratefully received.

Pastoral Visitors actively visit many congregants in their homes, long-term care facilities or over lunch or coffee as the situation permits. We struggle with how to remain connected with the many frail or older members who are no longer able to get to UUCA.

MEMBERSHIP

by Christine Magnarella Ray, Connections Coordinator

Although volunteers seem eternally difficult to recruit to the Sunday Welcome Team, **Michael Vavrek**, with assistance from **Janice May** and MY INFO, have been doing a great job in creating a process by which each Sunday's teams are filled. If the team is not filled by Sunday morning, the volunteers themselves recruit other

members to fill in the spots. The Sunday Welcome Team was trained shortly after the Welcome Project's completion to go over changes affected by the new addition.

We completed three cycles of membership classes in the fall, winter and spring. A total of 48 members and friends joined the congregation. **Linda Bair** continued to head up the food/hospitality team for the classes, **Paula Massey** provided support during the classes, and **Gene Lambirth** ran the New Member stewardship program.

Our New Member connecting process continues to expand. **Christine Magnarella Ray's** hours as Connections Coordinator increased from 5 to 15 per week, which allowed us to launch two new programs. The New Member Connector Program kicked off with the fall class of new members and friends. Each new member/friend is matched with a New Member Connector to help them navigate and find their place at UUCA during their first year of membership. A total of 14 existing members are connectors to all of the 2015-16 new members and friends, touching base with them at least four times during their first year, ending with a "class reunion" event.

Connecting Stewards began their work this year with the leadership of Bob and Eleanor Lane. Connecting Stewards met with people in their 1-3 year stage of membership to check in and see if/how they could help these members become more connected. By the end of 2015-16, nine connecting stewards will have met with 50 members in their first to third year of membership.

Over the summer after Christine's departure and during Rev. Lisa Bovee-Kemper's sabbatical, key volunteers from the Sunday Welcome Team, the New Member Connectors, Connecting Stewards, membership classes and Welcome Team office volunteers are forming a committee to ensure that the important work of welcoming visitors and supporting newer members continues.

SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

by Joy McConnell, Coordinator

Our Vision: A congregation in which every newcomer or member has an opportunity to make friends in a small group setting, to share our spiritual/life journeys with each other as we explore our worship themes and other important topics chosen by group members

At the end of the 2014-15 year, there were seven covenant groups and four theme groups.

As we moved into the 2015-16 year, one covenant group and two theme groups disbanded. We recruited heavily and, during the fall semester, we had six covenant groups and two theme groups. Nora Carpenter was motivated by her own

wonderful experience with her young parents' covenant group to start more groups for parents. She recruited facilitators and group members and, as of April, we launched three new parents' groups — one for parents of teenagers and two for parents of younger children. A group for foster and adoptive parents is also being planned with trained facilitators already in place. This spring we are also starting two new theme groups with another in formation. Right now we have nine covenant groups and four theme groups functioning well and are preparing for two more covenant groups and one theme group. We are currently serving 128 members and newcomers.

I facilitate both a covenant group and a theme group and would like to thank the other facilitators for their commitment: **Louise Anderson, Joyce Birkenholz, Nancy Bragg, Rebecca Bringle, Nora Carpenter, Geoffrey Habron, Sarah Hartnett, Bill Kleiber, Gay Lambirth, James Love, Paula Massey, Anna Olsen, Zaneta Summers.** We would love to expand the circle of facilitators so that we will be able to start new covenant groups and theme groups in the fall.

Four UUCA members attended a regional Small Group Ministry Institute in Knoxville the first weekend in April and returned with deeper understanding of the principles and practice of Small Group Ministry and with a wealth of materials for training and deepening of our practice.

EARTH AND SOCIAL JUSTICE MINISTRY

by Gay Lambirth, Interim Core Team Member

Other Interim Core Team members: Tom Blanford, Cecilia Rawlins, Jim Lee

The Earth and Social Justice Ministry is where we organize our justice work and support one another as we strive to live our values. This year the Earth and Social Justice Ministry took time to reflect and study ways in which we can move our justice work forward within the congregation. A Doing Democracy Study Group met during November and December. At the end of the study group a temporary Core Team (listed above) was selected from participants to take the ideas gleaned from the study group to develop a proposal to present to the larger Earth and Social Justice Ministry. In January approximately forty people attended a meeting at which the Core Team presented their observations and recommendations. The group voted to transition the Core Team to an Interim Steering Committee to serve until a permanent Steering Committee is in place in June. Task Forces were formed at the meeting in the following areas: Communications, Education, Open Space. In April a quarterly Earth and Social Justice Ministry meeting resulted in new energy and a few new ideas for the Core Team to explore.

ROOM IN THE INN

by Paula Massey, Coordinator

Other Coordinators: Martha Shepard, Janice DZierra, Allison Jordon

Room In The Inn (RITI) is the collaborative social justice project between UUCA and Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church (GCPC), providing shelter and food for up to 12 homeless women as selected by AHOPE under the interfaith initiative of the Asheville faith community. Four times a year, for a total of four weeks, we provide over 50 volunteers to serve as overnight hosts, make and serve four dinners and seven lunches, which in turn is matched with the 50 volunteers each of those four weeks from Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church. We are fortunate to utilize the large basement area of GCPC as the women's sleeping area. We welcome young families to participate in this social justice project.

PEACEMAKING POTLUCK

Bruce Larson, Coordinator

The Peacemaking Potluck meets on the second Wednesday of every month in Sandburg Hall “To explore peace and the way of peace so that we might practice and promote peace in all of our relations.” Its members are those who gather.

The activities of the Potluck vary from month to month. We gather from 6:00 to 6:15 pm, potluck from 6:15 to 6:45, and transition from 6:45 to 7:00. Activities take place from 7:00 to 8:15-ish, after which we tidy up. Information about the Potluck is communicated through UUCA’s *Weekly eNews* and a monthly email, “The Month Begins,” using a distribution list. The distribution list has 47 addresses and is maintained continuously.

During the 12 months covered by this report, the Potluck:

- Viewed and discussed “The Great Peace March.” May.
- Read and discussed *The Art of Forgiveness, Lovingkindness, and Peace*, by Jack Kornfield. June, July, August, and September.
- Did not meet. October.
- Viewed the 2015 Ware Lecture of the UUA given by Cornel West. November.
- Shared the annual “Stories of Peace.” December.
- Viewed the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize ceremonies recognizing The National Dialogue Quartet of Tunisia. January.
- Viewed the 2013 Ware Lecture of the UUA given by Eboo Patel. February.
- Read and discussed *Acts of Faith*, by Eboo Patel. March and April.

43 *distinct* people (not double-counted) participated in the activities of the Potluck during the 12 months covered by this report. Average attendance was ten. Both

the number of distinct participants and average attendance increased meaningfully in comparison to the previous year.

During the upcoming year there are three areas, in addition to annual events, that seem likely to take place: (1) read and discuss a peace-related book; (2) align more intentionally with the Earth and Social Justice Ministry of our Congregation; and (3) create a more sonically accessible environment for participants.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE FILMS

Charlie Wussow, Coordinator

Attendance for 2015-2016 was similar to the previous year, approximately 35-45 people per film. The email list has grown to approximately 250 people.

Screening license fees were similar to last year, but we have managed to negotiate a 50% discount with two of the main distributors we use. Also, we managed to receive free licenses for a few films from filmmakers and distributors that are “activist-focused.” Donations are covering approximately half of license fees.

We did not see films during the summer months because of the building construction. We added a matinee in February and March due to people not attending in winter months because of weather and darkness. Eight people attended the matinees, and we may do matinees next winter.

2015-2016 Films:

9/17 - *Poverty, Inc.*

10/15 - *When I Came Home: An Iraq Veteran's Struggle For Survival After Returning From The War*

11/13 - *Our Daily Dose* and *Gaswork: The Fight For CJ's Law*

12/15 - *Ferguson: A Report From Occupied Territory*

1/15 - *Cowspiracy*

2/12 - *E-Team*, 2 PM and 7 PM

3/11 - *Dream On*, 2 PM and 7 PM

4/8 - *Making A Killing: Guns, Greed, and the NRA*

5/13 - *PlantPure Nation*

6/10 - *Call of Life: Facing the Mass Extinction*

SOULS TO THE POLLS

by Ruth Christie, UUCA Ambassador

Barbara Brownsmith Campbell and **Ruth Christie** served as UUCA Ambassadors to the “Souls to the Polls” non-partisan, get-out-the-vote effort spearheaded by the NC NAACP and Democracy NC. UUCA members and friends volunteered to go to nursing homes to help residents update their voter registration

and request absentee ballots for the March primary; canvass neighborhoods to register voters and explain the “declaration of reasonable impediment” to anyone unable to obtain the required photo ID; engage in phone banking to remind registered voters of early voting; march in the Asheville Moral March to the Polls; offer rides to the polls; and serve as poll monitors on Primary Day.

We expect to be activated prior to the June 7th second primary that will have contested races in the 10th & 11th Congressional Districts and a 4-way race for NC Supreme Court Justice. Again, we’ll be seeking many volunteers for this non-partisan, get-out-the-vote effort prior to the general election in the fall.

COMMUNITY PLATE

by Linda Kooiker, Chair

Community Plate Team: Eleanor Lane, Brenda Robinson, Donna Robinson, Laurie Powell, Ben Fleming

The goal of the Community Plate program is to reach out into our community with both financial and volunteer support to leverage the changes we hope to see.

As we did last year (when the program was named “Share-the-Plate,” all cash and designated checks collected each Sunday were distributed to agencies in the local area whose work reflects UU principles. Over our 2015-16 fiscal year, we funded Building Bridges, Mel Hetland Scholarship/AVID program, MANNA FoodBank, Pisgah Legal, Asheville City Schools MotherRead, Asheville Greenworks, Bee City, The Mountain, UUCA Scholarship Fund, and UUCA’s Ministers Discretionary Fund. The average amount each organization received because of the generosity of our congregation and visitors was \$3,000.

The Community Plate team joined with Ben Fleming to organize The Alternative Gift Fair which was held in December. Congregants were able to donate money to various organizations. In return, they received a card to present to a family member or friend which acknowledged this gift. We plan to offer this opportunity to the congregation again this holiday season.

In 2015, our December giving went to the minister’s fund for UUCA members who needed a holiday gift. Groups sponsored by the Women’s Connections also received funding. Gift cards were presented to Women at Risk and gifts provided for their children.

During 2016-17, the team will be working with various nominated organizations so that we can continue to have an impact in our community.

UNITED TO RESTORE DEMOCRACY

by Lew Patrie, Coordinator

Our congregation's Earth and Social Justice Ministry's affiliate "Move to Amend of Buncombe County" has changed its name to "United to Restore Democracy" during the past year to better convey our message to those who need to learn of the great importance of our goals. We continue to meet monthly with a cadre of loyal and new members.

Together with other allied groups in Western N. C. and Charlotte we are preparing a resolution for submission to the N. C. legislature at an appropriate time, seeking a referendum to be offered to our state's electorate, stressing that entities such as corporations do not have constitutional rights and money is not free speech. We meet second or 3third Mondays at 7 PM, currently at the North Asheville Library.



John Bates

President of the Board of Trustees

At the end of the last church year, the Board updated and the Congregation adopted a revised set of Ends statements. In our policy governance, the Ends serve as a strategic plan for the goals of the Congregation in three theme areas; within, among, and beyond. The Executive, Lead Minister Rev. Mark Ward, and our professional staff formulate programs and services to help the Congregation achieve these Ends. The Board regularly reviews progress and spent time this year in attempting to better quantify progress. It began to do this by using the UUA guide, *Fulfilling the Call: A Model for Unitarian Universalist Ministry in the 21st Century*. Using this approach has helped clarify reporting of the Executive to the Board and improved communication throughout the year.

Of course, the summer and fall were dominated by activities surrounding the Welcome Project. Asheville's hotel building boom caused an increase in the cost of construction and the Congregation responded by committing to the entire project. This culminated in a congregational meeting in April to approve a mortgage resolution, which passed by a vote of 145 yes and 4 no votes. The Board was continuously updated on progress of the Welcome Project and conducted reviews of the mortgage loan and other documents. The Board also, unfortunately, had to react to the repeated flooding of the basement at 23 Edwin, including working with members who met with city officials to push for mitigation of the neighborhood flooding issues.

The Board was pleased at the new initiatives this year. The Luminary Program has been successful in better informing and connecting members with the wide variety of offerings and ways to get involved with UUCA. Director of Lifespan Religious Education Joy Berry continues to implement a lifelong religious education program that has gained recognition by the UUA as a model to be emulated. Associate Minister Rev. Lisa Bovee-Kemper has worked with the Associate Minister Mentoring Committee and helped rebuild the Earth and Social Justice Ministry (facilitated with **Tom Blanford**), helped redesign the welcoming of newcomers, and has achieved Final Fellowship with the UUA. The Board continues to evolve a deep and trusting relationship with Lead Minister and Executive Rev. Mark Ward as we approach the challenges and opportunities of serving our Congregation.



Gay Lambirth

Chair, Leadership Development Committee

Leadership Development Committee: Michael Vavrek, Kristi Miller, Kelly Riedesel, and Youth Affiliate Member Caroline Casteel.

The Leadership Development Committee (LDC) is a congregational committee that is charged with identifying, cultivating and developing leaders for the congregation. This year the LDC moved beyond just identifying candidates for congregational offices and began working on ways to identify and develop leaders within the congregation.

The Leadership Development Committee

- Consulted with Board Leadership and the Executive
- Sponsored a Leadership Workshop, *How is Congregational Leadership Different from Other Leadership*
- Made plans to host additional workshops
- Identified topics and resources for future leadership activities
- Identified presenters to assist with leadership training



Director of Lifespan Religious Education Joy Berry

Lifespan Religious Education Committee: not in place this year

Lifespan Religious Education staff: Jen Johnson (RE Assistant, 15 hrs/wk), Kim Collins (LRE Coordinator, 35 hrs/week, reducing to 25 for 2016-17), Joy Berry (DLRE, full time).

STATISTICS

- Approximately 200 registered or regularly attending children/youth.
- Average attendance was 88 (92 last year) in Sunday RE program.
- 14 total groupings/classes this year on Sunday morning for children and youth.
- 28 teachers need to be present on Sunday morning. (We need 4 person teams to be able to rotate, so 56 are needed to be fully recruited for this year's program.)
- 10% of K-3 teachers and 28% of 4th-12th grade teachers were non-parents.
- Seven classes offered for adults. 79 total registrants for adult RE classes.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

WITHIN AND AMONG CONGREGANTS

- Complete overhaul of youth ministry to reflect best practices shared by the UUA after over a decade of surveys and data gathering/analysis. An integrated approach meant to make bridging a three-year process rather than a single rite of passage at the end of the senior year, helping youth share leadership and engage with the different elements of our congregational life during their time in YRUU (high school youth group). We created a monthly schedule that intentionally fostered experiences within, among, and beyond for youth at UUCA. One Sunday for worship, including a way to reflect our goal for youth to have a relationship with both ministers via talkback sessions and intentional in-class interactions. One Sunday for social justice education, planning, action and reflection. One Sunday for a small group ministry approach to covenantal conversations. And one Sunday for the youth to work in the kitchen to prepare and enjoy a meal together in Sandburg Hall while in the mix of congregants and staff present there at 11:15.
- Visioning process led by Rev. Mark Ward and DLRE Joy Berry created time and space to collaborate with the congregation on our present and future RE approach. We hoped to communicate and explore the idea that religious education programming, as we have known it, is just one part of "faith development," which we consider to be the larger, core ministry of the congregation. A key goal was to "pivot" to an integrated ministry of faith

development wherein multiple generations are engaged in learning and teaching, moving away from a model wherein parents are mostly expected to teach RE classes, non-parent adults are an anomaly in the classroom, and children and youth are seen as the only learners (and as learners only). We spent four Saturday evenings between March and mid-May exploring what that could look like, and made changes to our fall lineup accordingly. For Fall 2016, an all-ages program of activities and classes will be offered at 9:15, and activity groups and committees have been asked to consider how faith development could be a key part of their goals for the year--planning intentional multigenerational events and collaborating with RE staff to create learning opportunities on Sunday mornings, inviting children and youth into a greater understanding and relationship with the other parts of UUCA congregational life. Attendance at the four sessions was 40, 31, 44 and 50, for a grand total of 163.

- Parents as Primary Sexuality Educators was a class offered to all parents this year for the first time at 9:15, in Spring 2016. It was a huge success, building relationships between the participants so strong that they immediately converted to a parent covenant group at the end of the sessions. They also built awareness, comfort, and skills needed to support their children and youth in sexuality education outside of church.

WITHIN THE CONGREGANTS

- Adult Religious Education (see full description further in this document).
- K-3rd grade Spirit Play (SP) program continued, with tweaks to have volunteers form teams rather than engage in “one-off” help as we tried last year. K-3rd grade (K-5 at 9:15) enjoyed stories from many traditions including UUism, deepening their religious understanding, then choosing their own activity (to engage more fully and individually with the story) from among six activities: Contemplation, Drama/Music/Movement, and Art were the center choices last year. We added Makerspace to share the Art room, bringing our summer philosophy and approach to the regular RE year. We were able to add the Nature Classroom when our rental, the Friends of Mine Preschool, moved out of RE 6, leaving us with a space with a door out to the playground and garden. Finally, we added the Storytelling Center as a Spirit Play choice mid-year, with the understanding that we had lost one classic part of Spirit Play, allowing children to work with the story they just heard.
- Successful 4th-12th grade classes
 - 4th/5th grade: offered 2 classes in comprehensive sexuality education (9:15) and UU identity (11:15).
 - 6th and 7th grade classes considered the big questions in life from a UU perspective, with a pop culture lens via supplemental curricula that helps them consider their faith in light of the wider world middle schoolers are beginning to inhabit.

- 8th/9th grade class learned about other religions in our community and beyond in the Building Bridges class.
- YRUU (10th-12th grade) worshipped together once per month and were challenged to unpack their own unexamined biases/privilege.
- Due to a small 9th grade class, the Coming of Age curriculum was not offered. It will resume next year with a combined 9th/10th grade class.
- Five multi-age worships were planned and implemented including: Water Communion, Day of the Dead, Christmas Eve, Earth Day, and Youth Sunday. These worship services provided an opportunity for parents to share their faith practice with children and youth, including the rituals and traditions of this community and UUism.

AMONG THE CONGREGANTS (RELATING TO ONE ANOTHER):

- During the Summer Makerspace Sundays, various adults from the congregation offered talks, activities and presence to the children, activities we believe also serve adults in their own faith development as they learn while leading.
- Four high school seniors were presented with graduation gifts and recognition by the congregation in a Bridging Ceremony on May 8th.
- Youth Worship on May 8 was a powerful event. Youth planned and created worship with Rev. Ward and DLRE Joy Berry over the course of the last six weeks of classes in YRUU. This service helped the youth feel greater connection to each other and the adult staff leading them, and helped the congregation know them better, building a sense that our youth are capable, valuable parts of our congregation.
- We increased the number of high school, junior high and elementary students attending Mountain Cons in the fall and spring, strengthening UU identity via inter-congregational connections.
- Parents were invited to a class led by Rev. Ward and DLRE Joy Berry, supporting parenting from a UU perspective. 6-8 participants attended and the class was very well-received.
- Time for All Ages, offered once a month during Sunday worship, continued. Joy Berry continued her use of the Wonder Box, telling stories crafted and told so that young children and elders could all enjoy a multigenerational moment together. We framed the value of this event in the life of the congregation like this: *Time for All Ages (TFAA) is a special time of shared worship for the whole congregation. On the first Sunday of most months, children, youth, teachers, families, and the rest of the congregation gather in the Sanctuary as a faith community to share our songs, stories, and rituals. This usually includes the Wonder Box, a story with “layered” meanings for both children and adults. After about 20 minutes, the teachers, children and youth are sung out to their classes. Bringing children, even babies and preschoolers, into the Sanctuary is a gift to*

them and a blessing to the congregation, though nursery care is available at this time.

BEYOND THE CONGREGATION (HOW OUR PARTICIPATION INFLUENCES THE WAY WE WORK IN THE WORLD)

- The Our Whole Lives (OWL) class for 4th-5th grade was offered, with about ten attending. We know that our kids' own lives are enriched by comprehensive sexuality education, but I firmly believe that what they learn in this class will make a difference in the world. The focus on respect, non-exploitation, trust, and healthy choices is one way we encourage and support our young people to “be the change we want to see” in their interpersonal relationships, generally outside the congregation, especially as they become physically and emotionally involved with others in ways that have the capacity to help or harm.
- Makerspace Summer Program in the summer of 2015 combined design thinking with theology to create a slate of classes that helped children in K-6th plan, build, and “make” together. From furniture assembly for RE classrooms, to work on a Little Free Library for the church campus, to the creation and maintenance of the Children’s Garden, to sewing pillow covers for the Nature classroom, to making and deploying stomp rockets, our overall goal was to help kids consider big problems, give them appropriate tools and support, and let them do real work. A key lens was understanding how craftsmanship, like faith, requires us to choose the right tools and engage whole-heartedly in our efforts to create together what we dream of. The program was a success and will be continued this summer. Our work was lifted up by the UUA as an example of an innovative RE approach.
- The social justice component for YRUU (10th-12th grade) included a spring semester devoted to the UUA anti-racist and anti-oppression curricula, *Beloved Conversations* and *Be the Change*, meant to help youth explore racial justice and take their learning back into their day-to-day lives, becoming advocates and change agents in the current climate of discrimination and systemic racism.

CHALLENGES

PARENTS AS TEACHERS, CHILDREN/YOUTH AS STUDENTS.

This is our congregational culture but it misses the need of parents and other adults to learn, and the value of children and youth teaching, as well as the value of multigenerational classes. Silos are well-established, separating children’s religious education and congregational life. Non-RE parents rarely join us. What can we expect from parents ten years from now who spend all their time in RE teaching (not worship, classes as learners, committees, or activity groups)? Is this a sustainable model? Are parents being sufficiently prepared for leadership? RE-Visioning attempted to re-orient us to a more integrated approach, beginning in the fall.

RE AS TRANSACTIONAL EXPERIENCE.

We give “education,” like a product, to children and youth. We are done giving it to them when religious education “ends” after 12th grade. Within the congregation there is no conversation about how much we have to learn from each other, for our whole lives. Additionally, there is no real understanding of the difference between faith development (happening everywhere, all the time, in church, whether we recognize it or not, and throughout our lives) and religious education (age-divided classroom instruction).

NO RE COMMITTEE.

This was a serious challenge. I plan to recruit this summer for an interim faith development steering committee, to help implement some of the learnings from the RE-Visioning process. Their last order of business will be to stay on or replace themselves, so that a standing committee exists for 2016-17.

“Taking It Home” Resources as a New Approach for Family Faith Support

by Jen Johnson and Joy Berry

This year we began providing resources for full-week family faith support. We believe parents are more likely to be more engaged/committed to church if they received regular, curated content that connects them more fully to their child/youth’s experience at church. Why? Because even with perfect attendance, 52 hours/year is not much if our goal is to help children and youth truly understand what Unitarian Universalism is and how it relates to their lives. As children grow and develop and as families are faced with new joys and challenges in the world, Joy and the RE staff have prioritized creating, finding and sharing these resources for families to further their connection and commitment to Unitarian Universalism and UUCA.

- Parents need regular faith development in structured settings. Two classes this year helped support them in this way. UU Parenting was led by Rev, Mark Ward and DLRE Joy Berry. The four-session class had eight registrants and attendance was good.
- Each week in our "This Sunday in Religious Education" section, we include a description of what the younger children will be doing in Chalice Children (PreK) and Spirit Play (K-3rd/5th). This includes a description of the lesson in Chalice Children and an overview of the Spirit Play story for that week, including a link to the story and wondering questions. (Example here: <https://t.e2ma.net/webview/w5yep/f89317e443d9f293649c72cfb4861d33>)
- We publish a "Taking It Home" section in the *RE Family eNews*. To give families a chance to revisit the story and lesson from that week, we include an article about "Last week in Spirit Play" with the link to the story and

description, plus wondering questions to consider together, thus furthering the learning and absorption of what our faith is about - for both kids AND the caregivers and whole family (if older kids or other family members are getting in on discussions, too). Parents have told us how they appreciate getting these snapshots and talking points to be able to guide a conversation with their children about what they did at church on Sunday. (See example here: <https://t.e2ma.net/webview/w5yep/f89317e443d9f293649c72cfb4861d33>.)

- A second article we publish weekly in "Taking it Home" is typically drawn from resources from the UUA- or UU-affiliated organizations/publications. Often timely (news-related topics like gender issues or national tragedy); holiday or seasonally related (UU advent calendar, Women's History Month); or general parenting issues for younger and older kids (money, humor, rituals), we try to include a few resources - books, online publications, images, etc. for parents to easily identify and bring home (or in the car, or on a walk...) - to further faith development and values that UU families wish to espouse and promote. (See topics and some language below.) Examples here: <https://t.e2ma.net/webview/wd58m/001666bed536a8e427309ec0fb3022dc> and here: <https://t.e2ma.net/webview/w17in/e0078c1dc284cc9c30ccd960674d2c9c>
- To give families and the congregation a look at what is happening outside the Sanctuary on Sunday mornings, we have included a snapshot of our RE classes and centers throughout the year in the *RE Family eNews*. Both families of children IN the class appreciate hearing a little more as do those looking forward to what is ahead for their younger children in future years. Examples here: <https://t.e2ma.net/webview/wx8so/0559a2833dfe77e96e3778688a7aae16>
<https://t.e2ma.net/webview/of5vn/a3beea6090ce62308c663b2c8c363a76>

“TAKING IT HOME” TOPICS WE COVERED THIS YEAR:

11/11 Weave a Tapestry of Faith FALL 2015
11/18 When Bad Things Happen – resources after Paris attacks
11/25 older – Blue Boat Unicorns (Do Unitarian Universalists believe anything?)
12/2 UU Advent Calendar
12/9 Talk About It – When Tragic Things Happen (following shooting, San Bernardino)
12/16 Religious (In)tolerance -- Islam from Joy – 30 Days lesson
12/23 What to do during holiday break... *WNC Parent* and “from the DLRE – Full-Week Faith”
12/30 Winter 2015 Weave a Tapestry of Faith: Money Talks and Full-Week Faith again
1/6 Engaging Youth (youth survey), Blue Boat blog <http://blueboat.blogs.uua.org/>
1/13 Starting Over - *UU World* Parenting blog (parenting better):
<https://www.uuworld.org/articles/starting-over>
1/20 UUA/Tapestry of Faith Resources for all

1/27 Brave Love and Universal Justice: http://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/uu-winter14.mech_uu-fall14.pdf

2/3 From the DLRE - Can we Grow Up
<https://staffpresidentreflections.wordpress.com/2016/01/28/joy-berry-can-we-grow-up-without-forgetting-the-lessons-of-childhood/>

2/10 – Lent calendar (words) #UULent

2/17 – Lent again

2/24 – Joy’s staff blog: visioning for the future... family ministry
<https://staffpresidentreflections.wordpress.com/2016/02/18/joy-berry-visioning-the-future-of-religious-education-and-family-ministry/>

3/2 Women’s History Month on UUA.org:
<http://www.uua.org/news/pressroom/stories/celebrating-uu-women-history>

3/9 Adolescent brains and faith formation:
<http://blueboat.blogs.uua.org/2016/02/24/adolescent-brain-development-and-faith-formation/>

3/16 Newest Tapestry of Faith - humor): http://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/2016_spring_families_all4.pdf

3/23 Spring break – lots of links

3/30 Repeat spring Break... still - with some tweaks AND RE library

4/6 Ritual (Meg Cox author resources -The Book of New Family Traditions
http://megcox.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Bk_of_New_Fam_Traditions_12-15.pdf <http://megcox.com/the-book-of-new-family-traditions-how-to-create-great-rituals-for-holidays-everyday/> http://megcox.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/You_Are_What_You_Celebrate.pdf -

4/13 (trans)gender (genderbread image and website, UUA resources and more, *It’s Perfectly Normal*)

4/20 repeat with additional resources

4/27 Earth Day

5/4 Animals – Pets (Tapestry of Faith Spring 2012) Animals – pets, Weave a Tapestry of Faith: Animals and Us: Companionship, Caring, and Compassion
http://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/documents/uuworld/families/12_spring.pdf

ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

by Kim Collins and Joy Berry

Our goal for Adult RE this year was to offer a slate of classes based on pillars or basic themes. Joy used UUA suggestions for what UU adults ought to know and be engaging with as she and Rev. Mark Ward agreed on the pillars that best fit our goals for excellence in Adult RE at UUCA:

- UU History
- UU Identity
- Social Justice

Many Faiths
Spirit in Practice
Living a Principled Life
Leadership Development

Some of the classes that we offered were from a wishlist that LRE staff put together, while some were brought to us as proposals by congregants. We definitely saw a benefit to our shared clarity about pillars as the lens for our consideration of classes: like mission, this “container” provided a way to orient or re-orient proposals that were not particularly spiritual or faith development in nature. It helped potential teachers and students, we hope, understand that what we offer should be different than what a congregant could attend at the local YWCA or through the Sierra Club.

While we were not able to offer classes linked to all the pillars, as we had hoped, the classes and discussion groups that were offered covered almost all of the areas listed above. One thing to note is that classes offered outside RE, to new members and via Leadership Development Committee, included content closely linked to UU History and Leadership Development, which were the only two pillars we did not offer a class for in Adult RE.

Attendance was good. Classes routinely filled up before the deadline to register. Unlike the previous year, when some classes did not attract much interest and had to be cancelled, we had only one class, on Jesus, that had to be cancelled due to no participants registering. Another class, Doing Democracy, had full registration before we made the decision in concert with Rev. Lisa Bovee-Kemper to move it to a study group in the Social Justice area, out of Adult RE.

We had some challenges this year, including that we were not able to curate and offer as many online classes and content as we had hoped to. We plan to continue to work towards this goal as we move forward into next year. We feel it’s important to offer congregants easy access to classes and groups that they can do from home, on their own time. It can be particularly challenging for families with young children to make it to church for a class during the week. By offering them vetted resources, we can make it easier on our congregants to practice full-week faith. We also wanted to offer more multigenerational opportunities. RE-Visioning has had us move in a slightly different direction than simply adding these into the normal times Adult RE was offered.

A key goal that arose from the RE-Visioning process this spring was to find a way to create learning opportunities for all ages on Sunday morning. Elders, parents, and young people alike consistently shared their desire to learn and grow in faith on Sunday mornings, in separate age groups and together. We created a pilot class for Parents as Sexuality Educators at 9:15 and it was extremely popular, spinning off

into a Parent Covenant Group that will continue at 9:15 (see more details in the OWL section of this report). We currently have a plan in place to offer several different multigenerational opportunities at 9:15 on Sundays beginning in the fall, pending full recruitment, including the Miracles (Tapestry of Faith) class, as well as all-ages choices for worship, yoga class, contemplation, social justice, and hymn sing.

2015-16 UUCA ADULT RE SLATE OF CLASSES

Many Faiths

Buddhist Voices in Unitarian Universalism

9/29/15 - 12/8/15

Facilitator: Jim Steffe

10 Registrants

Description:

Buddhism strongly informs the spiritual life of many Unitarian Universalists. In a recently published book (*Buddhist Voices in Unitarian Universalism*. 2013. Wayne Arnason and Sam Trumbore (editors). Skinner House Books, Boston. 234pp.), seventeen prominent UU Buddhists share their insights on the synergistic, and challenging, interaction of these two traditions. The purpose of this seminar was to learn more about the history and practice of Buddhism, and explore how that faith tradition may enrich our own UU journey.

Spirit in Practice

Yoga for Children and Parents (Multigenerational)

10/5/15 - 10/26/15

Facilitators: Nora Carpenter & Laura Hansen

10 Registrants

Description:

This class introduced 3- to 6-year-old children (and their parents, if they chose to attend) to yoga moves as well as breathing and relaxation techniques. Animal poses with sounds, yoga games, partner yoga and stories were used to make the experience age-appropriate.

Living a Principled Life

Growing in Faith: Unitarian Universalist Parenting

10/14/15 - 11/18/15

Facilitators: Joy Berry & Mark Ward

9 Registrants

Description:

Our faith calls us to live in covenant, showing respect, compassion, and a commitment to the democratic process as we support our children's emotional, physical, and spiritual development. Some days that seems like an impossible dream, as we hold fast to the raggedy edge of grace and just try not to yell at them

on the way to church. Balancing the needs of a family while trying to reflect “seven principles parenting” is not for the weak of heart!
In this four-session class, Rev. Mark Ward (father of three adult children) and DLRE Joy Berry (mother of three from 7 to 21 yrs) explored what it meant to be a UU parent: the joys and the challenges.

Social Justice

Doing Democracy Study Group

11/5/15 - 12/17/15

Facilitators: Lisa Bovee-Kemper & Tom Blanford

14 Registrants

Description:

The text for the 4-session conversation was *Doing Democracy—the MAP Model for Organizing Social Movements*. Bill Moyer, the primary author, had 40 years of experience working in civil rights and the peace movement, and with the American Friends Service Committee. He describes four roles for activists (citizen, rebel, reformer, and change agent) and eight stages of social movements from “normal times” to “extending the struggle.” Activists need to be effective in all four roles, applying the appropriate role to an accurate analysis of the current stage of the struggle. This book has been used by activist groups around the country to develop a common understanding of their movements and a common strategy. The book concludes with an application of this model to five recent case studies—the Civil Rights movement, Anti-Nuclear energy, Gay and Lesbian, Women’s health/breast cancer, and fighting corporate globalization.

UU Identity

Building Your Own Credo

1/3/16 - 2/28/16

Facilitators: Jane Bramham & Juliana Austin

13 Registrants

Description:

Have you marveled at the Credo statements given by our Coming of Age classes each year? This class asked the same of adults as they spent 8 weeks working from a UU text, *Building Your Own Theology*. Instead of writing New Year’s resolutions, they explored the foundations for their personal beliefs, values and meanings. Participants had the option to read their Credos as part of the April 10, 2016 worship service.

Spirit in Practice

Hindsight, Humor, and Hope: Seeking Spiritual Maturity

4/3/16 - 4/24/16

Facilitators: Nancy Bragg & Carol Shultheis

11 Registrants

Description:

Spiritual growth and maturity was explored with the support of a dozen peers aged 55 and over. Personal hindsights, humor and hope were accessed by these participants to reflect on their past and extended lives.

Living a Principled Life

OWL: Parents and Caregivers as Sexuality Educators

(Field test of new UUA Curriculum)

2/14/16 - 5/1/16

Facilitators: Kim Collins, Brett Johnson, Joy Berry, & DiAnna Ritola

(Kim-6 sessions, Brett-2 sessions, Joy-1 session, DiAnna-1 session)

12 Registrants

Description:

UUCA was chosen to field-test a brand new OWL curriculum called *Parents and Caregivers as Sexuality Educators*. The class was offered at 9:15am on Sunday mornings, and ran concurrently with the 4th-5th grade OWL class. Grounded in Unitarian Universalist values, this new curriculum provided parents and caregivers a unique understanding about teenagers, sexuality, and parenting. It offered information, skill-building, and broad perspectives while building communication skills that enhance parents' and caregivers' ability to be their children's primary sexuality educators.



Director of Administration Linda Topp

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

Administrative support entails six major areas of responsibilities: general administration, human resources, buildings & grounds, finance/accounting and fundraising, membership support, and communications.

Details of specific areas of church administration are reported to the Board on an annual cycle that is part of the Governance Document. Here is a rundown of the highlights of our year.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

2015-16 was the year of the policy update. Since we changed to policy governance, the Executive has needed to update all the policies of the congregation to reflect not only the new governance style, but also current practices in a variety of areas. It finally happened this year because 1) we are more secure in our understanding of how policy governance works these days, and 2) we had to wait until the Welcome Project was finished to free up administrative time.

The “grand opening” for the new policies was in February, though we are still updating or introducing new policies as issues arise. All policies of the congregation are published on our website, as a link off of the Board of Trustees page. Note that there are three other sources of policies: 1) the Board’s policies are all included in the Board’s Governance Document; 2) the congregation’s bylaws provide the highest level of policy; and 3) there is a personnel manual for personnel policies.

The Policy Team included **Kay Aler-Maida, Jim Lee** and **Mara Sprain**. This project was also used as the “certification project” for Director of Administration Linda Topp as she completed four weeks of training plus this project to qualify for certification by The Church Network, a national association for church business administrators of most denominations. In July she can add CCA to her name (Certified Church Administrator).

We changed internet and telephone providers this year, which resulted in a substantial savings, even after we needed to add another phone line to support the new smoke alarm system. Our previous providers were Birch Communications and AT&T. Our new provider is Charter Spectrum.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Personnel changes seem to be the norm around here, and this year is finishing up with a bang in that category. This year we had an Interim Music Director, Melody McGarrahan, who will be succeeded by our new Music Director, Les Downs, who will start before the end of this fiscal year. We had a similar situation with our Interim Lifespan Religious Education Coordinator, Kim Collins, the difference being we hired her as a permanent employee in the fall. We also had a part-time music accompanist for the choir, Nicholas O'Leary, who left us in the fall. He was replaced by Ghilman Brock, a fellow UNC-A student.

Due to future budget problems that we acknowledged in mid-year, we notified Jules Smith, our full-time Communications Specialist, that her position would be dropped by July 1, 2016. Fortunately for all she was able to secure a new position and left us near the end of May.

Another loss this year was that of our Financial Accounts Manager/Connections Coordinator, Christine Magnarella Ray, who resigned in May to join her husband in Boulder, CO for his new job. We have hired a part-time Bookkeeper, Becky Donald, to succeed her. We will wait to hire a new 15-hour per week Connections Coordinator until August when Rev. Lisa Bovee-Kemper returns from her three-month sabbatical (May-July).

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS - THE YEAR OF THE WELCOME PROJECT CONSTRUCTION

WELCOME PROJECT

This area of the congregation's work could not possibly have happened without the Campus Development Committee of Bob Roepnack, chair, John Martin, Bill Agrella, Shel Altschul, Larry Holt, Elizabeth Schell and Sonya Friedrich. An extremely special shout-out goes to Bob Roepnack who devoted many, many, many hours and his substantial expertise to this project.

Construction started on the Welcome Project at the end of the last fiscal year. It was substantially completed in December, although the project is not officially approved by the city because of (very minor) final inspection issues. The Welcome Project included:

- New foyer
- Raised floor in Sanctuary and new entry door to that floor

- New chairs and worship furniture, including new chalice
- New handicap/family/all gender restroom, with automated door
- Fire-resistant walls and doors at foyer/Sandburg Hall and stairwell
- Smoke alarm system
- New hardscaping of front lawn, including walkways and walls
- New sign(!)
- Paved handicap parking lot, new steps and entry ramp
- Exterior lighting
- Rain-handling features such as underground pipe temporary storage and rain gardens
- Replacement of three existing (crumbling) exterior doors in Sanctuary
- In the Sanctuary, new LED lighting, automated light shade and new performance lighting
- While the general contractor was on campus, removed fallen retaining wall from creek behind 23 Edwin (collapsed during extreme rain event) and sidewalk and porch repairs at Jefferson House (repairing basement leaks), used excavated soil from front yard to raise level of Jefferson House backyard and created flood-protecting swales around 23 Edwin

Many new plantings were added to the campus as a result of this project, and it is an on-going process to keep everything alive for the next two years until they all become established. Much of this work (watering when Mother Nature isn't in the mood) is being done by **Ann McLellan**, **Jodi Clere** and **Nancy Herbert**. A much larger group of volunteers, coordinated by **Bill Agrella**, is involved in other grounds upkeep activities.

OTHER BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS PROJECTS

The following volunteers were indispensable throughout the year as they supplied work equity to various maintenance and repair issues: Bob Roepnack (who understandably dropped off this list as the Welcome Project took off), Shel Altschul, Ian Fischer.

The changes we made to the main building for fire safety caused an issue with our renters, the Friends of Mine Preschool. To avoid the expense of adding sprinklers to the entire main building (which neither of us could afford), Friends of Mine opted to move to Jefferson House for their preschool home. That resulted in many repairs and upgrades to Jefferson House, some of which were accomplished by Friends of Mine, and some we took care of (long overdue maintenance issues mostly).

Here are the year's major purchases/repairs:

- Jefferson House downstairs bathroom upgraded, new flooring in the bathroom and kitchen, most of downstairs painted, porch area repaired and painted
- New flooring in RE #6, the prior home base for Friends of Mine

- All rooms in the main building's lower level that had not been painted the previous year were painted, including RE Commons
- Roofing and deck repairs to Jefferson House to stop leaks and replace damaged portions
- Carpets and floors cleaned throughout the main building following Welcome Project construction
- Multiple roof repairs and chimney resealing for the main building
- Closets built or re-built
- Kitchen closet door replaced
- 23 Edwin flood remediation February and re-working of flood prevention measures
- Added a pull for the fire alarm system to the Sanctuary
- Various plumbing repairs

MEMORIAL GARDEN

by Ruth Christie, Coordinator

Members of the Memorial Garden Team volunteer once a month to maintain the UUCA Memorial Garden and the surrounding areas. From June 2015 through January 2016 the team members were **Art** and **Kristina Aaronson, Dorothy Donaldson** and **Tom Rickey, Ian** and **Debbie Fischer, Kathi Rice,** and **Ruth Christie**. In January, Ian and Debbie retired from the team; **Barbara Kruszewski** has recently joined. We like to work in pairs because it's more fun, so we would love to have another volunteer fill out our team.

A new background plaque was purchased and installed in March to accommodate name plates.

FINANCE/ACCOUNTING AND FUNDRAISING

THE ANNUAL BUDGET DRIVE (ABD) – “SHARING OUR GIFTS”

The co-chairs of this year's Annual Budget Drive were Ian and Debbie Fischer. Ian tended to the financial details while Debbie applied her skills to food(!) and advertising. They did an outstanding job of organizing events, personal visits, mailings and advertising to solicit commitments from our Members and Friends. Acting as consultants to this process were Larry Wheeler and Jerry McLellan.

Here's how it happened:

The fundraising goal was set at \$670,000, which was the amount we felt could sustain most of our staffing while continuing to wean ourselves away from the transfers from a bequest from Marion Elmslie that we have been using for the past several years in support of a full-time second minister and a highly experienced Lifespan Religious Education Director. Even at that level of giving, we made plans at mid-year to lay off our full-time Communications Coordinator by June 30. This

move would provide room in the budget to allow for the diminution and eventual loss of the Elmslie transfer.

The ABD was segmented to target several different types of givers in the congregation. In early January, we held a very successful “Time, Talent and Money” tea that was both a thank you to our high-commitment members (financially, time-wise or both) and the first “ask” of the campaign. The presentation part of this event included the premier showing of this year’s video, *OneVoice*, along with a heartfelt talk by Rev. Mark Ward about the financial state of the congregation, a listing of the many program successes we are experiencing, followed by a Q&A period.

Two smaller gatherings were scheduled to follow the same pattern, one for families with children in our RE program, and one for donors who had not made any increases in their pledge in the past 3 years. Since costs are always rising (small inflationary pressures plus health care increases for sure!), these static pledges are experienced as decreases each year. Only one of these gatherings actually attracted enough donors to hold the event, even with the promise of time with our Lead Minister.

Additionally, print mailings went out to all members, a small cadre of Visiting Stewards were recruited to make one-on-one contacts with about 35 donors, Rev. Mark Ward was enlisted to make a few contacts himself. Multiple articles in the *Weekly eNews*, a changing bulletin board display, and at least one more personalized email was sent out asking people for their pledges. In early March, Rev. Mark Ward and Rev. Lisa Bovee-Kemper teamed up at a worship service that partially addressed our lagging commitments and resulted in a “pulpit ask,” something that has been rarely done here.

Here’s what happened:

Early on we recognized that we were not going to meet the wished-for goal, and as time went on, it became clear that we were going to miss the target by a substantial amount. In the end, we estimate (because some people still have not given us their commitments) that we will receive \$620,000 in commitments. However, our income stream was increased by 5 donors who have chosen to give us one-time gifts totaling \$18,000 more, so the actual income from our Annual Budget Drive came in at \$638,000. This still left a substantial deficit to be eradicated by cutting expenses in 2016-17.

WELCOME PROJECT

Final, final numbers are still not in (the City continues to find issues that need to be “corrected”), but as of May 16, the total cost of the Welcome Project is close to \$1,010,000 with commitments of \$856,800. At the June 5, 2016 annual meeting we

expect the congregation to accept a mortgage of no more than \$190,000 to cover the full costs.

UUCA AUCTION – “AUCTION OLÉ!”

The Auction Committee: Ann McLellan, Co-Chair, Judy Galloway, Co-Chair, Rhea Cravens, Eleanor Lane, Robin Loew, Paula Massey, Karen Morris, Renate Schuchardt, Allen Brasington III, Auctioneer

This year’s Auction was held November 14, 2015, at the Greek Orthodox social hall. Once again, we had a full house with 220 attendees. The buffet was catered by Mamacita’s. This highly successful auction produced a profit of well over \$28,000.

Beyond the financial success, the auction brings the congregation together in many ways: for a fun evening, for parties and events occurring months after, and for the opportunity to participate in gracious giving to our beloved community.

Many, many members and friends joined in to make this great event possible.

USED BOOK SALE

Book Sale Leaders: Ken Cameron-Bell, Ephraim Schechter, and Martha Shepard. Yearlong team members: Kay Harger, Linda Nash, and Willa Newell, who sorted, priced, and packed books all year, moved them down into 23 Edwin's basement for storage, and arranged publicity for the sale.

Special thanks to **George Ramig**, who volunteered his time to make and laminate more signs to keep our book tables organized. Plus many other Book Sale Weekend helpers too numerous to mention but too valuable not to notice! The Book Sale was held on the weekend of October 23, 2015. It raised approximately \$3400.

HOLIDAY CRAFT FAIR

Craft Fair Coordinator: Sammy Fong

The UUCA Annual Holiday Craft Fair was held on Sunday, November 22, 2015. The invited artists are required to donate 20% of their sales to UUCA (although some contribute more), which resulted in a total of \$400.

FINANCE/ACCOUNTING

The Finance Advisory Committee members are Michael Stevens (chair), Ann Cargill, Sammy Fong, Bob Lane, and Jim Steffe.

The Finance Advisory Committee (FAC) acts as a consulting body to both the Executive and Board, annually reviewing the Executive’s financial policies and procedures, reviewing monthly financial reports, conducting biannual mini-reviews of randomly selected accounting transactions in several categories (payroll, accounts

payable, bank statements), and applying their experience and wisdom to various financial issues that come up during the course of a church year. This year the FAC was involved in questions related to the annual budget drive shortfall as well as Welcome Project mortgage discussions.

This year we continued to invest a small share of our reserves (\$30,000) in Mountain Bizworks as a socially responsible community investment. During the course of the year, we held money in BB&T Bank, Self-Help Credit Union and Telco Credit Union as donations to the Welcome Project came in, maintaining all accounts under the federally insured amounts. Since then, we have paid out that “excess” cash and have all of our funds in Asheville Savings Bank (and Mountain Bizworks).

COMMUNICATIONS

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

This year (among loads of updates) we re-arranged the Staff and President Blog. Because Joy Berry’s (and sometimes others) columns have been picked up by the UUA, we moved the blog to an “easier-to-find” location. It is now the UUCA Blog and it links off the home page. And, to prove that we are always learning, we renamed the blog’s filename to make it easier for search engines to “see” it.

In Sandburg Hall, we once again re-arranged the bulletin boards. Hope you’re keeping up!

SOCIAL MEDIA TEAM

Team members are Stephen Carter, Lisa Coffey, Laurel Jernigan, John McGrann and Zaneta Summers

In April, we organized a new working committee for the congregation. The Social Media Team hit the ground running as UUCA was chosen as one of 12 beta-sites to try the UUA’s Promotional Toolkit at the same time we put together the team. What we did not realize at the time was that an entire cycle of the toolkit needed to be completed and reported on by July 1. The cycle included picking a target demographic group in our community (Asheville), creating an event to which we would invite said group members, use multiple social media outlets to provide invitations to the event, hold the event, and then let the UUA know how it all went down. WHEW!!!!

Once this beta-test is accomplished, the Social Media Team will settle down into keeping our Facebook and other media outlets up-do-date now that we no longer have a Communications Specialist on staff.