

**2012-2013  
ANNUAL REPORT**

**FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY OF ALBANY**



# FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY OF ALBANY

## *A Welcoming Congregation*

### 2012-2013 Annual Report

*We welcome all men, women and children who seek a religion based on the inherent sanctity of every person's free and responsible search for truth and meaning.*

*In keeping with our distinctive, non-creedal religion, we strive to excite the human spirit and inspire its development; to respond to moral and ethical issues in our local, national and world communities; and to sustain a vital and nurturing congregational life.--Adopted November 7, 1993*

*On April 22, 1998 the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany voted to become a Welcoming Congregation. As we welcome into our society people of all ages, races, colors, national origins, genders, gender identities, affectional or sexual orientations, disabilities, political and religious beliefs we will grow in vision and inclusiveness.*



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## **ANNUAL MEETING**

Sunday, May 19, 2013

### Appointments

Parliamentarian

Timekeeper

Quorum/Vote Counters

### Adoption/Rules of Procedure

Governed by FUUSA's Policy on Congregational Meetings,  
see next page

### Words for Gathering

### Approval of Agenda, Additions

### Nominating Committee Report and Election

### Update on Stewardship Campaign

### Presentation/Adoption of 2013-2014 Budget

### Presentation, Discussion and Vote on By-Law Changes

### Recognition of Outgoing Officers, Board Trustees and other Board appointments

### Comments of the President

### Announcement of Election Results

### Potential Additions to Agenda

### Adjournment

**FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY OF ALBANY  
POLICY ON CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS**

**I. Rules of Procedures on Debate**

After the meeting has been called to order, the president shall appoint the following: a quorum counter, a parliamentarian, a timekeeper, and pro and con floor managers.

Next, the Agenda shall be submitted for approval.

Next, the following Rules of Procedures shall be submitted for approval, after allowing amendments from the floor or suspension by a majority vote:

**A. Rules of Procedures for Presentation**

1. The person or committee that prepared a resolution or motion on the agenda for congregational vote shall make a supporting presentation limited to 10 minutes.
2. If there is a minority or dissenting opinion, the spokesperson for the opposition shall make a presentation, also limited to 10 minutes.

**B. Rules of Procedures for Discussion**

1. Those wishing to speak shall form a line behind either the pro or con microphone station, consistent with the views he or she wishes to express.
2. The chair will alternately recognize a speaker at one station and then at the other.
3. No person may speak for more than 3 minutes on any one item.
4. No person may speak more than once on an item as long as anyone else stands before him at a microphone station.
5. When there are no speakers waiting at one of the stations, the debate may be closed.
6. After initial presentation, debate time for each item requiring a vote shall be 15 minutes. After 15 minutes, a motion shall automatically be put, "Shall debate be extended for fifteen minutes?"

Any time that a majority shall fail to extend the time, debate shall be closed and the question on the floor put to a vote.

**II. Pre-Meeting Educational Efforts**

Resolutions, bylaws or budget changes, or other non-routine matters being brought to a congregational meeting, shall be presented in writing in advance of the meeting and be accompanied by brief explanations. If there is an opposing view, a brief summary of opposing arguments shall also be presented in writing.

Furthermore, there shall be ample opportunity to conduct pre-meeting discussions to educate the congregation, and for congregation members to ask questions and seek clarification from the resolution authors. Such pre-vote meetings shall consist of a church-wide town meeting, a series of neighborhood gatherings, and/or brief sessions incorporated in regularly scheduled committee meetings.



		Draft 2013-2014 Budget		FC/Board Recommendation		NOTES	
Ordinary Income and Expense		(Acct. Num.)	Prior Year '12-13 Budget	FC/Board Recommendation	% Difference From Current Year		
<b>Income</b>							
<b>Contribution Income</b>		<b>4100</b>					
	Back Pledges	4110	\$ 19,000	15,000	-21.1%		based on analysis of YTD
	Collection Plate	4120	\$ 10,000	9,500	-5.0%		
	Net Current Year Pledges	4130	\$ 367,447	399,310	8.7%		(\$14,000 gross pledge - 5.5% shrinkage) + \$8,080 in new pledges [\$27,594 increase in gross pledges from 2012-13]
	Gifts & Miscellaneous	4150	\$ 2,000	2,000	0.0%		
	<b>Total Contribution Income</b>	<b>4100</b>	<b>\$ 398,447</b>	<b>425,810</b>	<b>6.9%</b>		
<b>Other Income</b>		<b>4200</b>					
	Building Classroom Rentals	4210	\$ 6,000	6,000	0.0%		
	Building Hall Rentals	4215	\$ 30,000	33,500	11.7%		
	Building Rentals - Other	4217	\$ 1,000	0	-100.0%		
	Carryover from prior year	4219	\$ 14,213	0	-100.0%		
	Interest Income	4220	\$ 750	500	-33.3%		
	Coffee/bagel income	4240	\$ 1,300	1,700	30.8%		
	<b>Total Other Income</b>	<b>4200</b>	<b>\$ 53,263</b>	<b>41,700</b>	<b>-21.7%</b>		
<b>Program Income</b>		<b>4300</b>					
	Net FUN/D Raisers	4320	\$ 26,000	26,000	0.0%		
	RE (Child)	4340	\$ 3,600	3,600	0.0%		
	<b>Total Program Income</b>	<b>4300</b>	<b>\$ 29,600</b>	<b>29,600</b>	<b>0.0%</b>		
	<b>Total Income</b>		<b>\$ 481,310</b>	<b>\$ 497,110</b>	<b>3.3%</b>		
<b>Expense</b>							
<b>Non-Ministerial Sal. &amp; Ben.</b>		<b>5000</b>					
	Music Director Salary	5010	\$ 14,399	17,702	22.9%		NOTE: COLA is 2.45%
	Director Member Services Salary	5015	\$ 42,948	44,000	2.4%		See NOTE 1 at bottom of spreadsheet
	Office Administrator	5016	\$ 23,660	21,300	-10.0%		COLA
	Custodian Salary	5025	\$ 13,845	14,544	5.0%		5% increase to approach new salary band. Reduced time from .875 to .75 FTE
	RE Director Salary	5030	\$ 48,900	51,800	5.9%		COLA + \$1,702 to bring up to new salary band
	Sunday Nursery Care	5035	\$ 2,912	2,400	-17.6%		2 caregivers x 39 wks/year x 2 hr/wk x \$14/hr: 1 caregiver in summer
	Staff Benefits	5042	\$ 18,566	19,332	4.1%		Health Insurance and Retirement
	Music Director Prof. Dev.	5050	\$ 1,400	0	-100.0%		Covered by \$1,400 in designated fund
	DMSC Prof. Dev.	5051	\$ 2,455	1,786	-27.3%		
	Administrative Local Travel	5052	\$ 150	150	0.0%		
	RE Director Prof. Dev.	5053	\$ 2,880	2,880	0.0%		
	Office Admin Prof. Dev.	5054	\$ 150	150	0.0%		
	Staff Holiday Gifts	5060	\$ 350	350	0.0%		
	Employer Payroll Taxes	5080	\$ 11,220	12,068	7.6%		
	Hourly Custodian	5260	X	6,000	NA		\$11 per hour
	Workers Comp. & Disability	5090	\$ 3,702	3,500	-5.5%		
	<b>Total Non-Ministerial Sal. &amp; Ben.</b>	<b>5000</b>	<b>\$ 187,537</b>	<b>197,962</b>	<b>5.6%</b>		
<b>Administration</b>		<b>5100</b>					
	Bookkeeping & Payroll Svcs.	5140	\$ 5,500	5,500	0.0%		
	Office Equipment	5150	\$ 5,320	4,000	-24.8%		
	Office Supplies	5160	\$ 3,100	4,000	29.0%		
	Postage	5170	\$ 2,121	2,121	0.0%		
	Telecommunications	5280	\$ 3,978	3,978	0.0%		
	Rental Agent	5285	\$ 8,400	9,075	8.0%		
	Rental Costs	5287	\$ 1,000	0	-100.0%		
	<b>Total Administration</b>	<b>5100</b>	<b>\$ 29,419</b>	<b>28,674</b>	<b>-2.5%</b>		
<b>Building Maintenance</b>		<b>5200</b>					
	Buildings & Grounds	5210	\$ 19,000	19,000	0.0%		
	Janitorial Supplies	5230	\$ 3,000	3,000	0.0%		
	Utilities	5270	\$ 19,000	17,000	-10.5%		
	Insurance	5470	\$ 7,250	7,700	6.2%		
	<b>Total Building Maintenance</b>	<b>5200</b>	<b>\$ 48,250</b>	<b>46,700</b>	<b>-3.2%</b>		

Ordinary Income and Expense	(Acct. Num.)	Prior Year '12-13 Budget	FC/Board Recommendation	% Difference From Current Year	NOTES
<b>Church &amp; Community</b>	<b>5300</b>				
Accessibility Committee	5303	\$ 100	0	-100.0%	
Small Group Ministry	5304	\$ 100	100	0.0%	
Art and Aesthetics	5306	\$ 1,600	0	-100.0%	
Carbon Neutral Initiative	5307	\$ 1,200	0	-100.0%	
Board of Trustees	5310	\$ 300	400	33.3%	
Stewardship Committee	5320	\$ 400	400	0.0%	
Board Training & Development	5325	\$ 700	700	0.0%	
Receptions/Appreciations	5335	\$ 350	350	0.0%	
Child Care (General)	5340	\$ 400	500	25.0%	
Membership Committee	5350	\$ 1,535	1,585	3.3%	
Kitchen Fund	5355	\$ 1,200	1,750	45.8%	More people at Coffee Hour each Sunday, cookies, lemonade and ice tea during summer months.
Caring Network	5357	\$ 150	150	0.0%	
Joy Library	5361	\$ 450	450	0.0%	
Religious Services Committee	5365	\$ 3,800	5,000	31.6%	An additional \$350 is requested from the capital reserve for additional shelving See NOTE 2 at bottom of spreadsheet
Publicity Committee	5370	\$ 1,700	1,000	-41.2%	
Music Committee	5375	\$ 4,000	4,100	2.5%	
Archives Committee	5385	\$ 100	50	-50.0%	
PCC	5386	\$ 90	90	0.0%	
<b>Total Church &amp; Community</b>	<b>5300</b>	<b>\$ 18,175</b>	<b>16,625</b>	<b>-8.5%</b>	
<b>Denominational Affairs</b>	<b>5400</b>				
Partner Church Council	5410	\$ 1,500	1,500	0.0%	
SLUUD Dues	5420	\$ 9,624	10,210	6.1%	2.42% of \$421,882 (2012-13 current budget) = \$10,210
UUA Program Fund Dues	5430	\$ 22,620	23,160	2.4%	386 members X \$60 per member = \$23,160
Denominational Affairs Subsidy	5440	\$ 2,315	2,500	8.0%	SLD: UUA, NYVSCU & UUL TI
Uniradock Dues	5450	\$ 150	150	0.0%	
<b>Total Denominational Affairs</b>	<b>5400</b>	<b>\$ 36,209</b>	<b>37,520</b>	<b>3.6%</b>	
<b>Ministerial Expenses</b>	<b>5500</b>				
Salary/Housing	5550	\$ 85,644	87,742	2.4%	NOTE: The minister package includes housing, salary, retirement, professional expenses, life and disability insurance. COLA
Insurance	5560	\$ 5,820	10,065	72.9%	Provides 40% share of family health insurance
Retirement	5565	\$ 6,852	7,019	2.4%	
Professional Expenses	5510	\$ 8,956	8,956	0.0%	
<b>Total Ministerial Expenses</b>	<b>5500</b>	<b>\$ 107,272</b>	<b>113,783</b>	<b>6.1%</b>	
<b>Religious Education</b>	<b>5600</b>				
Education	5600	\$ 6,950	4,800	-30.9%	
<b>Total Religious Education</b>	<b>5600</b>	<b>\$ 6,950</b>	<b>4,800</b>	<b>-30.9%</b>	
<b>Social Responsibilities</b>	<b>5900</b>				
Interfaith Impact	5910	\$ 850	850	0.0%	
Social Responsibilities Council	5920	\$ 2,500	2,400	-4.0%	
<b>Total Social Responsibilities</b>	<b>5900</b>	<b>\$ 3,350</b>	<b>3,250</b>	<b>-3.0%</b>	
<b>Total Expense</b>		<b>\$ 437,162</b>	<b>\$ 449,314</b>	<b>2.8%</b>	
<b>Transfers</b>					
Capital Reserve Fund		\$ 11,083	14,907	34.5%	
Building Reserve Fund		\$ 25,465	31,289	22.9%	
Ministerial Intern Reserve Fund		\$ 1,000	1,000	0.0%	
Sabbatical Fund		\$ 600	600	0.0%	
<b>Total Transfers</b>		<b>\$ 38,148</b>	<b>47,796</b>	<b>25.3%</b>	
<b>Total Expense and Transfers</b>		<b>\$ 475,310</b>	<b>\$ 497,110</b>	<b>4.6%</b>	
DIFFERENCE			\$ 0		
<b>NOTES:</b>					
1. Music Director increased to 0.30 FTE as of 1/1/13, so FY12-13 salary adjusted to \$15,839. COLA was applied to annualized current year salary to calculate salary for FY13-14.					
2. [Summer: \$1,200 coordinator (twelve Sundays @ \$100); \$1,000 guest ministers (250 x 4); \$400 other paid non-minister speakers (\$200 x 2), \$600 musicians (12 x 50); \$200 travel & tolls].					
[Regular Year: \$1,000 guest ministers (\$250 x 4); \$400 special supplies for services & \$200 travel & tolls]					

## SUMMARY OF PROPOSED BYLAWS AMENDMENTS

Proposed changes are intended to make the bylaws easier to read; to cover important topics not previously addressed, such as conflicts of interest; and to make other changes that clarify or update the bylaws.

1. Throughout the bylaws, the sections are divided into lettered paragraphs (and further subdivided where appropriate) for ease of referral to their separate provisions.
2. In Article I, new sections 4 (Non-discrimination) and 5 (Interpretation) are added. These are taken from the UUA's current model "Your Congregation's Bylaws."
3. In Article III a new section 3 is added, Emergency Meetings. Emergency congregational meetings could be called on no less than 24 hours' notice, by the President at direction of the Board of Trustees or by the Executive Committee, to address situations that must be dealt with in an expedited manner. A 2/3 majority vote is required to pass a resolution at an emergency meeting. An amendment to section 4 creates an exception for emergency meetings to the notice requirements for Annual and Special congregational meetings.
4. In Article VI, Section 2, the authority of the Program Coordinating Council (PCC) to propose revisions of the Society Mission Statement is removed. This does not prevent the Board from directing PCC to work on revisions to the Mission Statement in the future, but there are other consultative processes that could be used to propose a new Mission Statement.
5. Article VII, Committees and Groups, is substantially revised to clarify the status of Standing Committees and other types of committees and groups. Section 1 clarifies that Standing Committees are those created in the bylaws, and deemed essential to the functioning of the Society. New Standing Committees can only be created by amending the bylaws and must be chaired by an active member of the society. The Canvass Committee is renamed the Stewardship Committee (see also amendments to Article XI, sections 13 and 14).
6. Article VII, section 2 as proposed to be amended provides that committees other than Standing Committees can be established by the Board of Trustees, which will also prescribe the number and terms of the committee's members, appoint the chair (who must be an active member), and adopt the committee's charter, which will require at a minimum that the committee report to the Board annually. The Board may determine to apply any of these requirements to committees already in existence at the time of the adoption of these amendments. This allows the Board to work with existing committees to develop charters, if desired, over an extended time period.
7. The amendment in Article VII, section 3 provides that the Board of Trustees may apply any of the requirements for committees to Special Committees. Generally, Special Committees are appointed for limited period of time or a single purpose.
8. New section 4 of Article VII clarifies existing language regarding publicizing meetings of all types of committees, and provides that they shall be open to all members *and friends* of the Society.
9. Article IX, section 3 is amended to delete the provision allowing nominations for elected office to be made from the floor at the annual congregational meeting. It should be noted that the Nominating Committee follows a months-long nominating process (including opportunities for members to learn about the candidates) and the bylaws would continue to provide for nominations by petition signed by 25 members.
10. Article X, section 1 is amended to streamline the annual performance review process of

staff members, restoring primary responsibility to the Personnel Committee.

11. Article X, section 2 is amended to provide that staff members report to the minister or his or her designee, instead of the president or his or her designee. This reflects current operations.
12. Article X, section 3(a) is amended to delete the prohibitions on the minister serving as a non-voting member of the Committee on the Professional Ministry, the Nominating Committee and the Personnel Committee. These were considered overly restrictive and counterproductive, since the minister is in a position to contribute to the work of these committees. (It is believed that this prohibition and the previous provision that is proposed to be amended are relics of a past period when the role of the minister was meant to be restricted.)
13. Article X, section 3(e), paragraph 5 is amended to clarify that the *only* means for dismissing the minister is by majority vote of members at a special meeting called for that purpose.
14. Article X, section 4 is amended by deleting the provision relating to the position of Sexton, as it is obsolete.
15. Article XI, section 4 clarifies that the Finance Committee makes budget recommendations to the Stewardship Committee and the Board of Trustees.
16. Article XI, section 6 is deleted at the request of the Finance Committee, since the Society's budget has not included reappropriations.
17. Article XI, section 11 reflects the current role of the assistant treasurer,
18. A new Article XIII, "Other Legal and Public Relations Provisions," is added, again based on the current UUA model, "Your Congregation's Bylaws."
  - ◆ Section 1 provides that all Society records, other than those deemed sensitive by the Board, shall be available to members during business hours or electronically.
  - ◆ Section 2 forbids the Society, Board, any officer or employee or member, from taking any action, making any public statement or using Society property in a manner which endangers the Society's non-profit or tax-exempt status. (An example of this would be the public endorsement by the Society of a political candidate.)
  - ◆ Section 3 adds a conflict of interest provision that requires abstention by any elected or appointed person or member of a council or committee from participation in discussion or vote on a matter that affects that person's financial interest, except when the council or committee votes to allow that participation.

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING**  
FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY OF ALBANY  
EMERSON COMMUNITY HALL  
MAY 20, 2012

**Meeting Start-up**

Chuck called the meeting to order at 11:55 a.m. Chuck drew participants' attention to the *Policies on Congregational Meetings* printed on page 2 of the Annual Report. Dave Metz made a motion to accept the Rules of Procedure. Dave Munro seconded the motion. The motion passed. Chuck made the following appointments for the meeting:

Parliamentarian: *John Sherman*  
Timekeeper: *Dick Dana*  
Quorum/Vote Counters: *Mark Yolles and Kathy Harris*

Rev. Sam read words for gathering. Chuck presented the agenda and asked for any additions. No changes were suggested, and Al DeSalvo made a motion to accept the agenda. The motion was seconded by Steve Moskowitz. The motion passed.

**Nominating Committee Report and Election**

Dawn Dana, Chair of the Nominating Committee, introduced the members of the Nominating Committee: Meredith Andrews, Debby Brown, Dave Munro and Linda Way. Dawn encouraged those interested in running for future office to contact members of the committee early in the year. She then read the names of the uncontested candidates and asked them to stand as their names were read. She asked for nominations from the floor; there were none. The secretary cast one ballot for the following uncontested positions.

*Officers to be elected for 1-year terms*

**President:** Chuck Manning  
**Vice-President:** Peggy Sherman  
**Secretary:** Donna Meixner  
**Treasurer:** Sue Berzinis  
**Assistant Treasurer:** Mike Babala  
**Religious Education Chair:** Paula Brewer  
**Social Responsibilities Chair:** Karen Kaufmann

*Religious Education Council to be elected for 3-year terms*

Sarah Martin  
Mary Myers  
David Quist  
Jan Satin

*Religious Education Council to be elected for 1-year terms*

Annika Pfluger  
Jennifer Quail

*Social Responsibilities Council to be elected for 3-year terms*

Patti Burch  
Martha Musser

Social Responsibilities Council to be elected for 3-year terms

Ed Hancock  
Jaye Holly

Following the adoption of the slate of uncontested candidates, Dawn introduced the candidates for the contested positions. She asked for nominations from the floor; there were none. The vote was taken by paper ballot and tallied. The results for the contested positions were as follows:

Board of Trustees for 3-year terms

Al DeSalvo  
Bob Franklin

Board of Trustees for a 1-year term

Becky Myer

Nominating Committee for 3-year terms

Dave Metz  
Paula Moskowitz

Endowment Trust for 5-year term

Todd Thomas

**Update on Stewardship Campaign**

Chuck introduced and thanked the members of the Stewardship Campaign Committee: Dick Dana (Chair), Donna Meixner, Chuck Manning, Kathy Harris, Tim Burch, Erik Eddy, Russ Myer, Rev. Sam Trumbore and Peter Brown. A number of new approaches were tried this year and have worked well. Chuck reported that last year at this time we were at 65% of our goal and this year we're at 88%.

**Presentation / Adoption of the 2012-2013 Budget**

Treasurer Dave Metz presented the budget for the 2012-13 fiscal year, which was prepared in conjunction with the Finance Committee. Dave highlighted the following points from the budget:

- Includes assumption of a 4.7 % increase in pledging income.
- Reflects the changes in personnel and our organizational structure.

Includes additional monies in three designated funds – Economic Distress Fund, Projector Fund and the Annual Dinner Fund.

Dave answered several questions about the Building Fund and the status of our mortgage, reporting that the latter is down to \$1 million. Our cost per year for the mortgage is \$84,000 including principle and interest. Our mortgage interest rate will need to be renegotiated after ten years, which will be 2017, and we do not know how our payments will be affected.

Dave explained that the majority of the mortgage is being paid from a sinking fund, which still has a balance of about \$400,000. The sinking fund is allowing us to gradually raise our budget to eventually be able to cover the total \$84,000 mortgage payment. In the 2012-13 budget we will be paying about \$25,500 toward the mortgage payment and the remainder will come out of the sinking fund.

DJ Panetta asked if we should consider refinancing the mortgage now to take advantage of the low interest rates. Dave said he's talked to our attorney about this, and he advises it wouldn't be advantageous for us to do that. Because we received an IDA grant when we took out our mortgage, we received a low rate at the time of only 4.25%. We would not be saving much in interest and the legal

work to do a refinance of a commercial loan would be between \$10,000 and \$12,000.

Al DeSalvo asked how we are doing with the payment of pledges to the Building Capital Campaign Fund as we are nearing the end of the pledge period. Dave reported that we're about 97% there. We recently sent letters to folks who hadn't yet completed paying their Capital Campaign pledge and a total of \$2,000 was submitted in response.

Dave reported that the Capital Reserve fund had been built up to over \$93,000 at the beginning of the 2011-2012 budget year. This fund was put to use this year with the repairs to the pillars in the front of the sanctuary. The Building and Grounds Committee hired someone to come in to repair the pillars and paint all of the wood trim on the exterior of the old building, including the steeple. The total cost for the repairs and painting was \$25,000.

Following this discussion, Dave Metz made a motion to pass the 2012-2013 budget as presented. Steve Moskowitz seconded the motion. The budget passed.

### **Presentation/ Discussion and vote on By-laws Changes**

Chuck announced that we had proposed revisions to two Bylaw articles, which appeared on page 5 of the 2011-2012 Annual Report, to vote on today. He first opened the floor to questions and discussion about the revisions to Article XI, Financial Policy, Sections 5 and 7 (see below).

## **ARTICLE XI FINANCIAL POLICY**

### **Section 5. Expenditures and Appropriations**

a. No contract or obligation involving an expenditure of more than \$5,000 **\$20,000** shall be made or incurred, unless such action is authorized by the membership at a congregational meeting, *except that in the event of an emergency declared by three quarters of the members of the board, no contract or obligation involving an expenditure of more than \$50,000 shall be made or incurred. The Board meeting declaring an emergency may be convened by telephone or email and the President shall poll the board members and record their votes.*

b. Committees, councils and other entities in the Society are authorized to expend the funds appropriated for their use in the operating budget during the year of appropriation.

c. The Board of Trustees, with the recommendation of the Finance Committee, may reduce appropriations or authorize additional expenditures according to the funds available. Said reduction or additional expenditure shall not exceed a total of five percent of the total budget during a fiscal year.

### **Section 7. Capital Reserve and Emergency Fund**

a. This fund may be designated by donors as the repository of their financial gifts.

b. The Board of Trustees shall have full power to invest, reinvest, and transfer such funds in trust or for deposit, within the limits of the provisions of the Religious Corporations Law.

c. The income from this fund may be included in the operating budget or allocated by the Board of Trustees unless restricted by the terms of a donation.

d. All or any part of the fund may be used for any Society purpose but only in amounts and for purposes directed by a resolution passed at a congregational meeting, *unless the expenditure is less than the limit imposed by section 5(a) of these by-laws, \$20,000.00, or the Board has met, voted and determined, in accord with section 5(a) that an emergency exists and the expenditure is less than the limit imposed by section 5(a) of these by-laws, \$50,000.00.*

e. It shall be the intent of the Society to include specific contributions to this fund as part of the operating budget when there is no long-term debt obligation on the Society's part.

Chuck reported that Don Odell had suggested that the following sentence be added at the end of Section 5c, “*Any action taken under this article/section shall be promptly communicated to the congregation.*” A motion was made and seconded to add the suggested sentence to Section 5c. The motion passed.

Jacqui Williams asked why we were increasing the Board of Trustees authority to spend funds from \$5,000 to \$20,000, which seemed like a big jump. Steve Moskowitz explained that this increase reflects the growth of our congregation and building and the cost of keeping it running. He gave the example of our current need to purchase a new copier which will cost over \$12,000. He said it doesn’t make sense to have the congregation vote on a copier.

Dave Metz pointed out that the copier will cost closer to \$20,000. He said the work on the pillars and the steeple are another example of issues that come up that would be difficult to always put to a congregational vote. Renee Panetta asked if we could put in a provision that this spending authority would be used for emergency situations only. She expressed the concern that some committees may want to have input into these spending decisions. For example, the SRC wanted to have input into the purchase of a green copier.

Paula Moskowitz pointed out that the SRC and REC Chairs sit on the Board. Chuck added that the BOT has followed the precedent of going to the appropriate committee for input on expenditures, as it did in involving the SRC with the copier. In the case of the copier, the staff came to the Board to say that repairs were getting costly and soon the copier would no longer be supported by a maintenance agreement and they recommended the purchase of a new copier. The SRC took this information to the Green Sanctuary who did research and proposed the purchase of a green copier. The BOT authorized the staff to research, select a model and negotiate with vendors for a new copier. The BOT’s job is to manage the overall policy and to authorize expenditures.

Diana Shear moved that we vote on Article XI, Section 5 and 7. Dave Metz seconded the motion.

Patti Jo Newell proposed the following amendment to Article XI: “*No contract or obligation shall be made if the congregation has specifically disallowed it through a congregational vote.*” Al DeSalvo seconded the motion.

After a brief discussion a vote was taken on the motion to amend. It was defeated.

The motion to approve the revisions to Article XI, sections 5 and 7 was then voted on and passed.

Chuck called our attention to the bylaw change to Article VI, Section 3, Religious Education Council (see below).

## **ARTICLE VI COUNCILS**

**Section 3: Religious Education Council** This council shall consist of a chair and *eight to* twelve members, elected and serving in accordance with Articles VIII and IX of these bylaws, and the religious education director. The chair is an ex-officio member of the Board of Trustees. Volunteer participants in the program shall be approved by the council upon recommendation of the Religious Education Director. This Council shall foster and maintain a religious education program for the children and youth of the Society and shall have direct supervision and control of this program.

After a brief discussion, Roseanne Fogarty called the question. It was seconded and Chuck asked for a vote on a motion to accept the proposed revisions to Article VI, Section 3 of the bylaws. The motion



passed.

**President's Comments**

Chuck thanked Eileen Hoffman for organizing the food for coffee hour. He provided some short reflections about the year, including a listing of the many outside groups that have used our facility in the past year (these are listed on page 47 of the Annual Report). Chuck then recognized our outgoing Board members: Lois Griffin, Dave Metz, Todd Gray, Randy Rosette and Donna Doran.

**Adjournment**

Dave Metz moved that the meeting be adjourned. Diane Shear seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

*Donna Meixner, Secretary*

**YEAR IN REVIEW**  
**MINISTER'S ANNUAL REPORT**  
Rev. Sam Trumbore

**Overview**

The first Sunday of May, I preached about our **evolving Unitarian Universalist faith**. My ministry here continues to evolve in ways that creates a better and better fit with FUUSA, attracting new people and stimulating greater commitment and generosity. Satisfaction with my ministry continues to remain strong and grow. My satisfaction serving here also continues to grow. We've had and continue to have a great fit between our program team of Leah Purcell, Matt Edwards and myself and what people in our congregation want and need. May it continue, as it has, to get better each year. The state of our congregation is good with, as I mentioned in the sermon, much potential for growth and development.

**Working with Thandeka**

The big event for our program team this year was working with our “We Love Beyond Belief” consultant, Rev. Thandeka. She met in June 2012 with Matt, Leah and me to stimulate us to work more collaboratively together. Not that we weren't working together before, but because Matt lives pretty far away and only came in on Wednesdays and Sundays, we didn't have many face-to-face meetings. Thandeka challenged us to change that, urging us to have a weekly “production meeting” to plan services together. Matt gets a lot of credit and appreciation from me for being willing to do that voluntarily as he was being asked to give more time to FUUSA without being compensated.

The results were fairly quickly apparent. We made changes in the order of service and worked very hard to coordinate all the elements of the service more closely and seamlessly. Our face to face time Wednesdays at 5pm helped make that possible. Midyear, I was able to persuade the Personnel and Finance Committees to increase Matt's compensation by two hours to cover his additional time. Something as basic as adding one meeting has made a significant difference in our Sunday services.

Thandeka's work with us was sponsored by a \$5000 grant we received from the O. Darwin and Myra N. Smith Fund of The Dallas Foundation in memory of Adina L. Smith. Thandeka came to work with our congregation five times. The first, as I mentioned, was meeting with our program staff. The second was meeting with lay leadership to introduce them to Thandeka's ideas about welcoming people who are hungry for what we have to offer. The third visit was to organize an “Evensong” program, an additional, once a month, service on the last Tuesday of the month that is 85% music with 15% spoken word. The goal of this service is to provide more emotional than intellectual inspiration. The fourth visit was a retreat for members of the congregation titled “Practicing the Heart of our Liberal Faith.” The goal of this workshop was to give our members tools for practicing “pausing.” Her last visit was for a “Celebration Sunday” to give the whole congregation an experience of how a Sunday Service can transmit the experience of “We Love Beyond Belief,” the core of her vision of Unitarian Universalist identity. This service was coordinated with the end of our yearly fundraising drive and included an opportunity for people to make or increase their financial commitment.

Overall, I'm very grateful for Thandeka's consulting. Matt, Leah and I are working even more effectively together and we've made some important improvements in our Sunday services. I'm not sure where we go from here with her, but we've definitely gotten a lot of value from her work with us. I feel confident saying that the increase in financial commitments this year tracks people's satisfaction and that satisfaction correlates with her consulting work.

## Sunday Services

With Thandeka's encouragement, I made a number of changes in the way I designed Sunday services, using more music and striving for more spontaneity and emotional expression in my participation. I also experimented with some different service formats. An example of this was the service on Veteran's Day titled "**Answering the Call to Serve.**" This service included a video segment that featured Chris Antal right before his unit boarded a plane to Afghanistan. I then passed out stones so everyone could write a word on the stones with a paint pen. I collected them and then sent them to Antal's unit.

I've continued with service themes started last year, but without connecting them to months. I'm doing service series that could be just two services, as the series I did on **sexual orientation and gender identity**, or the four part series that followed up on **Justice GA** that started in the middle of September. Rather than slavishly working with a monthly theme, I'm adapting the idea to what works in our congregation. Thandeka encouraged me to look at the arc of the year and construct services to fit in those segments. I think that has also been helpful.

Leah and I continue to get better at doing **multigenerational services**. Attendance, while depressed in previous years has started picking up. This year we did a "**wheel of life,**" in October, a **Mardi Gras** service in February, and an **Easter** service at the end of March that were all well received.

## Adult Education

The "**What Moves Us**" curriculum designed by Thandeka didn't attract anyone in October which was rather discouraging. I think part of the problem was I didn't promote it through offering a Sunday service that stimulated interest in it. When an October sermon I did that featured **Jonathan Haidt's book, *The Righteous Mind***, got a lot of interest, I decided to do a class on it that attracted 24 people to attend. The lesson for me was very clear. If I present a topic in a sermon that is stimulating for a class, people will show up!

I continue to offer **meditation on Sunday morning** with a core group of about 12-18 people who come. I also offered several Friday night and Saturday retreats for people to learn more about the basics of mindfulness meditation practice. I have steady interest in mindfulness meditation and it continues to bring people to our congregation. I could probably do a better job promoting it.

Once again I co-led the **Rite of Passage program** with Leah. This year we had 9 students and 9 mentors who completed the program. We've refined this program so we got a good design that has good satisfaction. Much as I enjoy the trip to Boston that is the culmination of the program, I didn't go this year again as it means I'd have to miss one more Sunday here at FUUSA. Because we've had to run the RoP program for three years in a row, not going wasn't much of a problem.

## Administration

The transition continues with Dave Stone's retirement in January 2012. Amy took over supervision of Hadiya Wilborn which created a bit of a reshuffling of responsibilities. That transition is ongoing and uncertain. We lost our evening custodian, Olga Oja, who moved back to Syracuse. Her replacement didn't work out so we're considering working with an outside custodial service to make up the difference. Stay tuned as this all has yet to settle down. My goal is to move things step by step toward resolution.

## Capital Region Unitarian Universalists of New York

The big change this year for CRUUNY has been the hiring away of our leader, Kathy McGowan, who became a Southeast Regional Group consultant in 2013. That left us without a convener. I've stepped in to convene the group to keep several of our activities moving forward as well as continuing to

serve as our fiscal agent. I don't think I can remain in this role, but I am very supportive of increasing the role CRUUNY can play to bring our congregations closer together and support our common work.

One such common effort was to purchase **Mark Hick's Beloved Conversations** program for use by our four congregations. I wrote and received a \$2000 grant from the New York State Convention of Universalists to pay part of the cost. Mark came in February to initiate the program for us. 13 people participated in the initial training for the presenters who will then offer Beloved Conversations in each of our congregations. The follow up to this initial training is 8 sessions. I participated in this program so I could assess it. I found it to be a very valuable program and look forward to seeing it used this coming fall.

### **Intercultural Competency**

Because I was involved in Hick's Beloved Conversations class, I decided to also attend the **UU Allies for Racial Equity's** meeting in Rockford, Illinois in March. The theme presenter who I wanted to hear was **Beth Zemski**. Her presentation was on the theory of Intercultural Competency developed by Milton Bennett. It describes the process of individual and institutional movement from denial of incompetence, to defensiveness, through minimization, then to acceptance and finally adaptation. In her presentation I saw a useful map for helping our congregation become more interculturally competent.

I think working to become more interculturally competent is of great importance for our congregation because of endemic racism here in Albany. Not overt, and nasty like during the civil rights era, but expressed quietly and passively. When I talk with people of color about Albany, they shake their heads and say it is much worse here than even in the south. It isn't "in your face" but the effects are just as powerful.

We have an opportunity to be a leader here and agitate for systemic change that could make a big difference in the community. But I believe we can't do that work until we become more interculturally competent as a congregation. We've dipped our toe in but there is much, much more to do. Mark Hicks Beloved Conversations program is a good step in that direction. But far more work is needed to get where I think we can go so we can make a difference.

Check out these sites for more information on the developmental approach to intercultural competency:

Good overview: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bennett\\_scale](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bennett_scale)  
<http://www.library.wisc.edu/EDVRC/docs/public/pdfs/SEEDReadings/intCulSens.pdf>  
her website to look at: <http://www.bethzemsky.com/>  
IDI information: <http://www.idiinventory.com/>

### **Mentor and Teaching Pastor**

A member of the Schenectady UU congregation, **Viola Abbitt**, started at the Meadville Lombard UU seminary in Chicago as a part-time student. As part of her program she needs to be in relationship to a minister and a congregation. We discussed this and I agreed (with our Board's consent) that I will be her "teaching pastor," and our congregation will be her teaching congregation. Initially this has meant that I've met with her monthly as she has worked with the FOCUS breakfast program as a community site this year. She is going to seminary part-time so she will not be working with our congregation until 2014-15. As part of this program, I traveled to Chicago at the beginning of January to meet with other teaching pastors and learn more about the program. I'm enjoying sharing what I know with Vee and helping her shape her journey into our ministry.

Last year, I was also trained to serve as a mentor to a settled UU minister to help him/her in her/his growth and development. I was assigned one person whom I have supported with a call once a month. So far this year, my monthly meetings for this purpose have been very helpful to my mentee. Both as a teaching pastor, and as a mentor, I have been able to share some of my knowledge, experience and even a little wisdom. I find this teaching role very satisfying, passing on the craft that has been passed to me by so many of my ministerial colleagues.

### **Organizing Events and Convocations**

One of my skills is organizing events. In September, Buddhist mindfulness teacher **Sharon Salzberg** came to Albany to lead a Friday night talk and Saturday retreat here at FUUSA. These events brought 175 people Friday night and 60 people on Saturday into our space and into contact with me and members of our congregation. In April, I led the **Unitarian Universalist Buddhist Fellowship's Convocation 2013** in Reisterstown, Maryland featuring Buddhist mindfulness teacher Tara Brach that attracted over 90 people. **Mark Hicks** was the presenter for our UU Ministers Association conference right before District Assembly and I had a hand in organizing that as well. Thankfully, I didn't have any organizing role in the UUMA's Convocation 2013 that was down in St. Petersburg, Florida at the end of January. This was an excellent continuing education experience. I spent 15 hours in class with Rev. Scott Tayler, co-minister in Rochester, New York, learning about some of their innovative ideas and methods in their congregation.

### **Buddhist Voices in Unitarian Universalism**

As I mentioned in my report last year, the Rev. Wayne Arnason and I have been working on a **book of essays** by mostly UU ministers on Buddhist themes to be published by the UUA's press, **Skinner House**. As this annual report goes to press, so is our book. Hopefully copies will be available at General Assembly in June. Very exciting to become a published author! You'll soon have a chance to get an autographed copy for just \$14!

### **Other Activities**

Just in case you think I am not busy enough, I also serve on the **Interfaith Impact Board** and attend meetings once a month as well as participate in their advocacy day. I serve as chair of the **Open UUA Committee**, a subcommittee of the UUA Board. This committee advocates for transparency and open governance within the UUA, implementing a bylaw that was passed to enforce such behavior. I also serve on an **Institutional Review Board (IRB)** with Mary Applegate for the Center for Disabilities here in Albany. I attend the **West Hill Ministerial Fellowship** meetings as a way to connect with the local community. And I continue to show up at **SNUG** actions, pride and transgender events and any other demonstration or action that aligns with FUUSA commitments and advocacy areas.

### **Personal**

In June 2013, we'll have lived a year in East Greenbush. The move has been wonderful. Our new home is warm in the winter and cool in the summer. Being 10 minutes from FUUSA and commutable by bike has been delightful for me. Philomena's work with Bick Wank and Assoc. as a therapist keeps her as busy as she wishes to be. Andrew is finishing up at Hudson Valley and will attend SUNY Potsdam as a junior in the fall. Life is good for our family and I'm grateful to be serving such a vital and vibrant congregation as FUUSA for another year.

Rev. Sam

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

<b>Executive Committee:</b>	Chuck Manning, President Sue Berzinis, Treasurer	Peggy Sherman, Vice President Donna Meixner, Secretary
<b>Trustees:</b>	Al DeSalvo Dick Dana Bob Franklin	Katharine Harris Rebecca Myer Mark Yolles
<b>Ex-officio Members:</b>	Sam Trumbore, Minister Paula Brewer, Chair Religious Education Council Karen Kaufmann, Chair Social Responsibilities Council	
<b>Elected Officer:</b> (not on Board of Trustees)	Mike Babala, Assistant Treasurer	

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Chuck Manning

“We **welcome** all men, women and children who seek a religion based on the inherent sanctity of every person's free and responsible search for truth and meaning. In keeping with our distinctive, non-creedal religion, we strive to **excite** the human spirit and **inspire** its development; to **respond** to moral and ethical issues in our local, national and world communities; and to **sustain** a vital and nurturing congregational life.--Adopted November 7, 1993”  
That is our mission statement. So how are we doing? Mission statements should lead to action. A few examples of how the highlighted verbs describe our actions this past year are given below. I expect that each of you could come up with many more.

**Welcome:** We have a very active Membership Committee. They call their work Membership Ministry. Visitors to our congregation consistently comment on how welcoming we are when they first come. As I observe conversations during coffee hour, newcomers are engaged with one of our members and are being welcomed. This is terrific and we need to keep doing this ministry to share what we have with the wider world. Our welcoming and community-building activities also include circle dinners, multi-generational pot lucks, neighborhood potlucks, Ps&Qs (Projects and Quilts), Walker Book Club, and coffee hour. There are two areas where we could improve. At a recent Board meeting, our youth rep, Anna Brewer asked, “Why does the mission statement say ‘all men, women, and children’, instead of all ‘people’?” Good question. We should consider it when the mission statement is reviewed. We also need to work more on the integration of new members into our community after they join as well as reaching out to members who have “lapsed”.

**Excite:** After just experiencing the Thandeka Sunday Service, it is clear that we are working on different ways to excite and inspire the human spirit. I realize that this type of emotional approach may be uncomfortable for some members (including this engineer) but it can lead to excitement and inspiration. The overall changes in Sunday Services this year have blended the traditional intellectual content with more music and thematic cohesion. I hope these experiments continue in the future. Evensong is another exciting and inspiring service that addresses our mission. The gathering of 40 to 60 on a Tuesday evening to share a worship experience has been very successful. Thank you to the volunteer organizers and Matt for this innovative experience.

**Inspire:** The Sunday services and Evensong we offer do inspire. The “Windows” newsletter and weekly “Preview” email provide many more examples of our inspiring activities including Wellspring, Small Group Ministry, Religious Education, Lifelong Learning, and Social Action. After experiencing the energy of a Sunday morning at FUUSA, I am ready for the week.

**Respond:** Our Social Action activities, led by the Social Responsibility Council and its sub-committees, respond to a wide variety of moral and ethical issues. We donate to local non-profits on “give away the plate” Sundays, we donate to the Focus Food Pantry once a month, and we have special collections for disaster relief. Our members work at the Focus Food Pantry and homeless shelter, they tutor at Sheridan Academy, they lobby at the State Capitol, they demonstrate for equal rights and a minimum wage, they write letters to politicians and sign petitions, they go on service trips to assist victims of Hurricane Sandy, and they help each other when there is a health or family crisis. All of these responses are inspired by our Unitarian Universalist values and principles.

**Sustain:** FUUSA is here because of the vision, hard work, and effort of previous generations. It is our duty and honor to continue to sustain and grow this community. Each year we do that together during the Stewardship Campaign and through all of our volunteer efforts. I have been amazed at the dedicated volunteer hours that keep us going and thriving. Truly, “Love is the doctrine of this community and service is its call.” Each Sunday and every day of the week, we all work to maintain our “vital and nurturing religious community.” I plan on continuing this sustaining work after I complete my term this June and I encourage all of you to continue on the journey with me.

## **BOARD ACTIONS 2012-13**

A summary of the Board Actions so far this year are provided below:

- ◆ Board Members took the on-line course Balancing Acts: Keeping Children Safe in Congregations
- ◆ Reviewed and Approved contract with New York Light Energy to install the FUUSA PV system
- ◆ Nominated Peter Morales for another four year term as UUA President (along with many other congregations)
- ◆ Appointed a by-laws task force, approved by-law changes, and established a process to present the changes at congregational conversations and at the annual meeting
- ◆ Approved using Capital Reserve Funds to repair the Organ
- ◆ Appointed members of the Finance Committee, Personnel Committee, and Committee on Professional Ministry
- ◆ Endorsed the concept of Rev. Sam becoming a teaching pastor in conjunction with Meadville-Lombard Seminary with FUUSA becoming a teaching congregation. Interviewed Vee Abbot and endorsed her as Sam’s first student.
- ◆ Reviewed and approved the Building Use Policies and Rental Fees
- ◆ Approved 2013-14 Budget and Stewardship Goal
- ◆ Approved Unirondack Fund Raising “Give Away the Plate” and CROP Walk fund raising
- ◆ Established task force to review the minimum pledge (financial contribution) as a requirement for active membership
- ◆ Sponsored a Potluck
- ◆ Supported participation in the Beloved Conversations Course Sponsored by CRUUNY

## **TREASURER'S REPORT 2012-2013**

Sue Berzinis, Treasurer

### **Operating Budget**

As the year has progressed, contributions have trended slightly above budget. There have been no unusual or expected expenses, so our expenses should all be within budget by the end of the year. If pledges continue to be met, we should finish the year with a modest surplus which will be transferred to the Building Reserve account.

### **Building Mortgage**

Part of the financing for Emerson Hall includes a \$1,200,000 mortgage held by Berkshire Bank. As of March, we have paid off \$213,065 of the principal, leaving a balance of \$986,934. Annual interest and principal payments are fixed for 10 years at \$84,109, most of which currently comes from the reserve fund set up at the outset of the loan. Last year we transferred \$20,000 from the annual operating budget to the reserve fund; this fiscal year we will transfer \$25,000. The amount will continue to increase while the reserve fund makes mortgage payments. Our mortgage must be renegotiated in 2017.

In my first year as Treasurer, I have found everyone to be very conscious and respectful of their budget and expenses. I have seen very thoughtful, responsible and detailed planning of our finances by the Finance and Personnel Committees. I appreciate the assistance of Stephanie Hayes, our Office Administrator for her attention to detail in recording all deposits, pledges and rental income. I pay the bills, reconcile our numerous bank accounts and issue monthly reports to the Board. I am thankful for the written documentation for the Treasurer compiled over the past few years. The position has a steep learning curve with our numerous funds and accounts; this has provided guidelines for consistent financial reporting.



**Income & Expense Summary FY 2011-2012  
ending 06/30/2012**

**Ordinary Income and Expense**

**Income**

Total Contribution Income	\$ 401,513	84.2%
Total Other Income (rentals, interest)	\$ 38,967	8.2%
Total Program Income( FUN/D raisers, RE)	<u>\$ 36,652</u>	<u>7.7%</u>
Total Income	\$ 477,132	100.0%

**Expense**

Total Non-Ministerial Salary & Benefits	\$ 176,776	42.8%
Total Administration	\$ 33,453	8.1%
Total Building Maintenance	\$ 42,866	10.4%
Total Church & Community	\$ 13,159	3.2%
Total Denominational Affairs	\$ 35,450	8.6%
Total Ministerial Expenses	\$ 102,579	24.8%
Total Religious Education	\$ 5,821	1.4%
Total Social Responsibilities	<u>\$ 3,069</u>	<u>0.7%</u>
Total Expense	\$ 413,173	100.0%

**Transfers**

Capital Reserve Fund	\$ 5,786
Building Reserve Fund	\$ 20,000
Ministerial Intern Reserve Fund	\$ 1,000
Sabbatical Fund	<u>\$ 620</u>
Total Transfers	\$ 27,406

**Total Expense and Transfers**

\$ 440,579

**Net Surplus transferred to Building Reserve account** \$ 36,553

## ENDOWMENT TRUST ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2012

Submitted March, 2013

### Trust Purpose

As stated in The Declaration of Trust, the purpose of the Endowment Trust is to invest and manage gifts and testamentary bequests made to the Society by its members and other individuals or entities. The primary objective of the Trust is to assure potential donors that their bequests will be honored and administered to protect in perpetuity a principal fund which will generate income which may be used from year to year to assist the Society in furthering its purposes, through Special Projects.

### Trust Status

At the beginning of 2012, the Trust had a value of \$764,995. During 2012, gifts to the Trust were made in the amount of \$15,527. Thus, without including earnings growth, the Trust should have been worth \$780,522 at the end of 2012. The inflation adjustment to the Trust's cost basis is \$1,950, giving a total of \$782,472. In fact, at the end of 2012, the Trust was worth \$809,312. This is \$26,840 (3.4%) higher than the inflation-adjusted amount. Given that 71% of the Trust is devoted to the non-interest bearing loan to FUUSA's building fund and additional 3% is invested in socially responsible low interest community loans, this is a reasonable return.

Looked at another way, if the FUUSA loan is excluded, the value of the Trust at the end of 2012 was \$234,312. This is more than twice the inflation-adjusted value of all contributions to the Trust since its inception, \$113,925.

At the end of 2012, the Endowment was composed of a congregational building loan of \$575,000 (71%), a mutual fund portfolio of \$198,338 (25%), interest-bearing loans to the Community Loan Fund of \$27,000 (3%), and to the Honest Weight Food Coop of \$7,900 (1%), and a designated fund balance of \$8,436 (1%).

### Disbursements

During 2012, the Trust received only one request and gave \$120 for food purchases associated with the Community Connections Committee's Community Health Fair.

Including unused capacity from last year, this year's grants allocation will allow the trust to entertain applications amounting to \$4,928 during 2013. We welcome proposals for using this money to benefit FUUSA's mission.

### Gifts Received

During 2012, a total of \$15,527 in gifts and bequests were received in memory of:

Charles Estey	Ruth Estey	George Kleinberger	Mathew E. Odell
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The Trust Board takes this opportunity to publicly thank this year's contributors:

Duncan & Julia Blanchard	Fred Boreali
Ann & Dave Brandon	Priscilla Crago
John Deagle	John & Myrna Denison
Ann & Don Eberle	Charles Estey (Bequest)

Ruth Estey (Bequest)  
Mary & Alfred Garrison  
Debra Imbriale on behalf of PS 128  
Susan Leahy & Peter Kinsella  
Barb & Chuck Manning  
Don Odell  
Margaret & Hebert, B. Plocharczyk  
Patricia Ryiz  
Bernice Shoobe  
Terry & Linda Way  
Timothy & Barbara Wojdan

Emily & Jonas Ettliger  
N. Foster & Corliss Greene  
Chris Jensen & Randy Rosette  
Sara Alice Knapp  
Ilona & Leonard Muhlich  
Mary Phillips  
Candace Portzer  
Margaret & John Sherman  
Lois & Bob Thomson  
Lois Webb

### **The Future**

It is a sad irony that our endowment often grows in proportion to the number of committed FUUSAns who die during a year. We on the Trust Board recognize the responsibility these gifts represent and devote our efforts to maximizing the impact of the memory of these treasured benefactors.

We invite interested FUUSAns and friends to consider small or large donations to the Trust for joyous occasions as well as memorials, and will be happy to discuss your contributions to our Greater Gifts Program.

Thank you for your continued support,

Lee Newberg, Endowment, Trust Chair

Reese Satin, Vice Chair

Chris Jensen, Secretary

Sue Berzinis, Treasurer (Ex officio)

Betsey Miller

Todd Thomas

## DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Leah Purcell

With great pride and deep appreciation, I list the names of the RE volunteers here. Whether you are a parent or caretaker of a child or youth or not, please extend your thanks to them. Their work changes the world for the better.

Our Sunday school team members were MaryAnn Lettau, Sandy Stone, Karyn Loscocco, Astrid Pettersen, Neil Rice, Owen Devine, Sarah Whalen, Peg Sutton, Laura Churchill, Zoe Hutchins, Sarah Martin, Terry Way, Cindy Ferrari, Cari Abatemarco, Elizabeth Baldes, Leah Akins, Ruth Foster, Richard Sleeper, Mike Myers, Laurie Beberwyck, Cate Bohn, Patti Jo Newell, Lee Newberg, Elena Reynolds, Tracie Tilgner, Winston Hagborg, Shuang Liu, Amy Jesaitis, Don Odell, Jim Hutchins, Millie Eidson, Laura Churchill, Shawn FitzGerald, Tyler Kessel, Pete Costello, Joanna Heinsohn, Britany Orlebeke, Sarah Martin, Brian Carr, Brette Bateman, Marietta Angelotti, and Christina Carerra. Of these 50 volunteers, 15 were first timers this year.

Our Rite of Passage mentors were: Barb Metz, Kate Nuding, Todd Gray, Tom Mercer, John Scaringe, Winston Hagborg, Mary Myers, Elissa Kane, Linda Way and Sheila Gray.

Our Workshop Rotation leaders were Sharon Babala, Randee Beeche, Alyssa Colton, Kayla Autry, Terry Way, Nora Purcell, Karen DeWillers, and Deirdre Harwick, and members of the Green Sanctuary Committee. Many thanks go to Carol Butt for organizing volunteers from the GSC.

Our accompanists for Children's Chapel were Karen Greene and Ann Brandon

As usual, the RE volunteers generally enjoyed their time working with children and youth. I emailed them weekly and routinely provided them with the materials they need; visited the classrooms and held team meetings to check in with them; and the children and youth seemed, for the most part, to be eager to come to the service, to Children's Chapel and to Sunday school. I heard nothing but good reports about the first day of Sunday school. I was able to visit each classroom long enough to see how things were going. The teachers and the children and youth did an amazing job of creating welcoming environments. The attendance that day was 98. (For reference, attendance on the first day last year was 93; 78 in 2009; 115 in 2001 -right after the terrorist attacks – and 80 in 2000.) In general, attendance was about the same as last year, though I got a lot of emails from families this year in December through February saying that they could not come because of sickness.

Our registration in the RE program for the traditional year was 146 which is 25 more than last year at this time. We continue to welcome new families each week--most have young children age 7 and under.

The curriculum choices this year reflect the RE philosophy that I have been discussing with the Religious Education Council. So the topics are less "academic" and more experiential, with more emphasis on Unitarian Universalism and addressing the "big" questions of life. ("Who are we?" "Where did we come from?" "Who are our neighbors?" "How are we called to serve others?" "What happens to us when we die?") There were two groups of children in Pre K and Kindergarten. I created a curriculum, much like Spirit Play [www.spiritplay.com](http://www.spiritplay.com) which I called *UU Play*. It is a UU story-based program using the Montessori Method. However, I modified the way it was presented to be more in line with our FUUSA culture. The element I kept from Montessori is encouraging children in a 3-year age span to learn from each other and to offer them choices in the activities that follow up on the story.

The theme of Workshop Rotation this January was reflecting on how to respond to the time of the year when the days are short and the nights are long. And the story was *The Rebirth of the Sun* from the Tapestry of Faith curriculum -which I first told in the regular service on Jan 4. The workshops were – Gratitude through Art, Music, Movement and Recycling. The Workshop Rotation committee and I

pursued a few ideas and asked people in both our congregation and Schenectady to lead the music workshop. In the end, I hired Deb Cavanaugh, a local musician who works with children at \$100 per week (which is half of her usual fee). I don't think that hiring someone needs to be a trend for Workshop rotation, but good musicians willing to work for free are hard to come by. The second week of January we re-enacted the story in Children's Chapel and the children did a marvelous job helping me with that. ! I also told the story in other ways the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> weeks. Many thanks go to Karen Greene for playing the piano for us the month of January. I arranged for special guests to visit the Pre-K and Kindergarten groups for the first 20 minutes of Sunday school since those children don't go to the Children's Chapel in the Sanctuary. The guests lead the children in singing or movement like yoga or nia.

We have 39 volunteers for the spring semester! I did recruit folks for the younger grades – two of them are parents who started attending last year. On Feb 3 we had the orientation for families and students of the Our Whole Lives program for our 4<sup>th</sup> grade. I was glad to see almost full participation by the RE families, so think this session of OWL (which is new to us, since we've never done OWL at the younger grades) has gotten off to a particularly good start. For the first time we offered OWL (Our Whole Lives – age appropriate sexuality education) for 4th graders. We had a bit of a bumpy start –finding the right material for parents to use at home and having the “homework” align with the sessions on Sunday mornings. But parents immediately made their concerns known and the facilitators and I were able to quickly consider the problems and make changes. The parents also set up a blog for families and facilitators and created a support group. These successes will be noted if and when we present the program in future years.

We had a really successful 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade OWL program, which we offer as a year-long program every other year. They had an overnight Friday, March 1. Seven kids came; all the facilitators came and 3 spent the night; and I was there too. What a great group! It was a pleasure to be with them.

I worked with Rev. Sam and the mentors and youth who decided to participate in the Rite of Passage program this year (the third of three years in a row we've offered the program.) I made the youth/mentor matches in the spring of 2012 and in August, most of us attended an overnight wilderness experience at Hawk Circle. Rev. Sam and I made some major changes in the program the past two years and we also did some more “tweaking” again this year to make the sessions more engaging and meaningful. Nine youth completed the program and went to Boston. To raise money for their trip, they sold poinsettias at Christmastime and held a “Parents' Time Out” (babysitting for FUUSA families). Their service is May 12th.

The Senior High Youth rethought how they did their service work this year. They opted not to do an Adopt a Family project in part because it seemed like charity rather than solidarity with other people. The youth were invited to the Hurricane Sandy relief efforts organized by CRUUNY (the Capital Region UU's of NY) and several youth attended those. More would like to participate in a summer trip which is being planned. One youth and one advisor and I attended the Healthy Youth Group Training Nov 2-4 along with 17 other youth and adults at the Schenectady congregation. It was an amazing learning experience since it was one of the first of its kind trainings given for youth and adults together. More of our youth attended St. Lawrence District youth conferences (“cons”) this year than previous years. Their feedback inspired seven senior high youth to attend the con in April in Schenectady. The youth group has decided that they would like to host a con here in April of next year. They had a FUUSA youth overnight here in February and are interested in having another one this spring, for the current senior high group and incoming high schoolers for next year.

The youth did a super job of creating, setting up, enacting and cleaning up their Haunted House for the younger kids attending the Halloween party held Saturday, Oct. 27. Some of them had attended the

Rite of Passage overnight the night before and stayed through the afternoon. Families pronounced the Haunted House a great success

Again this year I am meeting with our 12<sup>th</sup> graders to give them an opportunity to reflect on their years at FUUSA and what they would like for their futures. It's often a challenge for seniors to stay engaged with the high school group. This group of seniors has expressed interest in having a bridging ceremony at the end of the year and finding ways to stay connected to UU-ism after they graduate.

The elementary school children voted to donate most of the collection from our monthly Children's Chapel this year to the Marrilac Family Shelter – where we bring the donations from our Mitten Tree each year. A portion of the collection will go to FUUSA.

The Curriculum Committee will convene soon to make decisions about program offerings for Sunday school for 2013-14. The biggest issue regards next year's 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> grade group. They will just have finished 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade OWL. There is always discussion of whether to split them to move the 9<sup>th</sup> graders into the high school group or leave the incoming 8/9 together. The groups are often bonded following OWL, so absorbing both into high school could extend time for the 8<sup>th</sup> graders. But this creates a problem for the following year when the two grades enter en masse into the high school group.

### **Responding to tragedies**

Sadly, there were national tragedies this year that drew the attention of children, youth and families. Fortunately, I was able to help youth, in particular, respond to these events. The Rite of Passage Parent Time Out fundraiser was the day after the mass shooting in Connecticut. I called all the families who had signed up for Parent Time Out and let them know how we would be handling things with the children. The parents were very reassured and grateful for the call and the consideration. I also sent an email to RE volunteers with resources for them to talk (or not talk) about the shootings with their groups in Sunday school that week and posted some resources for parents on my Facebook status and in emails to parents.

I knew that at least some of the children would have been touched by Hurricane Sandy, so at the November 4<sup>th</sup> Children's Chapel, I invited children to talk about what they knew about the storm. Many shared the effects it had on them and their family and friends and what they heard and saw in the news.

Our Rite of Passage group left Boston the day before the marathon bombings. Some youth posted messages of concern for those affected and about how close our lodgings were to the finish line. I was able to go to Boston in the time between the trip and the following meeting and was able to talk to Bostonians who work at the UUA and bring back pictures of the messages of peace displayed at the Arlington St. Church to share with the youth to help them deal with their feelings.

Rev Sam and I continue to partner in creating multigenerational services that are engaging and meaningful for all ages. I spent quite a bit of time organizing a new (to us) Christmas pageant – “The Best Christmas Pageant Ever”. We had about 27 children participating in the pageant this year – perhaps a record! About 5 parents helped with the prompting during the service. At the rehearsal, I encouraged the children to act rowdy in the service – in keeping with the story-- but they were all very reserved. And so the impact was lost a bit.

Starting in October I used some of my professional development money to hire a coach (Kathy McGowan) to help me with my storytelling as worship skills. Kathy has a background in theater and is a former DRE. I think the things I learned from her have really helped to make the Message for All Ages each week impactful and engaging.

I was also on the planning committee for the CRUUNY worship service in Round Lake on June 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Besides Sunday morning programming and Rite of Passage, much of my time was spent with the Love Beyond Belief Program with Rev Thandeka to improve our workshop services. I also participated in the anti-oppression, anti-racism program Beloved Conversations program, which was a CRUUNY event designed to prepare facilitators to offer this program in each of the congregations.

I offered a few learning events for families and for teachers.

In the fall I offered a class for parents called “Parents as Social Justice Educators” I thought the topic was timely, given the interest we have heard from families about participating in social justice projects together and the work that CRUUNY is thinking about to follow up from Justice GA. But not enough people signed up to make it at “go”. Perhaps parents didn’t have enough notice, or maybe the topic is not as engaging as I anticipated, or perhaps parents are already ready to do social justice work.

With Paula Brewer’s help, I held a thank you breakfast for the RE volunteers on Feb 10. I wanted to find out from them what made them want to continue teaching (since the majority of RE volunteers have volunteered in the past). Frequent responses included. “It’s enjoyable and fulfilling.” “I wanted to improve my teaching skills,” and “To see the kids change and grow.” *I also asked them if they would like a workshop on teaching as a spiritual practice, and got positive responses on that too.* Cate Bohn, who attended Thandeka’s spirituality workshop and I will be working on taking some elements of the workshop to create a workshop for RE volunteers to help them make teaching RE a spiritual practice.

This spring I am working on gathering folks to help me host the May 17<sup>th</sup> Multigenerational Potluck. Dawn Dana and I are working to make the CROP walk an opportunity for personal, philosophical and faith development following the Learn/Do/Reflect model.

I’m working on a committee on the District and Regional level to support and provide training for lay congregational leadership. As you may know making connections among congregations is also a goal of the St. Lawrence District. I was elected to the St. Lawrence District Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee has three tasks – organizing the Fall Leadership Day, nominating candidates for volunteer leadership positions and presenting at District Assembly. I am very interested in ensuring that there is a workshop of value at Fall Leadership Day for Religious Educators – including RE Council Chairs and members.

I am also serving as a mentor in the Religious Education Credentialing Program.

I love my new office space! I have privacy, plus windows, and space for chairs and a work table. So my office has become a meeting place for me to meet with families and volunteers.

A milestone in our family life this year is that we are selling our home of 24 years in Valley Falls and moving to Albany. Though Kevin and I will miss the beauty of the country, we are looking forward to the conveniences and short commutes that city life affords.

## DIRECTOR OF MEMBER SERVICES AND COMMUNICATIONS

Amy Lent

### Communications

We started the year with the migration of our website into a content management system (WordPress) in order to make managing the material on the website easier and more consistent. We hired a consultant to set it up for us, and do the majority of the transfer of material. Bob Franklin reviewed the result, and updated all the items that had changed during the time of the transfer. Bob has continued to assist with updates all year long.

Newcomers express praise for the information provided on the FUUSA website. (The Internet is the most frequently cited information source that visitors list on their 'blue card' other than Friends and Family.) It is well worth our effort to keep our website current, attractive and useful.

We have had a FUUSA Facebook page for a couple of years, and this year at the suggestion (and with the assistance) of Owen Devine we added a closed Facebook group called "FUUSA News and Updates". The purpose of this was to provide a secure method for sharing information on FUUSA activities—whether it's announcing an event, a call for volunteers, or a sharing of photos and successes—it's a way for FUUSA Facebook users to 'talk' without the rest of the world being privy to their whereabouts. The general FUUSA page (which can be seen by anyone on Facebook) is currently only sporadically used. Cate Bohn and Jaye Holly have expressed interest in working on this page, and will be meeting soon to get started.

Our weekly email "Preview", powered by Constant Contact, goes to over 800 addresses. This includes, of course, multiple addresses in some households, and every visitor who's ever given us an email address! (Not to worry—they can unsubscribe if they don't want to get it any longer.) The Preview appears to be a valuable resource for FUUSAns whether newcomers or long-timers, and helps us get the message out about what's going on here.

The adage I learned when I first got into the church newsletter business (as a volunteer 18 years ago!) was that a person has to see something in print 5-7 times in order to retain the information. The challenge nowadays is to figure out which media to put the message in. We stopped producing the mid-month newsletter almost two years ago, to reduce paper use, among other things, and hoped that the weekly email would fill the gap. And I believe it has, quite well.

We still produce a monthly newsletter, and while I get very little feedback about it, I do know *some* people read it. However, I do not know if *enough* people read it. Is it a useful method of communication? Are we using it effectively? Can a publication designed for 8 1/2 by 11 inch paper survive in a world of computer screens--and the opposite question--What would happen to those of us who prefer to read on paper if we didn't produce it this way? Does the result justify the amount of time I put into collecting information and others put into writing it? And the time for me to edit, layout, print... I don't know. If we didn't have "Windows", what would better do the job of keeping members and friends of FUUSA informed and active participants in our congregational life?

The Internet is providing us with new avenues for communicating—we could take on more of those. How much time and energy (staff or volunteer) would we have to put into how many different modes of communication? (Full disclosure, I am probably not the right one to answer that question as I have never really liked Facebook, the one social media I've used, and I smirked recently upon learning that the younger generation is already abandoning it.) This is an area where we need some discernment and planning.



We've had a light year in external publicity, with the exception of calendar listings of FUUSA events in various local media. Paula Moskowitz, former chair of the Public Relations committee, has been doing an excellent job of sending out the calendar listings. I have gotten out a few press releases on events, and helped with some ads. But without a PR chair and a committee, we have no organized outreach effort. Rev. Sam called together a Marketing Summit earlier this year, and I hope that some energy for the vital task of sharing Unitarian Universalism will be forthcoming.

## **Member Services**

The four teams of the Membership Ministry seem to be working well. Peter Brown stepped up to serve as chairperson, thus freeing up the team leaders to focus on their areas while allowing for combined action of the larger group.

We made an effort early in the year to educate the congregation on being welcoming to guests, and while we did not manage to continue the educational effort, I am delighted to report that newcomers routinely comment on the warm welcome they get here at FUUSA.

Another kudo came from a long-time UU who praised the entire guest-to-new member experience, saying we have good practices in place.

We added Receptions to welcome New Members on their joining Sunday and New Member Guides to help them thru their first year. And in a few weeks we'll be hosting our first New Member Potluck for all who've joined in the past 12 months.

We reached out to members who hadn't been seen in a long time, to make sure they know we care and help them feel connected to FUUSA.

And yet, the not so rosy part of the picture is the numbers. You'll notice in the Membership Ministry report we had a net loss of 4 members from January 1, 2012 to January 1, 2013. In October I used a model of measuring member statistics called Membership Journey Ratios to prepare a report for the Board of Trustees.

The source of this reporting method is a workshop called Congregations Count by Linda Laskowksi which I took at General Assembly several years ago. By way of explanation, I include the first few bullets from her presentation here:

### ***The Journey is a process***

*--Processes are things that happen over and over*

*--Process improvement techniques can be used to evaluate them*

*--Break down the process into separate steps*

*--Measure each step and convert to a ratio*

*--Compare with measurements from other processes (churches)*

*--Determine what part of the process is not working as well and fix that part*

And what we learned about FUUSA is this. Our guests hear about us from friends or family (34.7%) and the Internet (34.1%). Our "path to membership" is effective. Our rate of losses is below average. We do not get enough first-time visitors to grow. Point blank.

So, in order to give the gift of Unitarian Universalism to more people, in order to grow our congregation, this congregation needs to do a lot more to get people to come check us out. The Membership Ministry has some good practices in place, and will continue to hone our skills, recruit

more folks to share the workload with us, and seek best practices to add to our toolkit. But if we want to grow our church we will need to find ways to get more people into our front door.

### **My year in review**

Mezzo Mezzo: partly a play on my two 'part-time' roles, partly my feelings about the transition. I didn't expect it to be easy to stop doing one job in this organization and start doing a different one which combined parts of my old job and added some new tasks while teaching someone else how to do part of my old job as well as part of Dave Stone's job. Not to mention teaching members and friends to ask Stephanie for administrative help instead of me. And then the addition, in October, of supervising a custodian, and having to get somewhat re-involved in facility management in order to do that role. Confused yet?

So, no, it has not been an easy year. But, yes, I am getting work done, just not as much as could be if there weren't so many other demands on my time. Do we need to re-calibrate? We'll see.

## OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Stephanie Hayes

### STAFF

**Minister:** Rev. Sam Trumbore

**Director of Religious Education:** Leah Purcell

**Director of Member Services and Communications:** Amy Lent

**Music Director:** Matt Edwards

**Office Administrator:** Stephanie Hayes

**Rental Agent:** Lynne Lekakis

**Custodian:** Hadiya Wilborn

**Nursery Caregivers:** Mary Ellen Millett, Brandy Luther, Sarah Martin

Success and Change are the words for this year! So much has transpired to make these occurrences so very true. We said a fond farewell to Olga Oja and wished her a huge success in her new endeavors. We welcomed Sarah Martin as our summer nursery child caregiver.

To continue the migration of utilizing Church DB to its fullest, Leah and I had a training session on the Education Module and are using it for all of the RE class lists and attendance. We have also given input to the new creation of a rental invoice. When it is ready to be tested, we have agreed to be one of the testers. We continue to explore all of the other options and incorporate them into the daily needs of the church.

Now onto the "Big Change and Success". We purchased the Xerox ColorQube photocopier that we were testing. It is "Huge"!

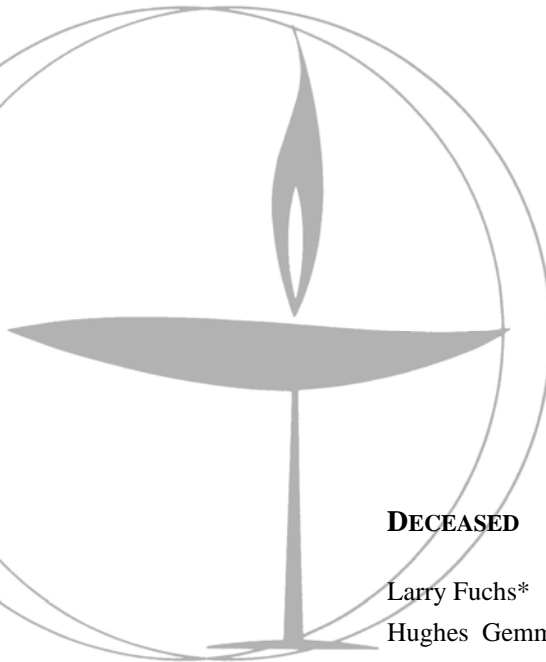
It can do everything that we need it to do, 3 different kinds of folding, staple, scan, fax and of course the big highlight is Color! It also complies with our mission to use only 100% recycled paper in it. Since it is so huge, the major change is that we needed to give it its own space. Now for the "Big Change", we completed a big makeover of the offices. Amy's old office had a wall built to divide it into two offices. The first part is now the "Work Room" and home to the photocopier, office supplies and mailboxes and a great work table provided by our master carpenter, Reese Satin. The second office is now Leah's. It provides her with all the privacy needed for her job. Amy has moved into what was the main office along with the guest spot. I have moved into the old RE office, and of course Sam stayed in his office. While we did the big move, we also completed a makeover of all the offices, with new paint, rugs and new flooring in the coatroom. All of this couldn't have occurred without the wonderful help of many volunteers. Out of this, we also now have a core of volunteers that come into FUUSA every week to work on any minor repairs. So far this has been highly successful!!

This year also brought change for Lynne Lekakis and myself, in the Rental Department. The Building Use Committee met several times and we have revised our Building Use Policy, Fee Schedule and Rental Contracts. We seem to be the new "in place" to have an event. We look forward to expanding our rentals in the coming year.

# WHEEL OF LIFE

## NEW MEMBERS

Kayla Autery  
Beth Babb  
Elizabeth Berberian  
Tom Chulak  
Alyssa Colton  
Paul Cotrupi  
Reed English  
Andrew Hendin  
Michael Hernandez  
Thomas Levanduski  
Maria Mena  
Ann Metzger  
Zachary Metzger  
Monica Miller  
Gina Patrino  
Lisa Penpraze  
Astrid Pettersen  
Bobbi Place  
Kaitlyn Proto  
Jim Reed  
Glen Reynolds  
Julie Reynolds  
Neil Rice  
Stephanie Roberts  
Bryce Rodin  
Michele Rodin  
Josh Shea  
Janet Smith  
Dee Van Riper  
Megan Vrooman  
Amy Weismann  
Todd Weismann



## DECEASED

Larry Fuchs\*  
Hughes Gemmill  
George Kleinberger\*  
Richard Patrick  
Ray Warner  
\*Not previously  
acknowledged

## STANDING COMMITTEES

### **BUILDING AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE**

**Chairperson:** Dave Metz

**Members:** Reese Satin, Dave Stone, Mike Babala

Working with other committees and the staff, our goal continues to be to improve and maintain the appearance and functionality of our extensive physical plant. No major projects were undertaken this fiscal year, but there has been an on-going effort to tackle and conquer the ever changing list of maintenance and repair issues that come with our extensive physical plant.

Examples of the projects completed this year include the following:

- ◆ Replacing all of the light bulbs in the chandeliers in the Sanctuary,
- ◆ Changing all exterior and many interior locks and key systems throughout FUUSA.
- ◆ Repairing and/or replacing lighting fixtures, fluorescent tubes and ballasts.
- ◆ Touching up paint in the Sanctuary and throughout the entire facility.
- ◆ Installing new flooring in the coatroom.
- ◆ Coordinating installation of the solar panel system.
- ◆ Completing the creation of a copier room and new office for the RE Director.
- ◆ Installation of new carpeting in the main office and the old RE office.
- ◆ Replacing the wax rings on all five toilets in the Emerson basement.
- ◆ Installing a new wall hanging in Emerson.

Special thanks go to Reese Satin, Dave Stone, Mike Babala, John Heinsohn, Steve Moskowitz, Reed English and Eileen Hoffman for their hard work this year.

### **COMMITTEE ON PROFESSIONAL MINISTRY**

**Chairperson:** Mary Applegate

**Members:** Jon Bick, Cate Bohn, Ben English, and Jon Newell

The **Committee on Professional Ministry** meets regularly with the minister to provide him with feedback about the congregation's reactions to Sunday services and other aspects of congregational life. They also serve as his sounding board, giving him an opportunity to

reflect on areas he wants to explore with the congregation and helping him think through challenges in the day-to-day management of FUUSA.

The committee welcomes input from other members of the congregation, with both positive feedback and opportunities for improvement regarding sermons, services, pastoral care, and other aspects of the ministry. All input will be passed on confidentially without revealing its source.

### **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**Members:** Michael Babala (Assistant Treasurer), Sue Berzinis (Treasurer), Dawn Dana, Larry Gambino, Kathy Harris, Dave Metz, Betsey Miller, and Steven Moskowitz (Chair).

**Goals and Responsibilities:** Except for the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer, members are appointed by the Board to develop and implement the financial policies of the Society and fulfill the responsibilities described in Article XI, Sections 4 and 13 of the Society's by-laws. Those responsibilities include maintaining and reporting financial information, conducting insurance reviews, analyzing and preparing budget proposals, obtaining external financial reviews and advising the Board on financial matters. Our meetings and records are open and we welcome visitors.

**Accomplishments:** Regular and extra meetings were conducted to do our usual work, which included additional work related to our budgeting process.

**Pledge collections.** Current budget projections show that we are meeting expectations for collecting current pledges.

**Emerson Community Hall financing.** We continue to monitor the actual and projected financial status of the mortgage. There has been much discussion about how to fund the next 4 years of payments (about \$84,000 per year) before the loan must be refinanced in year 10 (around June, 2017). New projections were made incorporating 6 years of past payments, very low

current interest rates and what will be needed in future annual operating budgets to ensure adequate building fund reserves and timely payments.

Two years ago, in response to the Finance Committee's recommendation, the Board endorsed increasing the proportion of our annual budget to debt service by 1% annually, at least until we reach the \$84,000 annual mortgage payment. Accordingly, our budget recommendation for 2013-14 is \$31,289. With that approach, both the base (the budget total) and the proportion allocated to debt will grow each year, allowing us to reach the mortgage amount within about 10 years. At this point there is no way to predict what our annual payment will be after the note is renegotiated in 2017.

**Operating budget.** We prepared the 2013-2014 operating budget, currently anticipated to be approved by the Board, subject to the final result of the annual stewardship drive and await congregational approval at the annual meeting. It is based on conservative projections of regular expenses and estimates of additional costs for initiatives. It also accommodates recommended personnel cost increases. The budget seeks to ensure that FUUSA will have enough money to meet current and future mortgage payments, as well as other planned commitments. As in past years, if actual pledge commitments either fall short of or exceed budgeted pledges, we will propose budget modifications to the Board. We will seek congregational approval if the changes exceed 5 percent. As has been past practice, should total unspent funds exceed our expenses, we will recommend that most of this amount be assigned to the Building Reserve Fund.

It should also be mentioned that FUUSA continues to be a Fair Share Congregation, paying its full allotment of dues to the UUA and the St. Lawrence District. FUUSA is working on paying its staff in accordance with UUA fair compensation standards.

**Financial records.** As Treasurer, Sue Berzinis is managing FUUSA's finances, ensuring that our financial records provide accurate monthly financial reports. Her work enables FUUSA to continue to receive positive statements in annual,

independent financial reviews that are required by our mortgage lender. This year's preliminary audit shows that another positive report is anticipated. More work is being done to develop a Treasurer's Procedure Manual, accounting for FUUSA's many transactions, and assisting in developing our next budget.

**Bookkeeping.** Our Treasurer, Sue Berzinis has assumed this role in addition to her elected one.

**Insurance.** Larry Gambino is FUUSA's liaison to our insurance agent, keeping the agent informed about our needs and advising the Finance Committee about our coverage. This year, we are reviewing our policies to ensure adequate coverage at a reasonable rate.

**Looking ahead:** In addition to our usual work, the Finance Committee will continue to monitor Emerson Community Hall's mortgage payment schedule and income from rentals. We will also continuously review FUUSA's overall income versus expenses, especially as actual costs associated with Emerson Hall and our membership growth initiative become better known. We budget conservatively as a rule, however, unforeseen costs are always a distinct possibility that must be appropriately handled..

#### **NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

**Chairperson: Dawn Dana**

**Members: Meredith Andrews, Debbie Brown, Dave Metz, Paula Moskowitz, Linda Way**

The Nominating Committee recruits and selects members to stand as candidates for the following positions:

- ◆ Officers- President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer
- ◆ Chairperson, Religious Education Council
- ◆ Chairperson, Social Responsibilities Council
- ◆ Board of Trustees members (6)
- ◆ Religious Education Council members (8-12)
- ◆ Social Responsibilities Council members (6)
- ◆ Nominating Committee members (6)
- ◆ Endowment Trust trustees (5)

In conjunction with the recruitment of candidates for elective offices, the committee conducts an active candidating process, compiling

biographical statements and photos to inform the congregation about candidate qualifications and to encourage active participation in FUUSA's Annual Meeting and election. We also conduct two Candidate Sundays prior to the Annual Meeting, where candidates are introduced during the Sunday service and wear colorful buttons to circulate at coffee hour.

The committee has been a regular contributor to Windows, both to inform the congregation of the "mechanics" of the elective process, such as nominating petitions and absentee ballots, but also to enhance the visibility of the leadership selection process and FUUSA governance.

The Nominating Committee has been active in this year's Bylaw review and amendment efforts, meeting with Bylaw committee representatives in the fall to discuss the review process and changes relevant to Nominating Committee work. We subsequently submitted several proposed Bylaw revisions and attended congregational conversations and other forums to address Bylaw matters.

The Nominating Committee continues important efforts toward leadership development in our congregation. We presented a Committee Focus on leadership development at a December service and also led discussion on this issue at the December PCC meeting. The committee has worked to develop comprehensive and accurate descriptions of all elective positions at FUUSA, which is critical to an informed and effective candidate recruitment process. The committee has established communications channels with the Membership Ministry, to ensure that leadership potential is identified and nurtured from an early stage. We have actively engaged with UUA Regional and District resource people to assess training opportunities and materials. The committee is in consultation with FUUSA leaders to promote summer leadership training and identify current and prospective leaders who could benefit from such opportunities.

The Nominating Committee wishes to thank all of those members who have stepped up for leadership roles, offering their time and talents for the benefit of our community.

## **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

**Chairperson:** Mark Butt

**Members:** Michele Desrosiers, Peggy Sherman, Molly Daniels and Bob Guerrin

The Personnel Committee oversees the administration of personnel policy and employee benefits for the paid staff of the Congregation. The Committee also facilitates communications between members of the society and the staff, works with the minister to set staff goals, and provides feedback on performance, and encourages and supports the staff towards professional growth.

This year the Committee has continued to promote fair compensation for FUUSA's staff based on UUA guidelines, market conditions and available FUUSA resources. This is a challenge for the coming year as there have been significant changes to these guidelines. The Personnel Committee is also trying to provide staff with medical benefits that are more aligned with other institutions in the areas.

With the recent changes to staffing at FUUSA, the Committee has been continuing to make changes to duties assigned to each of the staff to better reflect the diverse changing needs at FUUSA. In addition, the Committee has been looking at potential changes to the rental process as it becomes an increasing part of staff time.

The Committee continues in its review of the Personnel Manual to update the Manual to reflect changes in staffing and policies promulgated through the Board of Trustees.

Our job on the Committee is made easier due to a professional and competent staff. This has been another year of transitions for the Committee and a lot has been accomplished with the hard work of dedicated committee members and volunteers.

## **RELIGIOUS SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**Co-Chairpersons:** Irene Saulsbery & Linda Way

**Members:** Cate Bohn, Peter Meixner, Don Odell; Sue Stierer, Mark Yolles, and Rev. Sam Trumbore

The Religious Services Committee is responsible for assisting our minister with planning Sunday services on those dates when he

is not in the pulpit. Since Reverend Sam, Music Director Matt Edwards, and Director of Religious Services Leah Purcell consulted with Rev. Thandeka regarded creating a dynamic, integrated service experience for our community, there was a shift in the responsibilities of the Committee. The responsibility of recruiting ushers shifted from this committee to the Administrator.

The following are committee highlights from this year:

- ◆ Committee reviewed and filled open service dates.
- ◆ Discussed planning and possible service leaders for the 2013 Summer Service session. Sue Stierer is the Summer Service Worship Coordinator.
- ◆ Reviewed proposal for Audio-Visual equipment for Emerson. Given the complexity of the proposal, a subcommittee will take responsibility for this project.
- ◆ Welcomed Cate to the committee. Cate graciously manned the RSC table during the “Get Connected Fair.”

Members of the congregation are welcomed to join the RSC during our monthly meeting to participate in our ongoing conversations regarding Sunday Services

#### **STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE**

**Chairperson:** Dick Dana

**Members:** Tim Burch, Erik Eddy, Kathy Harris, Chuck Manning, Donna Meixner, Jon Newell, Rev. Sam Trumbore.

**Facilitators for Stewardship Gatherings:** Mary Applegate, Peter Brown, Tim Burch, Dawn Dana, Dick Dana, Michele Desrosiers, Elissa Kane, Chuck Manning, Donna Meixner, Peggy Sherman, Linda Way, Mark Yolles.

**Canvassers:** Al Berzinis, Sue Berzinis, Tim Burch, Dawn Dana, Dick Dana, Erik Eddy, Kathy

Harris, Roseanne Fogarty, Lois Griffin, Barb Manning, Donna Meixner, Dave Munro, Chuck Manning, Jon Newell, John Sherman, Peggy Sherman, Linda Way, Mark Yolles .

#### **Charge:**

The Committee is responsible for the development, conduct, and maintenance of the annual financial canvass of members and friends of the Society and also for the development, conduct, and maintenance of an ongoing program for canvassing new members. The Committee coordinates its program and activities with the Finance Committee.

Last year for the first time we instituted Stewardship Gatherings, inviting all members to attend, a very encouraging 225 members out of just under 400 total members attended 24 Gatherings. This year the turnout for Gatherings was less, 166 out of 400 members attended 18 Gatherings, leaving a larger number of members to be reached through the traditional meeting with a canvasser. Both years, the response of those attending Gatherings was very positive. Overwhelmingly, people thought it was a great improvement over the traditional canvasser method of obtaining financial commitments for the year.

Last year the Stewardship Committee did not advertise our canvass goal of an increase of three to four percent in pledges over the previous year. We did not attain that goal. This year, with the endorsement of the Finance Committee and the Board, a goal of 10 percent over last year has been advertised and advocated for directly in both Gatherings and letters to the congregation, along with justification for the need for this significant increase. So far, we are still on track to attain that ambitious goal.



## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COUNCIL

### **Religious Education Council**

**Chairperson:** Paula Brewer

**Members:** Amy Souzis, Pete Costello, Tracie Tilgner, Owen Devine, Mary Myers, Jennifer Quail, Sarah Martin, Jan Satin, David Quist

**Senior High Representative:** Vacant

**Director of Religious Education:** Leah Purcell

The RE Council continues to provide “a religious education program for the children and youth of the Society” as the bylaws direct, but have also continued to provide a high quality of engaging programming, involving children, youth, and adults of all kinds into the life of the congregation.

### **Our vision is:**

To be a Unitarian Universalist Lifespan Community of Learners, The Religious Education Council is dedicated to creating a safe, nurturing and welcoming environment for individuals and families to learn and grow.

### **Our four objectives:**

1. To instill Unitarian Universalist values by internalizing and practicing our seven principles
2. Promote stewardship through participation in and caring for our congregation, our denomination, our world community and institutions that promote Unitarian Universalist values
3. Offer opportunities to formulate and celebrate one’s Unitarian Universalist identity and beliefs
4. Provide opportunities for spiritual, philosophical, ethical and faith development across the ages of life and stages of personal growth

### **Composition of the Council:**

Because of resignations in 2011-12, there were 10 elected Council members this year. With changes made to the bylaws, the REC may have between 9 and 12 members and the Nominating Committee will be able to put up to 4 names on the slate for the coming year. This year Brian Frank, a former member, continued to attend meetings and participate in Council activities.

Having a youth act as the Senior High Representative on a continuous basis is difficult due to the busy schedules of youth and the fact that the majority of REC meetings. Currently, an REC member is a Youth Advisor and routinely provides information on youth group. This member’s term will end this year and the council will discuss how best to solicit youth input into RE activities which affect them.

### **Curriculum and Religious Education Offerings**

The Council continues to take an active role in assisting Leah on choices for the curriculum for the Religious Education programming. We continued to change the RE class format to a workshop rotation in January 2013. Workshop rotation is a method of teaching the same topic in different ways; it recognizes that children, as well as adults learn through different experiences. Based on the success of workshop rotation, we may expand it to a month in the spring RE term in 2013 or 2014.

The 4<sup>th</sup> grade RE class is in the midst of their 4-session Our Whole Lives Curriculum. Since this is the first time that we have offered this OWL curriculum, we’ve experienced some growing pains. However, with the support of the 4<sup>th</sup> grade parents, the classes are progressing well. Our traditional 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade full year OWL curriculum is also being taught this year. Expanding our offering of OWL to include the 4<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum supports the implementation of the Safe Congregation Policy.

With REC support, Leah implemented the newer Tapestry of Faith curriculum for grades one through 6 in 2012-13. The modified Spirit Play curriculum has been implemented for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten, as well as continuing to use it as the summer RE programming.

### **Intergenerational Social Opportunities**

Creating ways to come together as a multigenerational community was also a priority. The Pasta Dinner in September continues to be a success. It also served as an RE open house. Class curriculums and materials were on display for parents to review and Leah was available to answer any questions; and a couple of teachers

gave inspiring talks on why they volunteer to teach RE. Also in September, the Council sponsored the FUUSA picnic at the playground Washington Park after the service.

### **Stewardship/Social Action**

The Halloween Food Drive benefited the FOCUS Food Pantry this year. Children and families canvassed their neighborhood and collected cleaning and repair supply donations and then brought the donations to the Halloween Party. Youth were also involved in the party this year with their successful haunted house. Children had the option of experiencing it as scary and less scary. Many thanks to Terry Way for his creative face painting. Plans are to continue the haunted house and promote it more with the congregation to increase attendance.

We continued to combine the Holiday Craft Workshop and the tree trimming event in December. The tree was smaller and more user friendly for decorating by the children. As usual, it was a fun and fruitful event with many attendees making gifts to give to family and friends or to decorate the tree in Channing hall for the holiday season.

The Council has special interest in identifying family friendly service activities for FUUSA families. Aside from the Crop Walk, it is a challenge to identify service activities, especially outside of FUUSA, for families with young children to participate in. We are continuing to discuss avenues for such activities and have been polling parents for their opinions on this subject. REC and SRC worked to incorporate a Sunday RE lesson to hunger and food insecurity, which included a children's activity of making shelf-stable soup bags for donation to the FOCUS Food Pantry. Many thanks go to Renee Panetta and Patty Burch for their help with this project. SRC's Green Sanctuary also assisted with a workshop during the January 2013 workshop rotation on teaching children to re-purpose used t-shirts into tote bags.

In service to our recently graduated youth, members of the congregation at large are invited to donate food items, etc. which the youth group uses to stuff care packages, Huge UU Greetings

(HUUGS), for recently graduated youth of the church. Feedback from care package receivers has been very positive and is a good way for our current youth to keep in touch with their predecessors.

### **The Council and the Congregation**

The Council provides support to Leah each week by having a current or past Council volunteer staff the RE office to greet newcomers and answer any questions or meet the needs of parents or teachers while Leah visits the classrooms. Council members assist with copying materials for the next week's lessons, help freshen and replenish the "Busy Bags" for children attending multigenerational services, create and update a spreadsheet of all registered children in the program, volunteer in classrooms when an extra hand is needed.

The Council is discussing revising the role of Classroom Liaison. Since parents and teachers can easily reach out to RE Council members and the DRE about most problems and concerns, the Liaisons could be people to hear "grievance" issues (interpersonal conflicts between teachers, parents and the DRE). Plans are to develop a picture pamphlet of RE council members to distribute to parents; similar to the one on Pastoral Associates. We also want to develop a simpler way to gather information on RE program happenings in order to revive the UU Universe RE newsletter; probably through a template to use to simplify gathering information on RE classroom activities. Activities that have yet to occur include Sunday Sundae.

### **Summary**

This has been a year of discussion, planning, restructuring in response to and anticipation of further growth in the RE program. We continue to work closely with Leah and Rev. Sam to ensure that the Religious Education program is meeting the needs of our congregation and that our activities and events stay focused on the vision and mission of FUUSA and the Religious Education Council and support the Strategic Plan of the congregation.

## SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES COUNCIL

### SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES COUNCIL

**Chair:** Karen Kaufmann

**Elected Members:** Patty Burch, Fred Eames, Ed Hancock, Jaye Holly, Martha Musser, Renee Panetta

**Appointed Members:** Barbara Cooley, Don Odell, Robb Smith, Jacqui Williams, Betsy Wright.

**Structure:** In addition to the voting members, many others attend the meetings which are generally held following Coffee Hour on the first Sunday of the month. Everyone who attends is welcome to take an active part in the meeting. During the past year we have been joined regularly by Rev. Sam Trumbore. DRE Leah Purcell and President Chuck Manning have also attended. We were particularly pleased to have also been joined by several of our youth, who made valuable contributions to our discussions.

**Charge:** FUUSA Bylaws dictate the charge to SRC as follows: “The Council shall guide and coordinate education and action in the realms of social matters of moral and ethical significance. It may issue statements of public support and endorsement consistent with the policies and positions of the Society, the St. Lawrence District, or the Unitarian Universalist Association. The Council may initiate and promote activities consistent with these statements.”

**The Strategic Plan:** The Strategic Plan, formulated by the Dream Catchers and adopted by the congregation in 2009, highlighted the importance of social justice activities and set forth social justice goals and objectives which have served as a further framework for SRC. In particular, the Plan directs us to “increase the impact of our efforts and engage and energize the members of the congregation by concentrating our efforts in the following three areas:

1. Making a difference in the lives of children and families in the City of Albany.
2. Becoming a leader in sustainable environmental practices
3. Advocating for public policies that are in line

with our UU values and principles.”

These three criteria guide SRC membership in determining which projects to undertake and which activities to support through formal sponsorship, room donations and awards of plate giveaways.

Consistent with the Plan’s objective of “inform[ing] and connect[ing] new members with social justice projects,” we continue to provide new members with “commitment forms” so they can indicate their interests in specific aspects of social justice work. These forms are forwarded to SRC for followup contact to engage these new members in SRC activities.

**SRC Activities This Year.** In this fiscal year, SRC undertook a full slate of social justice activities, including the following:

In June, FUUSA was once again a visible presence at Pride Festival Day, marching behind our Standing on the Side of Love banner in the parade and tabling at the festival, doing double duty with voter registration as well.

On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, a number of FUUSAns joined CRUUNY in participation in the local Day of Service to coincide with Justice GA, partnering with the Backstretch Employees Service Team (“BEST”) for a day of service to backstretch employees at Saratoga Race Course, many of whom are immigrants, consistent with the theme of immigration justice at GA.

In September, with the leadership of Lois Griffin and Martha Musser, SRC undertook a new project to provide reading assistance for students of Sheridan Preparatory Academy, a city public school just a few blocks from FUUSA. A FUUSA delegation met with the Albany school district volunteer coordinator and the principal of Sheridan Prep. Over a dozen volunteers have since signed up to provide reading assistance to Sheridan students, who face the myriad challenges of urban poverty, and hopefully help them to achieve proficiency and a high school diploma.

On September 23<sup>rd</sup>, we sponsored a forum led

by local resident Alice Brody who discussed her peace mission to Iran and provided photo images and valuable insights based on her travels and connections with Iranian people.

SRC also became involved in planning for the Two Row Wampum commemoration, a paddling flotilla down the Hudson River to the UN in observance of the 17<sup>th</sup>-century treaties between European settlers and native peoples of New York. SRC has become a formal co-sponsor of this event and will provide volunteer assistance at the kickoff event at the Corning Preserve on July 27<sup>th</sup>.

On September 29<sup>th</sup>, Karen Kaufmann and Robb Smith attended the St. Lawrence District Leadership Conference in Syracuse. One of the workshops presented alternative processes for engaging the congregation in determining which social justice projects should be undertaken – food for thought should the SRC plate get too full!

In November, FUUSAns participated in A Day of Simple Giving, whose goal was to create practical gifts for guests of homeless shelters and low-income families. The event was organized by Grassroot Givers, a group that connects those with resources with those with needs for specific supplies and goods, particularly the homeless. We implemented Renee Panetta's brainchild, assembling soup mix bags that are easy to prepare to provide wholesome food to guests of homeless shelters and food pantries. Volunteers of all ages had fun on the "assembly line," and we have continued this activity at FUUSA and hopefully started a new tradition of conducting soup mix assembling at coffee hour on "Souper Sundays" once a month, for donation to the FOCUS food pantry.

In early January, 20 FUUSAns joined a CRUUNY weekend trip to New Jersey to assist in cleanup efforts following Superstorm Sandy. We stayed at the Murray Grove Universalist retreat and enjoyed fellowship activities that augmented two days of hard but satisfying work.

On February 1<sup>st</sup>, SRC hosted the

intergenerational potluck supper in Channing (a/k/a Chili Cookoff) for approximately 80 guests. We were joined by staff of the FOCUS food pantry. After screening the movie *The Line* about families crossing below the poverty line, they led a discussion about the food stamp program and the challenges of feeding a family on \$31.50 per person.

On February 17<sup>th</sup>, SRC sponsored a sneak preview screening of the movie *The Throwaways*. Directed and produced by Ira McKinley and Bhawin Suchak, it tells of Ira's struggle to bring positive changes to his community in inner-city Albany. There were 78 people in attendance, including FUUSAns, neighbors and college students from Siena College and SUNY Albany, and a free will offering of \$560.55 was collected to support further distribution of the film. The program was introduced by Jacqui Williams, who also gave an informative presentation about her project Filling in the Gaps in American History which recognizes the accomplishments of Americans of color that are overlooked in most studies of American history.

Immediately after the movie event, 3 youth and 2 adults (sponsored by SRC) boarded the bus at midnight for the Climate Change Rally in Washington, DC. We attended a service at All Souls Unitarian Church and then marched with UUs from all over the country, joining 40,000 other demonstrators.

On March 5<sup>th</sup>, with the organizational lead of Barb Cooley, we hosted a discussion in Emerson of Michelle Alexander's book, *The New Jim Crow*, that exposes the disproportionate mass incarceration of young men of color under the guise of the War on Drugs, and its devastating effects on minority communities. The book was this year's UUA Congregational Read, and Jacqui Williams led a discussion based on the UUA curriculum. Attendees included FUUSAns as well as community members and students. As an action around this issue, Judith Brink is guiding an effort to obtain enactment of the "SAFE Parole Act," a prisoners' grassroots initiative that would reform parole practices so that

decisions are properly based on an inmate's readiness to return to the community rather than the nature of the original crime. Followup meetings, both internal and with legislators, are being held to promote this legislation.

This year's UUA Congregational Study/Action Issue, as approved by delegates to the 2012 GA, is Reproductive Justice. As an action around this issue, SRC voted to join the Women's Equality Act Coalition for the promotion of the ten-point equity agenda laid out by Governor Cuomo in his State of the State message. The agenda includes enactment of the Reproductive Health Act, which would modernize state law to ensure the right to choose as reflected in federal court decisions. SRC members plan to participate in WEA rallies and lobbying events.

In April, FUUSAns participated in another Sandy relief trip, this time to Staten Island.

Plans for this year's Pride Day were also underway. FUUSAns and our sister congregations will march in the parade behind new CRUUNY banners and CRUUNY also decided to take out a half-page ad in the Pride Guide to publicize all of our four area congregations.

A number of regular ongoing activities have continued this year. During the winter months, volunteers prepare meals for the overflow homeless shelter on Mondays under the leadership of Patty Burch, and volunteers also regularly assist at the Interfaith Food Pantry and breakfast program.

We continue to enhance UU visibility via the **Standing on the Side of Love** logo. Our yellow hats, t-shirts and posters are now a constant presence at Capitol demonstrations in support of legislation and programs to aid the underprivileged and victims of oppression and injustice.

The SRC **Fair Trade Table** continues in operation, thanks to the efforts of Ann Kearney. It provides four to six varieties of ground and whole bean coffee and three to four varieties of chocolate Sundays during coffee

hour through the UUSC Equal Exchange Coffee project. In addition, we have continued working with Brenda Rosenbaum to offer Guatemalan craft items, the sale of which benefits both the craftswomen and FUUSA.

SRC attempts to keep the congregation informed of our activities through information on the SRC table alongside the Fair Trade Table, on the Bulletin Board, in Windows, the weekly Preview, and announcements in the Order of Service.

### **Give Away the Plate**

The Social Responsibilities Council is authorized to designate groups to receive a total of five plate giveaways in each fiscal year. Groups seeking a plate giveaway complete an application available on the FUUSA website that provides information about the organization's mission, its proposed use of the funding, and its other sources of funding. The application is voted on by the voting SRC members. A representative of the donee group is invited to speak briefly at the service at which the plate is donated. In 2012-13, the following groups received plate giveaways:

1. February 17<sup>th</sup>, Radix Ecological Sustainability Center of Albany. The Center is a unique not-for-profit educational organization in inner-city Albany that brings educational programs to schoolchildren and the public on greenhouse food production, aquaculture and renewable energy. \$545.00 was given.

2. Capital District Community Gardens, April 14<sup>th</sup>. It has become customary to donate the plate on Earth Day to CDCG, which provides garden spaces so that urban residents can grow their own fresh food, operates the Veggie Mobile which brings affordable fresh produce to inner-city neighborhoods, supplies low-cost fresh produce to urban convenience stores, and conducts a nutrition education program for city schoolchildren.

An additional plate giveaway has been approved for the Grand Street Arts Center, which incubated Ira McKinley's film *The Throwaways* and which also provides support

programming for Albany's youth to develop arts expression and skills.

Additional plate giveaways are made that are not subject to SRC approval. We continue to give away the plate on the fourth Sunday of every month to the FOCUS Food Pantry (over \$2,700 total through March). Christmas Eve plate proceeds were donated to the food pantry and Upper Hudson Planned Parenthood (\$529 each). A special plate giveaway was held in November for CERG Superstorm Sandy relief (over \$4,000).

### Room Use Donations

The room use donation process has been standardized with the adoption of the new Building Use Policy. SRC is authorized to provide 15 building use donations or rental rate reductions each fiscal year. In 2012-13, SRC donated:

- ◆ Emerson Hall on Sep. 20 for a lecture on genocide given as part of the Justice & Multiculturalism project of the SUNY College of Criminal Justice.
- ◆ Emerson Hall on Nov. 1 to Grannies for Peace and Veterans for Peace for readings of "Our Pieces of Peace."
- ◆ Emerson Hall on Nov. 17 for a Health Fair benefitting recent immigrants (Whitney Young Health Center and USCRI).
- ◆ Emerson Hall on Nov. 20 for the Transgender Day of Remembrance Service, under the auspices of Empire State Pride Agenda.
- ◆ Emerson Hall on Feb. 1 for the screening of *The Throwaways*.
- ◆ Channing Hall on Feb. 2 for Capital District Community Gardens' annual signup event.
- ◆ Emerson Hall Mar. 19 for Albany Community Policing Board (postponed due to weather)
- ◆ Emerson Hall for "In Our Own Voices" events: May 29 (Racism Under the Rainbow Community Discussion); May 30

("The Wiz" LGBT Ball); May 31  
(Community Sober Dance)

SRC is the umbrella organization for several committees and activities whose reports follow.

## COMMITTEES

### FOCUS INTERFAITH FOOD PANTRY

**Liaisons:** Patty Burch and Renee Panetta

Contributions: collection total for FUUSA donations to FOCUS: FUUSA gave \$7,115.70 to the Pantry for 2012

Backpack assembly at FUUSA occurred the last week of August, 2012.

- ◆ Created 200+backpacks for students in the Albany School District Pre-K through H.S.
  - ◆ Of the 200+ created-90 went to the children of the families staying at the Skylar Inn and
  - ◆ 20 backpacks to the Marillac Center.
  - ◆ The extra collected school supplies were divided among the 13 schools that comprise the Albany School District- Elementary, Middle School and High School.
  - ◆ FUUSA again will be the host to create the backpacks this August, 2013.
  - ◆ Starting in August the school supplies will be stored at FUUSA and on the week of August 26-30 the backpacks will be created on Monday, Tuesday and Wed. mornings; with backpacks being picked up by the families who are eligible to use the Focus Food Pantry on Wed, Thurs. and Friday.
- Breakfast club: average # of guests daily: 104

Pantry statistics (based on averages):

- ◆ Total Meals 2012: 130,458
- ◆ Monthly meal average: 10,850
- ◆ Total households served in 2012: 4,256
- ◆ Monthly households served average: 354

FUUSA has many volunteers helping to staff the pantry on a regular basis (averaging -8 monthly). FOCUS always welcomes more of our volunteers....

Pancake breakfast: 140 guests, raised over \$2000

Garden in a bucket: 335 Seedlings and 100

Packs of Seeds given out to 115 households. 95 Guests participated in garden in a bucket Garden lot program:

FOCUS will continue participation in the St. Paul's lot program on Hackett Boulevard (beginning at end of May).

Choir hosted a sing for your supper potluck in February of 2013. This event had over 125 attendees, collected over 400 items and over \$275 for FOCUS.

FOCUS visit to FUUSA 3/1/13: 63 people attended a chili potluck and showing of the movie "The Line". Beth Glassanos of FOCUS facilitated a group discussion after the potluck

SRC allowed FOCUS soup-bag-making table to be set up at the Committee Fair in February of 2013 and many fair attendees stopped to make homemade soup-mix bags for FOCUS guests. Soups were greatly enjoyed by pantry guests.

#### **GREEN SANCTUARY COMMITTEE**

The Green Sanctuary Committee (GSC) is charged with the task of maintaining FUUSA's Green Sanctuary accreditation with the UU Ministry for Earth. We work to fulfill the seventh UU principle "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part" and the second criteria of our strategic plan "Becoming a leader in sustainable environmental practices."

The GSC meets on the 3rd Sunday of the month under chairman Chris Bystroff (bystrc@rpi.edu). Our members are as follows:

Arden Dockter, Alyson Kelly, Ann Marie Haber, Betsy Wright, Jon Bick, Chris Bystroff, Carol Butt, Chuck Manning, Don Odell, Elaine Doremus, Jacqui Williams, Fred Boreali, Lois Griffin, Kathy Harris, Judith Brink, Nichola Dutre, Karen Kaufmann, Mark Butt, Marian Tischler, Lea N'Ko Ali-Napo, Renee Panetta, Patty Burch, Charles Poltenson, Trish Zima, Robb Smith, Robert Zima, John Cooley, Sandy Steubing, Al & Susan Berzinis, Thayer Heath, Jessica Semon, Cindy Dean, Kayla Autery, Sue Wright, Marjorie Nieh, Martha and David

Musser, Isaac Hoppe, Alyssa Young, Shuang Liu, Alyssa Colton, Cora Stackelberg, Todd Rumsey, Bob Campano, Lucy Wrightington, Sarah Martin, Sharon Rehder, Dean Havard, Neil Rice

#### **Energy Efficiency:**

This year's main accomplishment, in conjunction with many other committees, was the installation of the solar energy system which will save FUUSA about 40% on its electricity costs and significantly reduce our carbon footprint.

#### **Forums:**

The GSC organizes a Forum each month that highlights aspects of the environment or energy. This year we sponsored talks by the Radix Ecological Sustainability Center of Albany, MicroGreen Oil filters, The ReStore, Two Row Wampum, Ecovative, Local Plants, and of course...the new Solar Energy System.

#### **Potluck:**

Besides the Forums, the GSC organized a potluck in December titled Green Christmas in which Nichola Dutre showed us all the ways we could reduce our consumption over the holidays.

Kayla Autery did a recycled holiday card activity with the kids.

#### **Earth Day:**

For Earth Day weekend the GSC is sponsoring a movie, No Impact Man and will be supporting the West End Clean Up Day. Under the auspices of the SRC the GSC is organizing the Earth Day Bicycle Parade in conjunction with the Mayor's Office of Energy and Sustainability.

#### **Recycling:**

FUUSA continues to use all recycled paper products even for personal use. We recycle batteries for the congregation.

#### **Outreach and Education:**

In October, Martha Musser facilitated our joining with WAMC to answer phones for their fund drive. In January, under the leadership of Kayla Autery, the GSC taught RE classes how to make bags from recycled materials.

#### **Disaster Relief:**

The GSC helped to facilitate the

transportation and financial support of FUUSAns in their efforts towards Hurricane Sandy clean up.

**INTERFAITH IMPACT OF NEW YORK STATE:**

*Working for the Common Good through Progressive Religious Advocacy*

**Liaison:** Don Odell

Interfaith Impact is recognized as the progressive religious voice for justice and human rights in the NYS Legislature and the Executive Chamber. FUUSA is well represented as a congregational member of Interfaith Impact of New York State. Three FUUSA members serve on the IINYS Board: Don Odell as secretary, Rev. Sam Trumbore and Larry Gambino. The Executive Director is FUUSA member Robb Smith. IINYS is comprised of Unitarian Universalist, Protestant, and Reform Jewish congregations and individuals throughout the state.

Interfaith Impact will have had its advocacy day on April 29, 2013, with the three major thrusts on Women's Equality Act, Transgender Civil Rights, and Fair Elections/Campaign Finance Reform. We hope to have significant participation by FUUSAns. As a coalition of liberal religious groups, we participate with interest groups as best serves our advocacy. We are continuing to conduct Conscience in Public Life, with the most recent forum being in Rochester, and we continue to develop e-action campaign capability. In addition to the three issues above, we continue to monitor activity in the areas of hydrofracking and farmworkers rights, as our resources permit. We do have a success with an imperfect increase in the minimum wage. But, with the opposition of powerful interest groups in areas of progressive concern, our voice is even more important so that the gains of recent years are not lost, and so that we can continue to provide a liberal religious voice in the halls of State government. Information on these and other issues are available on the Social Responsibilities bulletin board in Channing Hall, and our web site at [www.interfaithimpactnys.org](http://www.interfaithimpactnys.org).

We appreciate the continued support of FUUSA and urge individual members to join. Visit our web site <http://www.interfaithimpactnys.org> and/or pick up a brochure at FUUSA.

**PEACE TEAM**

On Nov. 9, Peace Team participated in a Nov 9 dinner presentation of Howard Zinn's production "Voices of the American People". The program gave FUUSAs and community people a chance to hear the voices of Americans from those with Columbus, through Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglass, Susan B. Anthony and Cindy Sheehan and others.

**UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SERVICE COMMITTEE-OUR SOCIAL JUSTICE VOICE TO THE WORLD.**

**Liaison:** Don Odell

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) is our nonsectarian organization that advances human rights and social justice in the United States and around the world and partners with those who confront unjust power structures and mobilizing to challenge oppressive policies. The mission of the UUSC is guided by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), as well as Unitarian Universalist principles, which affirm the inherent worth and dignity of every person.

It is an associate member of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), but receives no general financial support from the UUA. Neither does it receive funding from federal or state governments or institutions, ensuring its independent voice. Its work is built on the conviction that all people are entitled to basic human rights, which transcend divisions of class, race, nationality, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, and gender. Through a combination of advocacy, education, and partnerships with grassroots organizations, UUSC promotes (1) Rights in Humanitarian Crises, (2) Economic Justice, (3) Civil Liberties, and (4) Environmental Justice.

**The UUSC relies on its members and supporters to fund its programs.** Anyone wishing to support human rights and social



justice is welcome and encouraged to join the UUSC. Over 60% of the UUSC budget comes from individual donations, which includes individual memberships by a number of FUUSAnS, and from the sale of UUSC holiday cards and Guest at Your Table.

In the 2012-2013 year, twelve members and friends of FUUSA gave a total of \$725.50 to the UUSC **Guest at Your Table**. Those who gave at the \$100 level had their contributions matched by the Veatch Foundation. (The Veatch Foundation is a trust fund maintained by the Shelter Rock UU congregation and has supported numerous Unitarian Universalist programs including the UUSC.) The Religious Education Council and our Director of Religious Education, Leah Purcell, coordinated and conducted this activity.

Also, in 2012, FUUSAnS purchased a total of 36 boxes of **UUSC holiday cards** for a total of \$360. Maria Joyner coordinated and conducted this activity.

In addition, a number of members of the congregation contributed directly to the UUSC. We are recognized as a *Creating Justice Banner Society* as 25-49% of our members are UUSC members.

Thank you to all who contributed to the UUSC, through the Guest at Your Table, directly to the UUSC, through the holiday card sales, and special collections.

## **WOMEN FOR A BETTER WORLD**

**Organizers:** Nichola Dutre, Elizabeth Berberian, Patty Burch, Barb Cooley, and Karen Greene

Women For A Better World's purpose is to build a social giving community, which empowers impoverished people through supporting existing health, educational or economic programs.

We meet twice a year for a brunch, lunch or dinner potluck in Channing Hall. We learn about development programs and contribute what is personally affordable to the chosen cause that benefits primarily women and children. We alternate between local, national or global causes.

In 2012 we had over 60 women who signed up to participate. During our spring gathering we raised over six hundred dollars for Equinox. Equinox is a local organization that offers several health, housing, and vocational programs for adults and youth. Their housing program provides shelter for domestic violence victims.

We also raised over one hundred dollars for FUUSA, REDF for our youth to participate in Justice GA.

It continues to be an uplifting experience in friendship and sharing.

## PROGRAM COORDINATING COUNCIL

**PROGRAM COORDINATING COUNCIL**  
**Chairperson:** Peggy Sherman (Vice President)  
**Members:** Council and Committee chairs or their designees; Amy Lent; Leah Purcell

Program Coordinating Council brings together our congregation's committee and program leaders to share information and work on issues that cut across our committee structure. Our stated purpose in the bylaws is to strengthen the lay ministry of our congregation.

This year the PCC agendas provided extra time to discuss a "focus issue" at each meeting. These issues included techniques to make our congregation more welcoming to newcomers (with the Membership Ministry), leadership development (with the Nominating Committee) and proposed changes to our bylaws (with the Bylaws and Governance Task Force).

### **Building Community**

PCC organized a very successful Homecoming Sunday lunch after the service on Sept. 9. Sandwiches and finger food provided a reason for FUUSAs to linger and catch up with each other after summer activities. We hope it will become a new tradition.

Each February, the members of PCC work together to map out FUUSA's major events calendar for the following church year. This year, multigenerational potlucks were scheduled for six Fridays and hosted by the Religious Education Council, Green Sanctuary, Choir, Social Responsibilities Council, and the Board of Trustees. Many thanks to these hosts, who provide a low-cost, low-key way for us to have fun and learn together over good food and an after dinner program.

### **Supporting Committees and Volunteers**

At the fourth annual Get Connected! Activity Fair on Sunday, Feb. 24, representatives of FUUSA's committees and activities staffed tables in Emerson, and adults and children toured the room to learn about opportunities for participation and service. Barb Manning and Paula Moskowitz organized this event.

PCC coordinates the designation of

committees for special focus each week. That committee's representative takes responsibility for reading announcements at the worship service. The announcer describes the committee's purpose and activities, and additional information about the committee is included in the Order of Service.

PCC's Unsung Hero Award, begun in 2005, is awarded to persons who have made significant contributions to the life of the congregation. Each recipient is recognized at a Sunday service with a citation and a token of our appreciation. Randy Rosette was the recipient of this award in November.

As I end my three year term as chair of PCC, I want to recognize the fantastic members of this group, who make FUUSA a vital and nurturing religious community!

## COMMITTEES

### **ANNUAL FELLOWSHIP DINNER**

**Chairperson:** Bob Franklin  
**Committee Members:** Al DeSalvo, Amy Lent, Meredith Mercer, Linda Way  
**Master of Ceremonies:** Reese Satin  
**Skit Director:** Bob Franklin  
**Skit Writers and Lyricists:** Bob Franklin, Kathy Harris, Jane Lax, Barb Metz, Renee Panetta, Carolyn Stetson, Hadiya Wilborn  
**Skit Cast:** Bob Franklin, Kathy Harris, Jaye Holly, Chris Jensen, Dave MacLeod, Barb Metz, Dave Metz, Sigrin Newell, Lou Rehder, Randy Rosette, Dave Stone, Nancy Woods  
**Music Director:** Matt Edwards

This year's dinner was held on April 5<sup>th</sup> at The Franklin Terrace in Troy with 135 folks in attendance. The entertainment featured a skit titled "Center of Attention", in which the City of Albany and Donald Trump attempted to site the new convention center where FUUSA now stands. They were defeated in a "Hair raising" finale. We also introduced a new welcoming song for new members sung to the tune of "Consider Yourself" from the musical "Oliver".

Following the skit, we all enjoyed dance music provided by Matt Edwards & Buck2Fifty.

## **ART AND AESTHETICS**

Responsibilities: The Art and Aesthetics Committee, in addition to arranging periodic exhibits for the art wall in Channing, works to assure that the Society campus provides an attractive and functional environment for worship, for social activities and for community use.

George Shear has recently been appointed A&A Committee Chair. The Committee will function as a sub-committee of the Buildings and Grounds Committee, chaired by Dave Metz, Dave will be a standing A&A committee member.

Those who have expressed interest in serving on the Committee have been contacted, the committee has been reconstituted, and Committee meetings have been scheduled. Artists have been contacted and a short-term exhibit schedule for the art wall in Channing has been prepared.

The committee hopes to upgrade the quality of the art and the quality of the events connected with the Channing art exhibits. There are many talented artists in the area, and the students and art faculty members at St. Rose, Sage, RPI, and UAlbany provide opportunities to access quality art. As we look to the new season, there will be appropriate press releases arranged, openings will be coordinated with Albany's First Night, and artists will be given the opportunity to discuss their work.

The Committee has been charged with a broad range of responsibilities relating to the Society's physical environment. In the past, A&A committee responsibilities included everything from the selection and acquisition of furniture and furnishings, to upgrading administrative office space. The committee will continue to provide input to the Buildings and Grounds Committee and the congregation at large regarding interior design, permanent and temporary signage, clutter control, and new purchases that affect our Society's environment.

The issues the A&A committee will consider--about Emerson, Channing and the environment of the rest of the campus--will help to promote and maintain an attractive and functional environment. The A&A Committee will monitor our campus to assure that it provides the appropriate inspiration for worship and contemplation offering, at the

same time, a degree of respite from the care and clutter that can invade our busy weekday lives.

## **BUILDING USE COMMITTEE**

**Chairperson:** Dave Metz

**Members:** Reese Satin, Stephanie Hayes, Hadiya Wilborn, Dave Stone, Karen Kaufmann

**Rental Agent:** Lynne Lekakis

This committee establishes policies governing the use of the physical facilities at FUUSA and, in conjunction with staff, also acts as the principal liaison with our rental agent, Lynne Lekakis. Lynne has done an excellent job of finding renters for Emerson, Channing and the Sanctuary. The large hall rentals were very successful this year. Despite the rough economy and cut-backs at SUNY, rentals are expected to exceed the budget projections for the fiscal year.

The Board has approved revised policies and procedures governing hall rentals. These include Building Use Policy, Rental Restrictions, Building Use Fee Schedule. Rents have been increased. Working with SRC and the Board, we have revised the number of free or greatly discounted rentals to groups closely allied with the purposes and mission of FUUSA. We have modified the Rental Application form and Rental Contract, and are looking for ways to improve and streamline the rental process, including better communications among all parties that have a need to know about the details of a specific rental.

### **2012 –13 rentals included:**

- 11 parties
- 12 lectures/educational
- 10 conferences/in-service trainings
- 10 weddings
- 10 fundraisers/annual meetings
- 23 services of other religious practices
- 5 performances/recitals
- 2 dances that meet monthly

### **These organizations used our space:**

350.org Climate Action, ACAP Head Start Training, Albany High School NCBI Workshop, Albany Law School, Albany Promise, Albany Saratoga Spiritualist Meet-up, Albany Transition, Alcoholics Anonymous, Bethlehem Neighbors for Peace, Bountiful Blessings Church, Capital District Community Gardens, Capital English Country

Dancers, CDGLCC Vintage Pride Luncheon, Citizen Action, Classic Theater Guild, Community Action Group, Cotton Hill Homeschool, Crime and Criminal Justice in Albany Conference, CRWS Meditation, Dances of Universal Peace, Eckankar Meeting, Federal Mental Health Associates, Frack Free Nation, Grace of God Church, Grannies for Peace, Green Island Tabernacle, Holy Trinity National Catholic Church, Honest Weight Food Coop, In Our Own Voices, Legends and Legacies, Liberian American Association, Lighthouse Baptist Church, Madrigal Singers, Metta Meditation, Move On.org, Narcotics Anonymous, NCBI, Oneness Meditation, Organic Farm Fair, Pagan Alliance, Palestinian Rights Committee, Power to the People Panel Discussion, Public Forum on Health Care, Re-Evaluation Counseling, Riding for Freedom, Rockefeller College, Russian Language School, Sacred Garden Discussion, Saratoga Cheese Board of Directors, Society of Architectural Historians, Sharon Levin (flute lessons), Solidarity Film Series, Spiritual Salt, SUNYA School of Social Welfare, Transition Albany, Transgender Day of Remembrance, Trinity Temple Church, Ujima Journey 2012 Reunion, Upper Hudson Planned Parenthood, Upstate Witches of the Crossroads, Underground Railroad History Project, Victoria Salzman American Smoke out, Washington Park Neighborhood Association, Whitney Young Center.

#### **CARING NETWORK**

**Chairperson:** Sharon Babala

**Members:** Sandy Stone, Linda Way, Barb Manning, Eileen Hoffman, Mary Ann Randall, Judy Hanson, Martha Schroeder, Jan Satin

The Caring Network group of volunteers and committee members have shown tremendous resourcefulness, open-heartedness, and generosity. We help to support those of us who lost loved ones, who are dealing with illness, who need a ride to a medical appointment or a home-cooked meal. We also helped a couple of people relocate. And delivered Valentine Roses to those who needed a little reminder that our community cares and is thinking of them. We are a full year committee – during the summer months we are also “on call” to help in anyway we can. Many committee members made visits to nursing homes, hospitals, rehab centers, and people’s homes to bring a smile, some

food, a kind word, flowers, companionship and comfort.

We also have continued to write up joys and concerns (special thanks to Mary Ann) and work with our Pastoral Care Associates program to make sure we offer support services when needed. Many thanks and deep gratitude to all the members of the Caring Network and volunteers who assist throughout the year.

#### **CHILDCARE**

**Coordinator:** Paula Brewer

Childcare is provided for congregational events through an annual childcare budget line. FUUSA youth provide childcare and the events in the past year they have provided childcare for have included:

- ◆ Parent Group - which meets monthly
- ◆ Stewardship Gatherings
- ◆ Annual Auction
- ◆ Wine and Cheese Tasting
- ◆ Evensong
- ◆ SRC Movies
- ◆ Educational Workshops

#### **DENOMINATIONAL AFFAIRS**

**Liaison:** Don Odell

The Denominational Affairs Committee addresses, and seeks to strengthen, the relationship of our congregation with the larger Unitarian Universalist world, including the St. Lawrence District, Central East Regional Group (CERG) and the Unitarian Universalist Association. Both the district and the UUA are associations of UU congregations. FUUSA pays dues, and has met its fair share, to both organizations, and is an active participant in each. FUUSA is also a member of the New York State Convention of Universalists.

#### **St. Lawrence District**

The St. Lawrence District now has thirty-six chartered congregations in upstate of New York, and includes all congregations outside of the Metropolitan New York District and one from Athens, PA.

The St. Lawrence District Annual Assembly is being held jointly with the Ohio Meadville District in Niagara Falls, NY on April 26-27, 2013. The

Gould Discourse is being delivered by Rev. Douglas Taylor on “Polity, Pine Trees and Process Theology” and the Keynote Address is being delivered by Rev. Peter Morales, UUA President, on “Breaking Down Walls” There is a YRUU Senior Bridging Ceremony at the end of the assembly.

FUUSAns are involved in district activities. Dave Munro is the Board President. Amy Lent is chair of the district Growth Committee. Robb Smith is on the district Nominating Committee. FUUSA delegates are Dick Dana, Kathy Harris, Becky Myer, Don Odell and Peggy Sherman.

The district also provides a number of other services including Congregational Growth and Development, Lifespan Religious Education, Youth Programs, Campus and Young Adult Programs, and Social Justice (where FUUSAn Robb Smith was a member) to name a few. The UUA has also established regional entities, and the district is a member of the Central East Regional Group (CERG).

**CRUUNY (Capital Region Unitarian Universalists of New York).** The four congregations of the Capital Region, FUUSA, First Unitarian Society of Schenectady, the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Glens Falls, and the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Saratoga Springs has become one of the more active clusters of UU congregations. Active and innovative, CRUUNY was named a UUA “Cluster on the Cutting Edge”, and it has its own web page and promotional spots on public radio. The presidents and ministers of the congregations meet more or less monthly to plan and program together. They continue to support the development of a new congregation in Clifton Park, the UU Congregation of the Two Rivers.

**The New York State Convention of Universalists (NYSCU).** Every year, by tradition in October, NYSCU holds an annual meeting with a keynote address; workshops; worship; and a business session for reports, elections, etc. The 2012 Annual Meeting was held at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Saratoga Springs on October 13. Lee Barker, President and Professor of Ministry at Meadville Lombard Theological School in Chicago delivered the keynote address. FUUSA

was represented by Fred Boreali, Dave Munro, Don Odell, and Robb Smith. FUUSAn Fred Boreali serves on the NYSCU board.

**The Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations (UUA),** for 2011-2012, is composed of 1,041 congregations in North America (Canada, U.S. & Mexico) with a total of 162,796 members. The Association acts as a national and international voice for Unitarian Universalism, with the final power residing at the congregational level. Organizationally, it provides support for Unitarian Universalism at the regional, district and congregational level, for which the member congregations pays annual dues.

The 51st General Assembly (GA)--the Justice GA--of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations met in Phoenix, AZ June 20-24, 2012. FUUSA delegates included Anna Brewer and Nora Kane (sharing a delegate position), Paula Brewer, Kathy Harris (as an off-site delegate), Karen Kaufmann, Chuck Manning, Jean Poppei, Jaye Holly, John Sherman, and Peggy Sherman. Barbara Manning, Dave Munro (representing the St. Lawrence District), Rev. Sam Trumbore, Leah Purcell, and Jacqui Williams also attended and participated in the Justice GA.

This year’s General Assembly is being held in Louisville, KY in June 19-23, 2013. General Assembly (GA) 2013 will be a gathering with multiple ways of engaging in justice work for people of all ages. Joining with the people of Arizona, we will worship, witness, learn and work together. We will leave General Assembly grounded in our faith, energized for justice and with resources to bring this work home to our congregations.

#### **EVENSONG**

At the request of Rev. Sam Trumbore, and the encouragement of Thandeka, a dedicated band of individuals, led by Matt Edwards, FUUSA’s Music Director, assumed the responsibility for creation and implementation of five Evensongs. These were held on the last Tuesday of each month, January through May 2013. Many members of the FUUSA Choir as well as other FUUSAns undertook the tasks of Evensong program development,

identifying participants, promotion of publicity within and outside the FUUSA community and celebration of Evensong.

To date there have been four Evensongs. January 29th's theme was Hope, February 26th's was Love, March 26th's was Happiness, and April 30th's was Awaken with Spring. May 28th's theme will be Courage. The first four Evensongs featured musicians and readers from FUUSA. May will showcase guest musician, Dan Berggren, a well-known folk musician of the Adirondacks, long-time UU and frequent guest at FUUSA. Sixty to seventy people have attended each event, including people of all ages, with several visitors from outside the FUUSA community. The voluntary collection plate funds support outside publicity, purchase of music and allow for Dan's May participation.

Thanks to Cate Bohn, Ann Brandon, Anna Brewer, Paula Brewer, Peter and Debbie Brown, Chris Bystroff, Dick Dana, Cathy DeMille, Matt Edwards, Kathy Harris, Chris Jensen, Ann Lapinski, Julie Lomoe, Maya Martin, Sarah Martin, Jan McCracken, Dave Metz, Dave Munro, Jon Newell, Sigrin Newell, Britany Orlebeke, Randy Rosette, Ruth Salter, Jessica Semon, John Sherman, Peggy Sherman, Sandy Steubing, Sue Stierer, Sam Trumbore, and additional members of the FUUSA Choir.

#### **FLOWER COMMITTEE**

**Chairperson:** Sandy Stone

**Flower Arrangers:** Dorry Campano, Lorraine English, Jane Lax, Barb Metz, Lois Webb, and Jody Zimmerman.

The Flower Committee provides flowers for the Sunday service and for various other occasions during the year, such as memorials and receptions in Channing Hall. These arrangements are paid for by contributions from members of the congregation in celebration or commemoration. We also have had a number of donors do their own arrangements, which gives us a wonderful variety of creativity.

It was an honor this year to supply flowers at the Memorial Services for our FUUSA members who passed away.

We are welcoming a new member to our committee, Trish Zima, and look forward to her flower creations. If you have an interest in flower arranging, or just love flowers, we welcome any new members to this committee.

Again, this summer, we look forward to having less formal floral arrangements, perhaps from our own gardens. Please sign up on the sheet in Channing Hall if you would like to bring something in.

It is now time for me to pass the reins at Chair of this committee. I have loved serving our FUUSA community and look forward to continue on the committee and arranging flowers for our services from time to time. Please welcome Jody Zimmerman who has volunteered to be the new Chair of the Flower Committee. We have all enjoyed her marvelous arrangements and I know she will do a wonderful job for FUUSA.

#### **FUN(D) RAISING**

**Chair:** Chuck Manning

**Members:** A wonderful group of folks who work hard at making all of our fund raisers Fun. I just write up this report.

November's **Holiday Bazaar, Craft Fair and Café** were a great success thanks to the many people who volunteered their time and talents to help out. We had many beautifully-crafted items to sell and we had lots of help to do so! As usual, Randy's Café was a huge success and her team did a great job. Our sales from the two-day event were 10% higher than last year with a total amount of over \$7,100 raised for FUUSA!

Many volunteered their time to help package up baking and food mixes, sew, knit and crochet items to sell, made soups, baked for the bake sale and helped put pies together. The committee was comprised of Randy Rosette, Sandy Stone, Donna Meixner, Barb Metz, Jo Keers, Linda English, Patty Burch, Arlene Gilbert, Jan Satin and Barb Manning. Thanks not only to all of our volunteers, but to all of you who have shopped!

The **8th Annual Guided Wine and Cheese Tasting**, was held on March 2, 2013. Nearly 80 FUUSAns and community members gathered. Participants shared company and a tasting

experience of *Wines and Cheeses of Spain*. Attendees enjoyed rich fellowship and excellent wines and cheeses while learning about Spain's wine regions, farmhouse and artisan cheeses, wine and cheese pairings, and constructing and serving cheese plates. The event raised \$787 for FUUSA.

Thank you to the organizing committee of Rick Whitebread, John Sherman, Peter Meixner, Sue and Al Berzini, Patti and Tim Burch, Don Odell, Russ Myer, Eric Paul and Alifair Skebe for helping with the pairings, preparations, and serving the night of the event. A special thank you to Peg Sherman, Lynne Lekakis, and Patty Burch for helping with room set-up, food prep, and clean-up the night of the event. Thank you to Al DeSalvo for shopping for fruit, crackers, and other accompaniments. Thank you to The Cheese Traveler for procuring the cheese, and the Honest Weight Food Co-op for the accompaniments.

The annual **FUUSA Goods and Services Auction** was held on the evening of March 16, 2013 with a theme of "Speed Date-ing". There were 70 items for bid and 25 fixed price items displayed. These were donated by 64 members and friends (not counting participating spouses!). Winning bids were made by 84 bidders and ranged from \$5 to \$500, with a total of over \$22,000 raised. Over the course of a year, the auction committee planned for this event through a series of committee and subcommittee meetings. The planning committee consisted of Lois and Bob Thomson, Barb and Dave Metz, Randy Rosette and Chris Jensen, Linda Hunt, Jan and Reese Satin, Kathy Harris, Bob and Trish Zima, Dorry Campano, Pat Bailey, Carolyn Bradley, Paula Moskowitz, and John Walko. In addition, Frank Woods, Cindy Dean, Paula Brewer, Dave MacLeod, and Don Odell assisted the evening of the auction along with the committee members and other attendees. Suggestions for next year's auction are always welcome. Offers to join the committee and assist should be made to one of the committee members or the general chair, John Walko, at 466-1030.

In addition to these major fund raisers, the Change of Time Breakfast and the sale of Entertainment Books also contributed to the total fund raising for the year.

## **GARDENING**

**Chair:** Paula Moskowitz

**Members:** Lots and more always welcome! You will recognize them by their dirty fingernails!

The Gardening Committee, affectionately known as the "dirty fingernail" group, installs and maintains the gardens surrounding our facility. In 2012 we were faced with the challenges of heat and lack of rain. The new grassy area on the Washington Ave. side of the Sanctuary is healthy and plants are filling in behind the bike rack. The gardens that we maintain and improve are: the Heron Garden which sits between the wheelchair ramp and the Washington Ave side of the building; the Peace Pole Garden which surrounds the Peace Pole on Washington Ave. and extends to the area in front of the Channing Hall bay window; the Jones Memorial Garden which is in front of the sanctuary, between the cherry and pine trees (where you can find two beautiful benches for quiet contemplation); the West Street Garden which is behind Emerson Hall, and now the, for lack of a better name, "bike rack" garden. In order for our gardens to bloom and enhance our property, many hands are needed. It is well worth the effort, however, as not only do we, the FUUSA community, benefit, but also our neighbors. Residents of the community have frequently stopped by and thanked us for turning concrete into green and colorful space!

## **HISTORY & ARCHIVES**

**Chair:** Patricia Bailey

**Members:** Eva Gemmill, Laura Cayford

**Goals:** Organizing, systematizing and updating the archives and continuing to keep good order to preserve our history and to make records accessible to all FUUSA members. We plan to create an alpha list of the files along with a diagram of the location of items of interest and value. We continue to explore the cost and value of putting all cassette tapes (over 300) of services on CD's for better preservation.

**Responsibilities:** Maintaining the History & Archives of the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany.

The archives contain many records going back to the beginning of the Universalist Society in 1830's. Some records are irreplaceable. It also

contains many items saved by members and later turned over to us to archive. Originals of some of our records are stored in the New York State Library and the Trustees also keep microfilms in Stone Mountain Storage Inc. - as per approval. Copies of most of these documents are kept in the archives. Also, due to space we are only able to archive one of every valuable item, such as copies of Oriel, Windows, etc. It is our hope that we will be able to continue to store important records along with much interesting data in this manner and for long into the future.

This past year with the assistance of the FUUSA Board of Trustees the following Collections Policy was approved:

*The First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany's archives should consist primarily of an organized body of non-current society records and photographs. The records would include those that now exist, and those that will be acquired continuously in accordance with protocol established by administration and the History and Archives Committee. In addition, the Committee may accept non-current objects that they believe will be of lasting interest, for example the Oriel, Church School texts and R.E. photos, and other items effecting FUUSA. Any problem with appropriateness may be solved by the History & Archives Committee. No more than one item per event occurrence need be kept due to space limitation. (November 2012)*

The Archives also acquired a newer 4 drawer file cabinet which has allowed the expansion of our storage space making the job of retaining, filing and retrieving items much easier. This was possible thanks to the assistance and hard work of Dave Metz and Stephanie Hayes, Office Administrator.

We gratefully accept archival items for safekeeping and we especially appreciate having **dates, including the year and names** (especially in photographs) and, if appropriate, the name of the person donating the items. Thank you to those who provide these pieces of history.

As before in the interests of keeping track of all our documents, especially those that are one-of-a-kind, members wishing to borrow items should now find the key to the Archives with Amy or in

the office. If you wish to borrow an item please sign the Archives Log in the Archives office. This will assist us in not losing important pieces. Please don't remove any items from the cabinet labeled "Older Archives". If you would like assistance finding an item, please feel free to contact me. Pat Bailey 766-0215 - Thank you!

#### **JOY LIBRARY**

**Co-chairs:** Sally Knapp and Arnold Patashnick  
**Committee Members:** Ann D'Attilio.

In 2012-2013, we added 48 new titles to the online catalog. Most were purchased but some were donations. We deleted 18 titles.

Our total holdings (April 17, 2013) were 1337 books. This is an increase of 30 titles (2.3%) over last year.

As usual, Sally cataloged acquisitions, compiled nine "Notes from Joy Library" for Windows, kept track of funds, ordered supplies and some books, and writes the annual report.

#### **Circulation**

We have kept records of circulation but have not totaled them as of this writing. Counts are based on the dates borrowers put on their cards, so at best, they are imprecise.

#### **Budget**

As of the March 30, 2013 Treasurer's report we had spent \$279 (61.9%) of the allotted \$450 with \$171 remaining.

#### **Overdue Books**

The number of books which are not returned continues to be a problem. We don't have statistics on it at this time. We plan to send out renewal notices before the end of the season.

#### **Plans**

As we wrote last year and the year before, we really do hope to update our printed catalog this year. We still plan to catalog the old books on Unitarian history and the old Unitarian periodicals. We still have volumes from the former collection which need to be reviewed and cataloged or discarded. We would like more shelving to accommodate the expanding collection and a file cabinet for a pamphlet collection. We would still like to



hang a picture and brief bio of Charles R. Joy in the Library/Stott Lounge.

## **MEMBERSHIP MINISTRY**

**Chair: Peter Brown**

The Membership Ministry Committee has been very active this year. Our objective is to grow our congregation by welcoming visitors more effectively, creating better connections for new members, and working to try to prevent members from drifting away. The structure of the committee has helped improve the results, and reports by four key subcommittees are below. We have tried through the year to help current members understand the importance of being welcoming and learn techniques for reaching out to visitors and new members. The Program Coordinating Council has been especially helpful in this effort. We would love to have more FUUSA members work with us on these objectives.

**Sunday Hospitality Team:** Amy Lent

Twenty-six FUUSAns served as Greeter on Sunday mornings this year, doing what is probably the easiest and most fun volunteer job we have here! The Greeters' role is to smile, say hello, and get first time guests over to the Welcome Table. Another nine folks learned to staff the Welcome Table. At the Welcome Table we have a minute or two to connect with people, get some information from them, and give them some information about FUUSA. The chief goal really is to get them into the service (and RE classrooms if they have kids), let them know we'll be here to answer questions after the service, and that their nametag will be on the board when they come back. This is working extremely well: Second-time guests walk right up to get their nametag, and we get another chance to speak with them. Both of these roles are an important part of making guests feel welcome here, and I thank all those who have helped this year.

Thank you to all who served as Greeters: Ann D'Attilio, Alyssa Colton, Barb Manning, Barry Greene, Carolyn Bradley, Cate Bohn, Cora Stackelberg, Debbie Brown, Elizabeth Berberian, Felice Devine, Jean Bolgatz, Kathy Hodges, Linda Hunt, Linda Way, Lois Griffin, Lois Webb, Margie Eddy, Mary Myers, Michael Hornsby, Molly Daniels, Paula & Steven Moskowitz, Sandy Stone,

Scott Knox, and Teddy Archer.

Thank you to all who served at the Welcome Table: Barbara Manning, Michael Hornsby, Mary Applegate, Sharon Babala, Jean Bolgatz, Andy Hendin, Al DeSalvo, Cora Stackelberg, and Jaye Holly.

**Newcomer Welcoming Team:** Kathy Hodges

During the 2012-13 church year, the Newcomer Welcoming Team has continued to take on responsibilities for preparing and presenting newcomer orientation sessions (known as "Getting to Know UU") quarterly on Saturday mornings at FUUSA. "GTKUU" sessions are opportunities for newer folks to get acquainted with current FUUSA members as well as with other new folks who are searching for a spiritual/religious community. Participants always share interesting stories of their life experiences with each other in terms of what their life experiences have been. Barbara Manning, Don Odell, Barb Metz, John Sherman, Mary Applegate, Kathy Hodges, and Sam Trumbore have contributed significant amounts of time and talent to make these groups happen. They are fun and rewarding. Following a GTKUU session, some participants choose to become new members of FUUSA.

The Newcomer Welcoming Team answers newcomers' questions as they consider becoming members, and helps them along the path. A person intending to join meets with Rev. Sam, and with Jon Newell (representing Stewardship Committee,) and then they are ready for New Member Sunday. During the New Member recognition service (held approximately 5 times yearly) President Chuck Manning officially welcomes new members and introduces them to the congregation. Kathy Hodges and Amy Lent share the pleasure of contacting and coordinating the process with Chuck, Sam, and new members.

Any new person interested in a deeper relationship with the congregation can contact Amy, Kathy, or Sam in order to join the congregation.

**New Member Integration Team:** Barbara Manning

During this year, we have begun two new

activities to better welcome new members into our congregation. The first activity is to provide a reception for new members, their families, Membership committee members, board members and new member guides. This is a relatively small setting where new members are honored for their commitment to join FUUSA and have the opportunity to meet some more people in the congregation.

The second activity is to assign a new member guide to most new members. The purpose is to help new members meet new people and find what activities at FUUSA are of interest to them. The goal is to have this accomplished in three to six months. The new member guide checks in with their new member periodically to see how things are going, invites the person to some particular activity and introduces them to other members of the congregation.

Not all new members will be assigned a guide, as some new members may already be well integrated by the time that they join. The hope is that these two activities will help most new members integrate more quickly and more firmly into our congregation and feel welcomed.

**Continuing Connections:** report by Don Odell, incoming Chair

This group is responsible for following up with newer members (one year plus), keeping in touch with other members and friends as needed, and do exit interviews with people resigning membership. We are working to identify people who seem to have lost some of their previous attachment to the Society, and find out whether we can do anything to help them stay active participants. Mary Applegate, Peter Brown, Amy Lent, Barb Manning, Barb Metz, Don Odell, John Sherman, and Linda Way volunteered to make telephone calls in the current year.

This year's numbers:

--we offered **four** newcomer orientations "Getting to Know UU" on Saturday mornings

--we introduced **27** new members to the congregation on **five** New Member Sundays this church year

--we certified (with the UUA) **390** members on January 1, 2012, and **386** members on January 1, 2013, a net loss of **4**.

## **MUSIC COMMITTEE**

**Chair:** Kathy Harris

**Members:** Matthew Edwards (Music Director), All members of the choir are consulted on many matters concerning FUUSA music events

### **The Choir:**

Our singing ensemble kept a stable number of singers including: Lea Ali-Napo, Kayla Autery, Pat Bailey, Ann Brandon, Peter Brown, Christopher Bystroff, Dorry Campano, Barb Cooley, Cindy Dean, Cathy DeMille, Michelle Desrosiers, Peter Gerdine, Kathy Harris, Linda Hunt, Chris Jensen, Julie Lomoe, Dave MacLeod, Barb Metz, Dave Metz, Russ Myer, Jon Newell, Sigrin Newell, Lou Rehder, Debbie Rodriguez, Randy Rosette, Ruth Russell, Ruth Salter, Jan Smith, Sue Stierer, Nancy Wagner, John Walko, Terry Way, and Dorry Whisher.

This year Matt worked to greatly increase coordination with Sam and Leah through weekly service planning meetings. Also, Matt worked with members of the choir and other FUUSAns created a musically focused monthly Evensong service. During the Christmas holidays, FUUSA singers sang carols at The Beverwyck and at members' residences, having a large turnout of singers. The choir hosted a potluck and sing-a-long that was memorable for its large multi-generational group in attendance. Again this year, the choir will sing with the combined chorus at the CRUUNY service which will be held at the Round Lake Auditorium in June.

### **Guests:**

This year we featured many wonderful guest performances by FUUSA artists including: Ann Brandon (piano), the Helderberg Madrigal Singers with FUUSAns Dave Metz, Dawn Dana, and Dick Dana; Russ Myer (percussion), Randy Rosette (flute), Cathy Demille (voice), Virginia Reed (voice), Dave MacLeod (percussion), and Chris Bystroff (viola). Also, the congregation got to hear our youth choir perform for a few different services.

Beside our wonderful in-house talent there was a great diversity of musical guests from outside our congregation including: John Metz (piano), Barbara Metz (cello), Greg Greene (bass), Chris Turano (percussion), Bob Warren (guitar & voice), Joy MacKenzie (voice), Sybil Stock (guitar & voice), Mark Smith (guitar & voice), Albany Gay Men's Chorus, and Emma's Revolution (professional touring folk duo).

The FUUSA music committee hosted social and music events this year including: a concert by John and Barb Metz, and a potluck sing-a-long.

### **The Music Director:**

Our music director, Matt Edwards, continues to provide varied music for the services as pianist and choir director. Again this year, Matt was the musical director and accompanist for the Annual Dinner skit performance. As always our music director is grateful for all of the encouraging comments from the congregation and their support of his work at FUUSA.

### **PARTNER CHURCH COMMITTEE**

**Chairperson:** Dave Metz

**Members:** Peter & Debbie Brown, Dick & Dawn Dana, Betty Dietz, Ben English, Judy Hanson, Kathy Harris, Barb Metz, Betsey Miller, Russ Myer, Don Odell, Anita Patka, Darnell Rohrbaugh, Peggy Slocum

This committee handles FUUSA's relationship with the Unitarian Church in Szökefalva, Romania. FUUSA's most recent personal contact with the partner church was during the summer of 2010 when our choir visited Szökefalva, sang at a Sunday morning service and performed a short concert for the congregation that afternoon. That was followed by an absolutely unforgettable party. Financial support from us has included helping fund a new roof for the church (2010) and this past summer providing \$700 (2000 Lei) for materials needed to replace the fence around the parsonage. In addition, we are now supporting a portion of the minister's salary. The committee hopes to be able to arrange a more personal connection in the future, either bringing the minister here for a visit or sending one or more visitors there.

### **PASTORAL CARE ASSOCIATES**

**Reporter:** Philip G. Rich

The Pastoral Care Associates program of the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany, began in the fall of 2010. It grew out of the Minister's desire to extend the pastoral care that he can provide through this program. Pastoral Care Associates also keep him aware of the pastoral needs in the congregation.

The Pastoral Care Program is designed to give support to congregants through active listening based on the work of humanistic psychologists Carl Rogers and Marshall Rosenberg. Associates are trained to listen with empathy, not to judge and not to do psychotherapy. Any Pastoral Care Associate may be approached for emotional support or the minister can make a referral.

The Associates are: Sharon Babala, Jerry Deighan, Jon Newell, Phil Rich, Bruce Rodgers, Randy Rosette, Jan Satin and Sandy Stone. The advisers are: Rev. Bobbi Place and Rev. Sam Trumbore.

### **RECEPTIONS COMMITTEE**

**Chair:** Jan Satin

#### **Goals and Responsibilities**

The Receptions Committee seeks to contribute to FUUSA's community life by taking responsibility for planning and providing receptions and other celebratory events as needed. **Members:** Jan Satin, Barb Manning, Sandy Stone workers vary from event to event. All FUUSAns are generous.

#### **Accomplishments**

##### *Memorial Services*

Since June We have had two memorial services.

Charles Estey

Hughes Gemmill

#### **Celebrations**

The Committee also held receptions for the following events:

- ◆ Christmas Eve Services with Jaye Holly and Sandy Stone
- ◆ We have replaced more tablecloths and collected cloth napkins as well as replacing wine glasses, cups and cream pitchers.

#### **Looking Ahead**

Given the many expressions of appreciation

received, it is clear that the Receptions Committee makes a valuable contribution to the FUUSA community. Its ability to continue to make such contributions depends on the continued participation of many volunteers and donors.

### **RUMMAGE SALE**

**Reporter:** Patty Burch

No Rummage Sales were held in the FUUSA Year 2012-2013.

However, working with the Green Sanctuary Committee there has been established a list of the various centers and agencies that will take used clothing and household goods. The list can be found at the SRC table on Sundays in Channing Hall.

### **SAFE CONGREGATION RESPONSE TEAM**

Following last year's development year for the Safe Congregation Response Team (SCRT), the 2012-2013 year has been thankfully uneventful. There have been no reports to the SCRT of inappropriate behavior. Members are Owen Devine, representing the Religious Education Council; Kathy Harris, representing the Board of Trustees; Jean Poppei, member at large; Leah Purcell, Director of Religious Education; and Rev. Sam Trumbore. In accordance with the Safe Congregation Policy, all members of the Board of Trustees, SCRT Team and appropriate staff have been asked to study the New England Adolescent Research Institute's training *Balancing Acts: Keeping Children Safe in Congregations*, by Debra Haffner (<http://training-center.neari.com/training-center/form/course-item.aspx?targetCourseId=6>). Certificates of completion are filed at FUUSA. The Safe Congregation Policy is available at [www.albanyuu.org/safecong.pdf](http://www.albanyuu.org/safecong.pdf). Brochures that explain the policy and the availability of the SCRT along with photos are available in the FUUSA Lobby.

### **SMALL GROUP MINISTRY**

**Contact:** John Sherman

**Facilitators:** Ben English, Barbara Manning, Don Odell, Anita Patka, Patsy Patrick, and John Sherman

Thirty three of FUUSA's members and friends participated in one of our four Small Groups this

year. Using an open structure that welcomes every person as a valued participant, Small Group participants get to live our Unitarian Universalist values and principles in twice monthly meetings. In groups of six to ten, people engage in a lay-facilitated ministry that focuses on our personal experiences, develops our ability to listen to and support others, deepens our individual appreciation for life, and provides a unique opportunity to become closely connected with other members of the group.

### **THRESHOLD CONGREGATION TEAM**

FUUSA's Threshold Congregation Team was formed in the fall of 2011 to respond to the designation awarded by CERG, the Central East Regional Group of the UUA, to FUUSA as a Threshold Congregation - a healthy congregation poised to grow. As a Threshold Congregation, FUUSA was supported in our work with leadership consultants, training opportunities and plan encouragement. The work of the Committee was completed this year. The Threshold Congregation Team included Betsey Miller & Elissa Kane as conveners, Chuck Manning, Tim Burch, Linda Hunt & Sam Trumbore. Jacqui Williams, Kathleen Diina-Feldman, Michael Hornsby, Adrienne Cattell, Virginia Reed, & Chris Franklin have contributed to the conversation.

As a wrap up to the Threshold work a Pilot Self Assessment Tool (provided by CERG) was completed this year evaluating FUUSA's progress in a number of areas. Overall it was concluded that progress had been made in the areas of:

- ◆ Using our mission and vision statement to evaluate our programs
- ◆ Evaluation of our governance and by-laws
- ◆ Leadership operating based on a covenantal relationship with Board and REC covenants created and used in our meetings.
- ◆ A willingness of the leadership and the congregation to embrace change
- ◆ Expanding the effectiveness of our Membership Ministry
- ◆ Offering alternatives for spiritual growth and development

There can be continuing improvement in these areas but others that require more attention in the future are:

- ◆ Developing a trained pool of new leaders
- ◆ Expanding our connections with the wider UU community
- ◆ Improving our multi-cultural competence
- ◆ Expanding our use of new and emerging technologies

Although the Threshold team has completed its work, the issues raised by the team will continue to provide guidance as the congregation moves into the future.

### **WELLSPRING**

**Facilitators:** Jan McCracken and Betsey Miller

**Participants:** Peggy Slocum, Anita Patka, Marian Tischler, Julie Lomoe, Peggy Sherman, Cathy Perkins, Kayla Autery, Lezah McCarthy, Kathy Magee

The Wellspring Program is a ten-month, small group journey of spiritual deepening which began at First Unitarian in Rochester under the direction of the Reverend Jen Crow. This year was the third time Wellspring has been offered at FUUSA. The current facilitators were drawn from last year's participants.

Participants in Wellspring commit to developing an individual spiritual practice; exploring personal spiritual development with the guidance of a spiritual director; reading and reflecting on theology and Unitarian Universalist history; attending bi-weekly meetings with their class of other participants; and exploring ways to put their faith into action. A sampling of reading and discussion topics includes: Welcoming the Soul; Our European Roots; Buddhism; Transcendentalism; Humanism; Process Theology; Forgiveness; UU Perspectives on Death and Dying; The Theology of Joy; and Living our Faith.

The class is a significant commitment – but the rewards are deep and enriching. If you are interested in learning more, speak to any of those persons listed above and watch for further publicity.

### **ACTIVITIES AND AFFINITY GROUPS**

#### **CHANNING CIRCLE**

Channing Circle is an informal group of retirees who meet for a brown bag lunch on the third Monday from September to June. New participants

are especially welcome. After lunch there is a program, often a chance for those attending to talk about events of interest. Sometimes there are presentations and in December there is a holiday luncheon at the Cafe Paradiso around the corner.

Attendance at a SPAC performance by the NYC Ballet also took place in June. The group remembers well Ursula Poland and Thayer Heath who were the founders of the group. (Average attendance 18)

#### **6 to 9 at 6:09: CIRCLE DINNERS**

**Coordinator:** Martha Musser

Circle dinners, organized by Martha Musser, offer small groups of FUUSANs a chance to socialize over a delicious potluck dinner in a private home. As well as giving members the opportunity to strengthen their connections with FUUSA and contribute to a vital, nurturing religious community, the dinners provide an extraordinary opportunity for newcomers to learn about FUUSA. With these goals in mind, we have committed to encouraging greater participation by newcomers and families with young children.

We scheduled dinners on seven weekends during the 2012-13 church year. On three weekends, we provided the option of attending on either of two weekend nights. With May dinners still to come, 23 dinners have been held and 101 adults and nine children have attended at least one dinner. About half of attendees have attended more than one dinner. In November, we encouraged participation in a multi-generational dinner and two such dinners were held. The last dinners of the church year are scheduled for May 4.

We have planned six dinners for the coming year, beginning on October 12, and plan to increase participation by issuing individual invitations to newcomers and members who have not participated previously.

#### **PARENTHOOD POTLUCK**

Parenthood Potluck meets approximately monthly during the school year. We share a potluck dinner then discuss a topic of interest to UU parents. Childcare is provided during our discussion. The underlying goal is to bring together FUUSA parents for fellowship. Recent

discussion topics have included getting kids involved in the arts, books that instill UU values in kids, and getting your kids outdoors.

### **PHILOSOPHY DISCUSSION GROUP**

The Philosophy Discussion Group meets every Tuesday at 10:00 am until 12:00 pm usually in room B8. The discussion topic is chosen by the group at the end of each session and is e-mailed to the group through the FUUSA philosophy group mailing list. Anyone interested in the topics may request the office to place them on the e-mail list. The discussion typically begins as soon as 5 persons arrive. The topic is introduced by whoever suggested the topic and the participants each express their view of the topic for one or two minutes followed by a general discussion. Any one is welcome to come and engage in the discussion.

The following is a list of some of the topics discussed in this fiscal year.

1. What are the important characteristics of each of the Liberal, Conservative, Libertarian, Populist/Totalitarian viewpoints?
2. How are concepts of "acceptance"/"tolerance" similar? different? Is UUism an "accepting"/"tolerant religion/philosophy"?
3. Does living in opposition to nature as evidenced by western society a colluded mental illness
4. Why is it so hard for us to get along? A discussion of the Righteous Mind by Haidt.
5. Bring your favorite, or least favorite, biblical verse(s) and share both the verse and the value you think it underpins, such as "feed the hungry" etc. ([Matthew 25:34-40](#)) or bring a value that is going out of fashion, or even becoming illegal, such as "He who spareth the rod hateth his son: (Proverbs 23:13-14)
6. Our topic for August 14<sup>th</sup> will be an assessment of the utility (correctness) of economist Fredrich Hayek's statement that: "A claim for equality of material position can be met only by a government with totalitarian powers."
7. White Privilege in the United States Today; Does it still exist? If so, what does it consist of?
8. Love seems to have three major antonyms. There is: Love and Hate; Love and Apathy; Love and Fear. To what extent is love different in each case?
9. Is growth necessary for a health economy
10. To what extent is it true, accurate or fair to make the simplification that Democrats are like bees or ants, and Republicans are like chimps?
11. Does the district attorney system give too much power to district attorneys?
12. How do we welcome political diversity within our religious community?
13. When we reach the age of Social Security and Medicare and leave our previous professional roles behind, how do our lives change, and what do we find most meaningful? Is it okay to simply opt out of the rat race, kick back and enjoy the fruits of our labors? What about boredom?
14. Is there a compatibility between atheism and spirituality, or are they incompatible?
15. What does it mean to "support the troops," from a UU perspective?
16. "What are the empirical limits of political correctness?"
17. What are the philosophical aspects of collective debt?
18. Did Obama, in his Second Inaugural Address, define or redefine liberalism/progressivism for the future?"
19. An examination of contemporary US immigration policy and the changes in immigration policy which seem to be on the horizon.
20. What are the appropriate limits Indian nation sovereignty as recognized in the US Constitution, which reserves to Congress the exclusive right to treat with the 'Indian nations.'?"

### **PROJECTS AND QUILTS (PS AND QS)**

**Reported by Jan Satin**

This group meets every Wednesday in B8 at 10:00 We share lunch and enjoy chocolate nibbles.

This past year we have worked on a wall hanging to be shared with FUUSA in the near future. We are also working on a quilt to be given to a Local Service Organization.

This year we made donations to the UUSC Service Committee and to Surge Hurricane Relief

### UU CHRISTIANS

The UU Christians group meets monthly. Anyone who is interested in considering New Testament stories with an inquiring mind is welcome to participate. The teachings of Jesus are still around after many centuries, and we agree with this statement by the Rev. Stephen Kendrick, "...I believe that people who are attracted to a place of free faith, spiritual seeking, and non-dogmatic religion have much to gain by grappling with the legacy of this teacher.."

### WALKER BOOK CLUB

The Walker Book Club meets at FUUSA on the second Sunday of each month at 5:30 PM from September through June, beginning with a potluck supper, followed by a lively discussion of the book of the month chosen by participants. This informal group, which has existed for many years and is named in memory of a treasured, deceased FUUSAn, offers participants the opportunity to search for UU truth and meaning by reading and discussing a wide-range of fiction and nonfiction books. Participants greatly expand their reading horizons and develop a deeper sense of community and connections with other FUUSAns. Newcomers are always welcome and the group is open to all FUUSA friends and members.

The group read and discussed five non-fiction books and five novels. Our annual classic for May is a novel and protest against apartheid in South Africa published in 1948. Our annual discussion of short stories for June focus on works of a Canadian author. Average attendance has ranged between 12 and 16.

Dates and books scheduled for discussion during 2012-2013

- ◆ Sept. 9, 2012 The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration by Isabel Wilkerson.
- ◆ Oct. 14, 2012 Caleb's Crossing a novel by Geraldine Brooks.
- ◆ Nov. 11, 2012 The Swerve: How the World Became Modern by Stephen Greenblatt.
- ◆ Dec. 9, 2012 The Other Side of the Bridge by Mary Lawson.
- ◆ Jan. 13, 2013 The Places In Between by Scottish Author Rory Stewart.
- ◆ Feb. 10, 2013 Open City: A Novel by Teju Cole.
- ◆ Mar. 10, 2013 The Great Disruption: Why the Climate Crisis Will Bring On the End of Shopping and the Birth of a New World by Paul Gilding.
- ◆ Apr. 14, 2013 In the Garden of Beasts: Love, Terror and an American Family in Hitler's Berlin by Erik Larson.
- ◆ May 12, 2013 Cry, the Beloved Country by Alan Paton.
- ◆ June 9, 2013 Three short stories, The Bear Came Over the Mountain, Dear Life and Corrie by Alice Munro.