

ANNUAL REPORT
2017-2018

First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany

405 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12206

www.AlbanyUU.org | 518.463.7135

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Annual Meeting
of the
First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany
Sunday, May 20, 2018

AGENDA

Call to Order and Words for Gathering

Appointments

 Parliamentarian

 Timekeeper

 Quorum/Vote Counters

 Floor Managers

Approval of Agenda

Adoption/Rules of Procedure

 Governed by Albany UU's Policy on Congregational Meetings (see next page)

Nominating Committee Report and Election

Update on Stewardship Campaign

Presentation/Adoption of 2018-2019 Budget

Proposed Resolution to become a Sanctuary Congregation

Comments of the President

Announcement of Election Results

New Business

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 either 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.

A/B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P
53	Utilities	5270	\$ 13,000	\$ 13,000	0.0%	\$ 13,000	\$ 13,000	0.0%						
54	Insurance	5470	\$ 9,500	\$ 9,500	5.6%	\$ 9,500	\$ 9,500	5.6%						
55	Total Building Maintenance	5200	\$ 94,559	\$ 95,750	1.3%	\$ 95,750	\$ 95,750	963.9%						
56	Church & Community	5300												
57	Board of Trustees	5310	\$ 200	\$ 200	0.0%	\$ 200	\$ 200	0.0%						
58	Annual Dinner Subsidy	5315	\$ 450	\$ 400	-11.1%	\$ 400	\$ 400	-11.1%						
59	Stewardship Committee	5320	\$ 600	\$ 600	0.0%	\$ 600	\$ 600	0.0%						
60	Board Training & Development	5325	\$ 500	\$ 500	0.0%	\$ 500	\$ 500	0.0%						
61	Nominating	5330	\$ 50	\$ 50	0.0%	\$ 50	\$ 50							
62	Receptions/Appreciations	5335	\$ 100	\$ 100	0.0%	\$ 100	\$ 100	X						
63	Child Care (General)	5340	\$ 250	\$ 250	0.0%	\$ 250	\$ 250	0.0%						
64	Membership Committee	5350	\$ 1,100	\$ 480	-56.4%	\$ 480	\$ 480	-56.4%						
65	Kitchen & Coffee	5355	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500	0.0%	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500	0.0%						
66	Caring Network	5357	\$ 100	\$ 250	150.0%	\$ 250	\$ 250	150.0%						
67	Joy Library	5361	\$ 350	\$ 400	14.3%	\$ 400	\$ 400	14.3%						
68	Religious Services Committee	5365	\$ 6,170	\$ 6,830	10.7%	\$ 6,830	\$ 6,830	10.7%						
69	Publicity Committee	5370	\$ 800	\$ 800	0.0%	\$ 800	\$ 800	0.0%						
70	Music Committee	5375	\$ 3,700	\$ 4,700	27.0%	\$ 4,700	\$ 4,700	27.0%						
71	Archives Committee	5385	\$ 75	\$ 50	-33.3%	\$ 50	\$ 50	-33.3%						
72	PCC	5386	X	\$ 135	X	\$ 135	\$ 135	X						
73	Inclusivity Team	XXXX	X	\$ 2,000	X	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	X						
74	175th Anniversary Environmental Committee	XXXX	X	\$ 3,000	X	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000	X						
75	FUN/D Raiser Expenses	5790	\$ 135	\$ 1,125	X	\$ 1,125	\$ 1,125	X						NEW
76	Total Church & Community	5300	\$ 16,080	\$ 23,370	45.3%	\$ 23,370	\$ 23,370	45.3%						
77	Denominational Affairs	5400												
78	Partner Church Council	5410	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500	0.0%	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500	0.0%						
79	HMJU Cluster	5415	\$ 500	\$ 500	0.0%	\$ 500	\$ 500	0.0%						
80	UUA/CER Program Fund Dues	5420	\$ 32,320	\$ 30,000	-7.2%	\$ 29,088	\$ 29,088	-10.0%						
81	Denominational Affairs Subsidy	5440	\$ 3,000	\$ 4,660	55.3%	\$ 4,660	\$ 4,660	55.3%						
82	Unirondack Dues	5450	\$ 150	\$ 150	0.0%	\$ 150	\$ 150	0.0%						
83	Total Denominational Affairs	5400	\$ 37,470	\$ 36,810	-1.8%	\$ 35,898	\$ 35,898	-4.2%						
84	Ministerial Expenses	5500												
85	Salary/Housing	5550	\$ 95,032	\$ 98,032	3.2%	\$ 98,032	\$ 98,032	3.2%						
86	Insurance	5560	\$ 14,301	\$ 7,000	-51.1%	\$ 7,000	\$ 7,000	-51.1%						
87	Retirement	5565	\$ 9,503	\$ 9,803	3.2%	\$ 9,803	\$ 9,803	3.2%						
88	Professional Expenses	5510	\$ 7,500	\$ 7,500	0.0%	\$ 7,500	\$ 7,500	0.0%						
89	Total Ministerial Expenses	5500	\$ 126,336	\$ 122,335	-3.2%	\$ 122,335	\$ 122,335	-3.2%						
90	Religious Education	5800												
91	Children & Youth	5800	\$ 6,000	\$ 4,250	-29.2%	\$ 4,250	\$ 4,250	-29.2%						
92	Lifespan Learning	5810	\$ 700	\$ 850	21.4%	\$ 850	\$ 850	21.4%						
93	Total Religious Education	5800	\$ 6,700	\$ 5,100	-23.9%	\$ 5,100	\$ 5,100	-23.9%						
94	Social Responsibilities	5900												
95	Interfaith Impact	5910	\$ 850	\$ 1,000	17.6%	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	17.6%						
96	Social Responsibilities Council	5920	\$ 4,900	\$ 6,970	42.2%	\$ 6,970	\$ 6,970	42.2%						
97	Total Social Responsibilities	5900	\$ 5,750	\$ 7,970	38.6%	\$ 7,970	\$ 7,970	38.6%						
98	Total Expense		\$ 499,727	\$ 531,761	6.4%	\$ 531,349	\$ 532,349	6.3%						
99	Transfers													
100	Capital Reserve Fund		\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	0.0%	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	0.0%						
101	Ministerial Intern Reserve Fund		See DF	\$ 9,000	X	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000	X						
102	Contingency					\$ 1,411	\$ 1,411							
103	Sabbatical Fund		\$ 600	\$ 600	0.0%	\$ 600	\$ 600	0.0%						
104	Total Transfers		\$ 15,600	\$ 24,600	57.7%	\$ 24,600	\$ 26,011	57.7%						
105	Total Expense and Transfers		\$ 515,327	\$ 556,361	8.0%	\$ 555,949	\$ 558,360	7.9%						
106	Net Income		\$ 22,373	\$ 11,439	X	\$ 5,200	\$ -	X						

NEW - add to min. intern DF in alternate year

**FIRST UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY OF ALBANY (ALBANY UU)
RESOLUTION TO BECOME A SANCTUARY CONGREGATION**

WHEREAS, we live in a time of heightened risk for immigrants, documented and undocumented, and we consider the deportation of undocumented individuals to be inhumane in many circumstances and fundamentally in conflict with our values; and

WHEREAS, we affirm the time-honored traditions of faith communities that recognized houses of worship as a refuge for fugitive enslaved people, conscientious objectors, and Central American refugees fleeing the civil wars of the 1980s; and

WHEREAS, in 1984 our congregation entered into a covenant with the Albany Friends Meeting (Quakers), declaring both congregations as a sanctuary for those seeking to escape violence in Central America. Our congregation adopted a resolution stating as follows:

“[FUSA], fully cognizant that this resolution may propose an act of civil disobedience, does declare [FUSA] a sanctuary. In solidarity with many faiths throughout the United States, and as a symbolic act, [FUSA] will invite refugees from El Salvador and Guatemala to accept temporary sanctuary with us”

and in fact both the Quakers and our congregation did provide physical sanctuary to refugees; and

WHEREAS, we are mindful of our UU principles that call us to acknowledge the inherent worth and dignity of every person with justice, equity and compassion in human relations, and the goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all; and

WHEREAS, the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) for decades has been actively involved in efforts to change federal immigration policy, and to aid and support sanctuary work for refugees and immigrants; and

WHEREAS, in February 2017 the UUA and the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee together issued a Declaration of Conscience stating in part that “We will oppose any and all unjust government actions to deport, register, discriminate or despoil. As people of conscience, we declare our commitment to translate our values into action as we stand on the side of love with the most vulnerable among us;” and

WHEREAS, a church that declares itself a Sanctuary Congregation is one willing to engage in a spectrum of solidarity actions, including welcoming undocumented people, advocating to help stop deportations, defending the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival Program (DACA), opposing unjust policies that enlist local police to engage in immigration enforcement, and in cases of extreme need physically sheltering individuals in danger of immediate deportation; and

WHEREAS, we have engaged in a process of discernment led by our Social Responsibilities Council (SRC), which has provided information and facilitated congregational conversations about becoming a Sanctuary Congregation; and

WHEREAS, the Albany Friends Meeting has once again voted to become a sanctuary congregation, and it is preparing space within its building to offer temporary housing in certain instances to undocumented individuals.

THEREFORE, be it resolved that we, the members of the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany, publicly declare that we are a Sanctuary Congregation. Specifically, we will:

Educate ourselves about the issues of immigration reform and immigrant rights;

Speak out against discrimination toward any and all marginalized people;

Build partnerships with immigrant groups, other faith institutions and all others advocating for just treatment of undocumented immigrants and refugees;

Offer immigrants material support (food, clothing, childcare, transportation, etc.) where there is need and desire for such assistance;

Extend physical sanctuary. We will support the Albany Friends Meeting and other faith institutions serving as physical sanctuary sites for undocumented immigrants. Further, cognizant that we may be engaging in civil disobedience, in cases of extreme need, upon the recommendation of the SRC and with the approval of the Albany UU President, we will offer any available temporary shelter to immigrant(s) facing unjust deportation, while they pursue a legal appeal. Albany UU's minister, its Board of Trustees and the SRC will work collaboratively to address the eligibility and logistical aspects of providing any such temporary shelter; and

Actively publicize our status as a Sanctuary Congregation.

The Social Responsibilities Council will work with the congregation to implement this Resolution and will report to the Board of Trustees on a regular basis.

**Minutes of the
Annual Meeting of the
First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany
May 21, 2017**

Call to Order and Words for Gathering

Dick Dana, President, called the meeting to order at approximately 11:52 A.M. Rev. Sam Trumbore opened with words of gathering and welcome to honor the vital role of annual meetings in the Unitarian/Universalism tradition and at Albany UU.

Appointments

Dick announced the names of those who would be assisting with the meeting:

- Parliamentarian – Mike Myers
- Timekeeper – David Quist
- Vote Counters - Molly Daniels and Nominating Committee
- Floor Managers - Annika Pfluger and Patti Jo Newell

Approval of Agenda

It was determined that there was a quorum of the members. Dick Dana made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Peggy Sherman, and passed unanimously.

Adoption/Rules of Procedure

Dick Dana summarized the rules embodied in Albany UU's Policy on Congregational Meetings. He then made a motion to adopt the rules, which was seconded by Molly Daniels. Reese Satin stated that he proposed to change the rules of order for the meeting to eliminate Item 1.B.5, which cuts off debate when either the pro- or con- microphone no longer has any speakers. Reese's motion was seconded by Al DeSalvo. The issue considered during the discussion was whether an amendment to Reese's motion was needed to clarify the process to close debate. Dick Brewer made a friendly amendment to add the word "either" to clarify 1.B.5 instead of deleting the entire subsection. Reese Satin accepted Dick Brewer's friendly amendment to 1.B.5. After 15 minutes of discussion, the question was called and a motion to end debate passed with one opposed and one abstention. The vote on adoption of the Rules of Procedure, as modified by Reese's motion to change 1.B.5, passed with none opposed and 1 abstention.

Nominating Committee Report and Election

Molly Daniels, Chair of the Nominating Committee, made the Nominating Committee Report. She thanked the members of the Nominating Committee: Bob Franklin, Meredith Mercer, Mary Myers and Sandy Stone. Molly reported that last year's amendment of the bylaws regarding contested and uncontested elections was successful again this year because many people stepped up to volunteer for positions. Molly then announced the names of the candidates for the uncontested elections.

OFFICERS TO BE ELECTED for 1-year terms are:

- Dick Dana (President)
- Patti Jo Newell (Vice-President)
- Linda Hunt (Secretary)
- Kathy Harris (Treasurer)
- Michaela Pochily (Assistant Treasurer)
- Board of Trustees: Al Berzinis, Molly Daniels, Lee Newberg, John Newell, Annika Pfluger and Nancy Shay
- Endowment Trust: Sharon Babala, Tim Burch, John Cooley, Jan McCracken and Tom Mercer
- Religious Education Chair: Jim Hutchins
- Religious Education Council: Elizabeth Baldes, Paula Brewer, Michele Desrosiers, Becky Edvalson, Sheila Gray, Liz Halvorsen, Amy Jesaitis, Larry Schell, Sarah Stanwicks, and Tracie Tilgner.
- Social Responsibilities Chair: Matt Lesniak
- Social Responsibilities Committee: Carol Butt, Zach Cunningham, Annie Metzger, Laura Paris, Jean Poppei, Elena Reynolds, and Ann Von Linden,

John Newell made a motion for the election of all uncontested candidates, which was seconded by Peggy Sherman and approved unanimously.

Molly Daniels then explained the procedure for the contested election for the three positions on the Nominating Committee. Ballots were distributed and members were instructed to rank all candidates for Nominating Committee from 1 to 6, in order of preference. The following members were candidates for Nominating Committee:

- Mary Applegate
- Peter Brown
- Al DeSalvo
- Mike Myers
- John Sherman
- Dee Van Riper

After distribution and collection of the ballots, the Nominating Committee retired to count the ballots.

Update on Stewardship Campaign

Chuck Manning, co-chair of Albany UU's Stewardship Campaign, expressed appreciation for Lynne Lekakis, co-chair of the "Sustaining Our Safe and Compassionate Community" Stewardship Campaign this year. Our Campaign goal is \$470,000. To reach this goal we asked everyone to raise their pledge. At the time of the Annual Meeting, outstanding pledges were needed to finish the campaign for the next fiscal year (July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018). We are at slightly over 90% of our goal. Chuck reported that there has been a significant increase in generosity this year with those who had pledged by the date of the Annual Meeting increasing their pledges by an aggregate 5%. So far this year, 1 pledge unit gave at the 10

Percent level; there were 32 Visionaries; 11 Sustainers; 10 Supporters and 104 pledge units who did not indicate a giving level on their pledge form. Chuck thanked everyone who had contributed to date.

Presentation/Adoption of 2017-2018 Budget

Kathy Harris, Treasurer, presented and explained the 2017-18 budget. She noted that this budget is balanced and reflects anticipated income versus anticipated expenses. The Finance Committee arrived at this budget by incorporating requests from all committees, Albany UU Personnel Committee, and a review of past expenses.

The proposed budget was moved by Dave Metz, and seconded by Tracie Tilgner. In the discussion that followed, questions were raised about some items, and Kathy Harris and Rev. Sam answered them.

- Kathy pointed out that Line 5270/Utilities decreased because of LED lights, solar panels and the cost of gas.
- A question was asked about the thinking on the total income increase of 1.7% while staff salaries and Social Responsibilities Council increases were 10%. Rev. Sam explained that part of the Staff increase is due to our new intern who will arrive in August, but that much of the money for the intern's salary is in a dedicated fund. Another question was about part time v. full time employees. We anticipate hiring a new Music Director for 12 hours whose starting salary will be lower than that of previous long-term Music Director, Matt Edwards. We have two part-time custodians; Hadiya Wilborn works 10 hours a week, and Cameron Holloway works 20 hours a week. Tammy Hathaway, our Administrative Assistant, also works 20 hours per week. Rev. Sam Trumbore, Church Administrator Amy Lent and Religious Education Director Leah Purcell are full-time employees. In response to a question about retirement benefits, Rev. Sam explained that we had met our goal to reach the UUA guideline for contributions to retirement in two years by increasing our contribution to 9% in 2016 and to 10% in this year's budget.
- There was an increase in the Social Responsibilities Council budget line for possible additional activities for Sheridan Preparatory Academy and immigration/sanctuary related issues.
- A questioner asked why there was a difference in the mortgage under transfers between this year and last year. Kathy explained that \$50,000 was moved into the regular budget to pay for the mortgage for 10 years.
- It was asked why there was a decrease in building Rentals. Kathy Harris answered that SUNY did not hold a class at Albany UU this year as SUNY had last year.
- Art and Aesthetics was reduced from \$50 to \$0 because no request was received; this committee does not currently have a chair.
- Given that the Social Responsibilities Council received an increase, it was suggested that Interfaith Impact also could use an increase from \$850 in L5910. Kathy explained that although \$1,000 was requested, the Finance Committee did not receive any information to support the addition. Therefore, Interfaith Impact received the same amount (\$850) for 2017-18 as was budgeted last year.
- When asked to explain line L5500, Kathy answered that the addition is wrong. The first column should read \$122,410.

- Kathy pointed out that the Finance Committee had held a meeting the previous Monday to explain the budget and answer questions. Since only one Albany UU member attended the Finance Committee's presentation, discussion of the budget had taken longer at the Annual Meeting.

Proposed Resolution

“WHEREAS there are excess funds in the Endowment Trust that will not be needed for their original purpose of maintaining Stott Lounge, and

WHEREAS Patricia Stott, the spokesperson for the Stott Family, has agreed in a letter to the following change, therefore

Be it RESOLVED that

The Endowment Trust is authorized to transfer \$22,000 from the Stott Fund in the Endowment Trust to the Looking Forward campaign. That will leave \$5,000 in the Endowment Trust for the ongoing up-keep of Stott Lounge.”

Jon Newell explained that over 35 years ago, the Stott family gave money to Albany UU to support the creation and indefinite maintenance of a lounge in the new Religious Education wing. Stott Lounge was created, and existed for many years in the space now occupied by the coat room and part of the RE Office. Around twenty years ago, the Stott family decided they wanted to send additional money to endow the maintenance of Stott lounge. A good-faith estimate was made of what it might cost to maintain the Lounge, and the Stott's sent money, to be kept separately in the Endowment Trust to ensure the Lounge remained well-maintained.

Around ten years ago, Albany UU built Emerson Hall, and several new classrooms spaces, including a new space for Stott Lounge and the Joy Library.

Last year, we conducted a Looking Forward campaign, raising money to help pay down the mortgage on the Emerson construction. During that campaign, the Chair of the Endowment Trust, Todd Thomas, realized that the original maintenance funds contributed by the Stott's had grown due to investment gains, to a level that greatly exceeded the costs to maintain the Lounge. At Todd's suggestion, Jon Newell wrote to the Stott family, pointing out these facts, and proposing that about \$5,000 be left in the Trust to meet maintenance needs, and the balance, now \$22,000, be contributed to the Campaign. Patricia Stott responded very affirmatively to that suggestion, and the Endowment Trust Committee confirmed that that arrangement would be put in place.

Because the transfer affects the “principal” held in the Endowment Trust, the Trustees deemed it appropriate to get the whole congregation to approve the transfer. At this point, this is a plan that has been approved by all parties concerned except the congregation at large. Jon Newell made a motion to approve the resolution, and Dave Metz seconded the motion.

Jon Newell answered some questions during the discussion.

- When asked whether the transfer was a gift or a loan, Jon answered that the transfer was a gift.

- When asked about the location of Stott Lounge since the renovations, Jon answered that it is the sitting area within the same space as the Joy Library.
- When asked about the Capital Campaign and the Looking Forward Campaign, Jon explained that the Capital Campaign was around ten years ago when Albany UU raised a lot of money and built Emerson Hall. The Looking Forward Campaign was last year when we raised money to help pay down the mortgage on the Emerson construction.
- A question was asked about the historical cost to maintain Stott Lounge. Jon answered that it has cost very little. Therefore, about \$5,000 will be left in the Endowment Trust to meet the maintenance needs for Stott Lounge, and the balance, now \$22,000, will be contributed to the Looking Forward Campaign.

A vote was taken on the motion to approve the Proposed Resolution to authorize the Endowment Trust to transfer \$22,000 from the Stott Fund in the Endowment Trust to the Looking Forward campaign, and to leave \$5,000 in the Endowment Trust for the ongoing maintenance of Stott Lounge. The motion passed unanimously.

Report on the Looking Forward Campaign

Jon Newell, Chair of this project, explained that the Looking Forward Campaign was an effort that significantly reduced the size of the mortgage on Emerson Community Hall that we needed to renegotiate. The congregation had authorized borrowing a second time from the Endowment Trust at the 2016 Annual Meeting. The Looking Forward Campaign was initiated by Albany UU members who felt that there was more that could be done to reduce our annual mortgage costs than simply borrowing a second time from the Endowment Trust. Jon Newell and the Looking Forward Campaign team – Al Berzinis, Peter Brown, Bob Franklin, Chuck Manning, Tom Mercer, Dave Metz, Betsey Miller, Reese Satin and Sam Trumbore – raised \$223,000 toward retiring the \$860,000 Emerson debt. The Looking Forward team also worked creatively “outside the box,” by soliciting and receiving an additional \$140,000 in loans from our own members at a significantly lower interest rate than our bank mortgage rate. Albany UU had also saved \$343,000 from the original loan and through additional savings that were put to the payment of the mortgage. The result is that not only is our debt reduced from \$859,761 to \$282,431 (including payment of outstanding Looking Forward pledges over the next two years), but the combined interest rate we are paying on all the loans is a very reasonable 4.43%. Most importantly, our formal bank mortgage has been reduced to \$142,000.

The money raised, plus the loans from members, and including an annual Albany UU budget of \$50,000, will allow us to pay off our mortgage and notes in about seven years instead of the anticipated ten. At that time, we will start paying ourselves back in the form of reimbursing the Endowment Trust for the \$575,000 loaned to the congregation ten years ago when we first built Emerson. Jon Newell read the names of 22 donors who had contributed to the Looking Forward Campaign, whose names are memorialized on a plaque in the hall.

Comments of the President

- Dick Dana thanked Jon Newell and his Looking Forward Campaign team for their exceptional job.

- Previous President, Peggy Sherman, passed down two initiatives to President Dick Dana. They are an Organizational Effectiveness Group and the Growth through Service initiative. The Board Retreat in September will concern Albany UU's Organizational Effectiveness. Growth through Service is beginning to yield results; 75 conversations have taken place.
- President Dick Dana and the Board have undertaken two new initiatives. The first is establishment of an Inclusivity Team, charged by the Board with addressing "inclusivity issues," focusing on institutional racism and other types of oppressions and to bring a proposal back to the Board on how to move forward during the next 2 years.
- The second new initiative established a Congregational Covenant Team. In May the Board charged the Team with "gathering input from the congregation toward creating a congregational covenant for Board approval and, ultimately, an up-or-down vote of the congregation at the 2018 annual meeting." Dick said that Unitarians/Universalists have a covenantal faith, and that there are many benefits to creating a covenant that the congregation will be learning more about in the coming months.
- President Dick Dana and the Board recognize that these projects have potential to enhance the experience at Albany UU for all.
- Dick thanked two departing Board members: Michelle Desrosiers and Ben English. He also thanked Jean Poppei, who is stepping down as Social Responsibilities Council Chair, and Dave Quist, who is stepping down as Religious Education Council Chair.

Comments of the Minister

Sam announced that we would be celebrating Leah Purcell's 10th anniversary as Albany UU's credentialed Director of Religious Education on June 4. Sam then announced that it was time to celebrate Amy Lent's 15th anniversary as Church Administrator. Sam read a sincere tribute to Amy's 15 years of excellent service to Albany UU. Dick Dana presented Amy with a card signed by members of the Board. Amy received applause, congratulations, gifts and good wishes for many more years of service to Albany UU.

Announcement of Election Results

Molly Daniels reported the results of the contested election. The elected members of the Nominating Committee are: Mary Applegate and Al DeSalvo for three years, and Mike Myers for one year. *Incumbents continuing in their positions are: Bob Franklin, Kathy Hodges and Meredith Mercer.*

New Business

Hearing no requests to address new business, Dick Dana declared the meeting to be adjourned.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted

Linda Hunt

Minutes of the

**Special Congregational Meeting of the
First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany**

October 1, 2017

Call to Order: President Richard (Dick) Dana called the meeting to order at approximately 11:12 AM.

Appointments: Dick announced the names of those who would be assisting with the meeting.

- Parliamentarian: Karen Kaufman
- Timekeeper: AnNika Pfluger
- Vote Counters: Lee Newberg and Nancy Shay
- Floor Managers: Jim Hutchins and Jon Newell

Quorum: It was determined that there was a quorum of the members of the First Unitarian Universalist Society of New York.

Adoption/Amended Rules of Procedure

Dick Dana read the resolution to be voted on by the congregation and stated that no other business can be considered at this meeting under the rules for Special Congregational Meetings set forth in Article III, Section 2 of FUUSA's Bylaws (revised January 10, 2016). Dick then made a motion to adopt the rules set forth in the bylaws, which was seconded by Molly Daniels. The motion was approved.

RESOLUTION TO BE VOTED ON BY THE MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION

A motion was made by Dick Dana and seconded by Jean Poppei to approve the resolution (below) to modify and extend the existing mortgage with Berkshire Bank, under the terms and conditions set by Berkshire Bank. The motion was approved unanimously by the Congregation.

Adjournment: Dick Dana declared the meeting to be adjourned at approximately 11:20 AM.

Respectfully Submitted

Linda Hunt, Secretary

**RESOLUTION TO BE VOTED ON BY THE MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION
AT A SPECIAL MEETING ON OCTOBER 1, 2017**

Whereas the first mortgage of \$1,200,000 supporting the construction of Emerson Hall in 2007, with a remaining balance owed of approximately \$145,000, is maturing and a modification of the existing agreement with Berkshire Bank is required to pay off the remaining balance. The Board of Trustees of the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany has approved such a mortgage modification agreement and recommends that the congregation also approve this transaction as required by the New York State Office of the Attorney General.

Therefore, be it resolved:

That the Congregation approves modifying and extending the existing mortgage with Berkshire Bank, under the terms and conditions set by Berkshire Bank, as follows:

Amount: \$142,431.57
Term: 5 year term/10 year amortization
Interest Rate: Fixed at 4.20% for 5 years
Purpose: Refinance of existing indebtedness owed to Berkshire Bank
Collateral: First Mortgage position on the property located at 405 Washington Ave., Albany, NY

Minutes of the

**Special Congregational Meeting of the
First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany**

February 4, 2018

Call to Order: President Richard (Dick) Dana called the meeting to order at approximately 11: AM.

Appointments: Dick announced the names of those who would be assisting with the meeting.

- Timekeeper: Bob Franklin
- Vote Counters: Kathy Harris
- Floor Managers: Randy Rosette

Quorum: It was determined that there was a quorum of the members of the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany.

Adoption/Amended Rules of Procedure

Dick Dana read the resolution to be voted on by the congregation and stated that no other business can be considered at this meeting under the rules for Special Congregational Meetings set forth in Article III, Section 2 of FUUSA's Bylaws (revised January 10, 2016). Dick then made a motion to adopt the rules set forth in the bylaws, which was seconded by Reese Satin. The motion was approved.

RESOLUTION TO BE VOTED ON BY THE MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION

A motion was made by Dick Dana and seconded by Al Berzinis to approve the resolution (below) to spending of up to \$35,000 in designated funds gifted in memory of Sue Berzinis for the purchase of new lighting and audio systems for the Community Hall.

Some members asked questions, which were answered by Al Berzinis.

- It was asked whether the new lighting would be on tracks or fixed. Al said that there would be three banks of fixed lighting.
- It was asked whether additional speakers would be added under the balcony. Al said that it would not be cost effective to add speakers under the balcony. The expectation is that targeted speakers that can be fine tuned with an iPad will be more effective.
- In response to a question about the addition of video, Al said that the ability to project on a screen with video is to be determined in the second phase of this project.
- A question was asked about providing enhanced accessibility for persons using hearing aids. Al answered that our current Williams system can be plugged into the new sound system. He also said that the committee is looking into the availability and cost of newer technology to enhance accessibility for persons with hearing impairments. They are gathering contacts and making follow up inquiries. The system can be adjusted so the sound isn't overly loud in some locations.

There were no speakers in opposition. The motion was approved unanimously by the Congregation.

Adjournment: Dick Dana declared the meeting to be adjourned at approximately 11:20 AM.

Respectfully Submitted

Linda Hunt, Secretary

**RESOLUTION TO BE VOTED ON BY THE MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION
AT A SPECIAL MEETING ON February 4, 2018**

“Whereas, there is more than \$50,000 in a designated fund for technical improvements to our Community Hall, and

Whereas, Albany UU’s bylaws state that any expenditure of more than \$20,000 must be authorized by the membership at a congregational meeting,

Therefore, be it resolved that the congregation approves the spending of up to \$35,000 in designated funds gifted in memory of Sue Berzinis for the purchase of new lighting and audio systems for the Community Hall.”

YEAR IN REVIEW

Minister's Annual Report

Rev. Sam Trumbore

Overview

As I complete my 19th year here in Albany, I'm ever so grateful to be here and able to serve as your minister. We continue to face challenges and opportunities in positive and constructive ways that strengthen us rather than separate and divide us. Whether considering a name change for a hall or a resolution to protect undocumented residents, we use processes that bring us together and keep us moving forward. We are an excellent place for a student to come and learn the arts of ministry.

Eileen Casey-Campbell's Internship

A highlight of our congregational year has been **having Eileen Casey-Campbell as our ministerial intern**. She has been as splendid support to the ministry work of the congregation. We enjoyed and were challenged by her sermons, such as the first one she offered titled, "Losing Our Heroes." She also asked, "How Can We Be Thankful Now," pastored to us with the "Blue Christmas" service; again challenged us with a sermon on race, "No Justice, No Peace," and sexism titled "#Youtoo: Overcoming Toxic Masculinity." She collaborated skillfully with me on several services including the one we did for the beginning of Lent titled, "The Joy of Fasting," and "Why Shelter a Stranger?" Eileen was also very creative when I came back inspired by a training in multi-sensory worship to assist with the Easter service that kicked off a series of services titled, "Emerging Hope."

While we were very impressed with Eileen's skill in the pulpit, she was busy in other areas as well. She worked with Rev. Sam and Leah to structure and to participate in the Rite of Passage program. She taught an introductory class on Islam and assisted with a repeat of the "Developing White Racial Literacy" class. Eileen also participated in the pastoral care of members of the congregation through the Pastoral Care Associates program.

Two social justice initiatives got her support and guidance. The first was our effort to decide to change then rename what is now called "Community Hall." Her primary effort went into helping to create and move the Sanctuary Resolution to the point it is ready for the congregation to vote on it.

We have worked closely together meeting weekly for an hour, collaborating in our Production Meeting that we use to put the Sunday Service together each week, and attending as many other congregational activities as she could fit into her schedule. I've been very happy with her work and expect her to do well in her ministerial calling.

Social Justice Work

Our justice work continues to be dominated by our efforts to work toward **dismantling the cultural dominance of white supremacy in our congregation**. This is challenging work for white folks to do because many whites are not accustomed to and resist being uncomfortable dealing with race issues and behaviors that we are often unaware of and take for granted.

To increase my skill in this area and to learn what other congregations are doing, I **attended the UUA Mosaic Maker's Conference** at the end of October in San Diego at the UU Congregation there. Patti Jo Newell and Jacqui C. Williams attended as well. We brought back some good ideas and I continued to develop my cultural competency.

One positive result of this work was the **recognition of Emerson's white supremacy and the decision to change the name of what is now called "Community Hall."** It was a two-step process that started first with the decision to make the change then the selection of a new name. A board sub-committee did a great job collecting names, narrowing the choices to two, and allowing our children and youth to make the final selection. Congratulations to us all for the success of that process.

I continue to attend the **Inclusivity Team** and the **Social Responsibilities Team** and when I can get there, the Green Sanctuary Team. I've participated in several demonstrations and events this year including the **March for Our Lives**, the **Poor People's Campaign**, the Protect Our Water march and the Prison Reform march conclusions that were held at Albany UU. I've had an op-ed in the paper and participated in advocacy for **Medical Aid in Dying**. I also participate in the **Beyond Racism Interfaith group** that meets at the Friends Meeting regularly sharing our efforts to do anti-racism, anti-oppression, multicultural work.

Hudson Mohawk UU Cluster

The **New York State Convention of Universalists**, a legacy organization from before our 1961 merger that offers grants, contacted me about having their annual meeting at Albany UU in the fall. I said that would be fine if we could **combine it with our Hudson Mohawk UU Fall Cluster meeting**. They agreed. We had a good gathering of about 45 people with a great keynote by the Rev. Richard S. Gilbert and a number of stimulating workshops.

Our custom has been to have a **joint service in the spring** for our five congregations that comprise our cluster (Glens Falls, Saratoga Springs, Schenectady, Albany, and Kingston). This year we invited **Dr. Glen Thomas Rideout as our featured presenter**. We wanted to experience a different kind of worship than the usual sermon centered service. This service was designed to step out of the white Protestant norm ... and it did!

That weekend was also the weekend for the March 24 March For Our Lives. We had planned a workshop with Dr. Rideout. Instead we met and worshipped together at 9am and marched down to the Capital together. A soup lunch fortified us for an afternoon workshop with Dr. Rideout.

The capstone for our cluster was the installation of the new Schenectady UU ministers the Rev.'s Lynn Gardener and Wendy Bartel April 21.

Religious Services

The big change for our Sunday services, besides having Eileen Casey-Campbell in the pulpit, was the **hiring of our new music director, Dr. Richard Porterfield**. Though he comes from an Episcopalian background, he has taken up the challenge of working in a liberally religious setting. He chooses a wide spectrum of pieces from ancient to contemporary. We continue to have a choir of significant size that performs on average of twice a month. Dr. Porterfield is from New York City so he has connections with performing artists there he has brought up including most recently, **Ruth Cunningham**.

Remembering a member who encouraged him to invite ministers of color to speak from our pulpit, **Rev Sam and Unity minister Rev. Crystal Muldrow decided to do a pulpit swap** at the end of September. It was interesting for both to experience each other's congregation and speak in a new setting. We also did an exchange of musicians. The Unity band came to Albany UU and Dr. Porterfield accompanied Rev. Sam to their service with him. It was a good experience to try out.

This year was the **celebration of our 175th anniversary and the 10th anniversary of our building expansion**. The first was celebrated in the fall and the second in the spring. In both cases, Rev. Sam traced the history of the development of our congregation and the long process that led to the building expansion.

Rev. Sam attended a UU Ministers Association continuing education event in Tampa, Florida with the **Rev. Dr. Marcia McFee** who specializes in innovative worship. She currently is working on a **contemporary style of worship she describes as “sensory rich.”** Rev. Sam was very inspired by her theory of worship and technical methods, wanting to bring some of them home. The result was the April service series titled, “Emerging Hope.” A pleasing discovery was the power of sensory rich worship to engage children, greatly enhancing our Easter service this year ... probably the best one I’ve done!

Here is a sampling of the Sunday services this year:

Sunday Morning Service Highlights

- **“Expanding Our Welcome,”** September 17
- **“After 500 Years, is the Reformation Over?”** October 22
- **“A Vulnerable Humanism of the Heart,”** November 5
- **“Gratitude to Indian Givers,”** November 19
- **“When the Yule Log Won’t Light,”** December 3
- **“The Holy Flame of Life,”** December, 10
- **“Intention Does Not Equal Impact,”** January 7
- **“Collapse of the Enlightenment Era?”** January 21
- **“Order, Disorder, Reorder,”** February 4
- **“The Joy of Fasting”** with Eileen Casey-Campbell, February 11
- **“Why Did You Doubt?”** February 18
- **“What Moves Us?”** with Eileen Casey-Campbell, February 25
- **“A More Perfect Union,”** March 18
- **“Emerging Hope: The Unexpected,”** with Leah Purcell, Eileen Casey-Campbell, April 1
- **“Emerging Hope: A New Story,”** April 8
- **“Emerging Hope: Who Gets To Be Saved?”** (Eileen Casey-Campbell), April 15
- **“Emerging Hope: Our Story and Our Planet’s Future,”** April 22
- **“Emerging Hope: Glimpses of the Promised Land,”** April 29
- **“Why Shelter a Stranger,”** with Eileen Casey-Campbell, May 6

If you missed one of these sermons or would like to read it, you’ll find most of them archived here: <http://members.albanyuu.org/wp/services/sermons/>

Lifespan Religious Education

I continue doing **Meditation Workshops**, five this year, to introduce people to mindfulness meditation. Attendance has been strong this year with one workshop with twenty people. It continues to be a way I offer for people to deepen their growth and development process.

Toward that end, I continue to work with other Capital Region meditation teachers as part of a group called Organizing Mindfulness. In collaboration with it, we sponsored a day long workshop the day before Easter with meditation teacher **Mark Hart** with an attendance of about 35 people. Last June and again this coming June we will also have an event to bring together various mindfulness teachers as part of an event called **Change Your Mind Day**. This event drew over 100 people last year and I hope we will have as many if not more this year.

Meaning Matters continues to be a way I connect on a monthly basis with those who want to go deeper into their spiritual lives by contemplating the monthly theme. I distribute a packet I receive and edit from the Soul Matters network just before the beginning of the month. This twelve page packet has a couple of short essays on the theme, deepening exercises, questions for reflection, quotes, electronic media and podcast links, books, movies, music, all to assist the participant to go deeper into the theme. This year I ran three groups (one led by Eileen Casey-Campbell) that had about thirty people signed up and about twenty regular participants.

The classes I ran were:

- **Developing White Racial Literacy** (twice, second time with Eileen Casey-Campbell) Using the audio recordings from four workshops at UUA General Assembly, three of which came from Robin DiAngelo, a trainer in dismantling white supremacy, we explored white supremacy, white fragility, white silence and 8 tools for doing the work.
- **Cultural Climate Change** – This class came from a talk presented by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks at the Chautauqua Institute. He predicted bad times ahead for our liberal values that we analyzed and invited U Albany professor Dr. Jon Mandle to discuss with us. Made for a stimulating three weeks of political philosophy.

Institutional Development Work

With the approval of the Board to move ahead with governance changes based on the Hotchkiss adaptation of policy governance for religious organizations, I joined the **Governance Working Group**. I've contributed significantly to their efforts (you'll find reports elsewhere on this work). I've also been a participant in the **Covenant Team** working on the development of a Covenant for our congregation. I've offered **technical support for the Growth Through Service** and Membership Teams as well.

We've had a number of young adults visiting our congregation. Eileen Casey-Campbell has done some work with them to stimulate their involvement. I invited a dozen of them over to my house for dinner and conversation to connect and learn how to better involve them (and potentially their friends) in the life of our congregation.

Concluding Thoughts

Having a ministerial intern half my age has been a source of regeneration for my ministry this year. Eileen's recent study in seminary and her experience working as Membership Coordinator for Rochester Unitarian have been very helpful for me to learn and recognize new opportunities for our congregation. She has challenged my old ways of doing things and thinking about things I formed in the 1980's and 1990's. She has helped me keep up with the changes being brought forward by our younger leaders.

Remembering our 175th and our 10th anniversaries has both connected me with our past and how to integrate who we have been with who we and Unitarian Universalism are becoming. In the past I've been the one pushing for new ways. Now I'm the one attached to the old way of doing things. And now I'm more aware of the risks of making changes as well as the opportunities. It makes it harder to take risks ... but just as important and vital as it was when I started in ministry.

May we not be afraid of change ... but consider those changes in creative tension with our heritage.--Rev. Sam

Board of Trustees, President's Report

Dick Dana

Officers:

Dick Dana, President

Patti Jo Newell, Vice President

Kathy Harris, Treasurer

Linda Hunt, Secretary

Trustees:

Al Berzinis

Molly Daniels

Lee Newberg

Jon Newell

Annika Pfluger

Nancy Shay

Ex-Officio voting members:

Jim Hutchins, Religious Education Council Chair

Matt Lesniak, Social Responsibilities Council Chair

Ex-Officio non-voting member:

Rev. Sam Trumbore, Minister

Albany UU Board Covenant, adopted August 18, 2016

We, the Board of Trustees, covenant with each other to:

Commit our energy and talent to the work of the Board, ready to assume our fair share of responsibilities;

Participate fully, respectfully and honestly in Board dialogue, striving to understand the viewpoints of others;

Be accountable to one another, supporting each other and assuming goodwill;

Deal with conflict responsibly and respectfully;

Respect Board decisions and represent those outcomes with integrity; and

Be faithful to the Albany UU mission

It has been a good year for the Board of Trustees. We have lived up to our covenant and succeeded in moving this congregation forward in so many areas, juggling numerous balls in the air at once. It has been heartening to see individual Board members step forward and take on the various new responsibilities created by several of the new initiatives described below.

10th Anniversary Celebration of our Community Hall and 175th Anniversary Celebration of Albany UU

Better late than never, on the 11th and 176th anniversaries, we celebrated Community Hall and the founding of Albany UU. Community Hall was celebrated with a cake, and a new name minus "Emerson." And shortly, maybe even before you read this report, Community Hall will be provided with a brand new wall hanging by the 10th Anniversary Team charged with choosing a fourth wall hanging to put in the display rotation for over the lectern.

Also very shortly, thanks to generous gifts honoring the memory of Sue Berzinis, our Technical Improvements Team will be outfitting the hall with a brand new state-of-the-art sound system, stage lights, and a console capable of handling multiple inputs, video projection within

Community Hall, and video capture and streaming to the Web. Video streaming will be available as soon as the system is installed. The ability to project video awaits more equipment that will require additional funds.

The 175th Anniversary Environmental Team was charged with

“1) evaluating and finding ways to improve the aesthetic experience of walking into our building from Washington Avenue and down the hall to Emerson; and

2) proposing ways to create a more welcoming experience; and possibly adding something that clearly identifies this set of buildings as UU.”

At the April 8 service the Team presented their vision, with various options for improving the experience, to Sam and the Board. The Board is expected to take up this project in the next month and to charge a new team with presenting their vision to the congregation through more conversations. And if the congregation reacts favorably to the proposed improvements, it is expected that the new team would be given the go-ahead to raise the funds necessary to implement the changes.

Fundraising

We are truly a generous community. Last year, we raised enough money to reduce our significant debt from the building of Community Hall to just \$142,000, putting us just a couple of years away from being able to start paying back our own Endowment Trust the money we borrowed from them 11 years ago for the building.

This year we raised over \$8,000 for Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism, far exceeding the goal the UUA set for each congregation's share of what could be characterized as UU reparations: what we owe plus interest on a pledge the UUA made almost 40 years ago to black UUs, which they were unable to honor at the time. What will next year's special fundraising project be? Perhaps we will raise funds for improvements to our façade on Washington Avenue, or maybe projection screens for our Community Hall. We'll have to wait and see.

A Sanctuary Congregation

The process of becoming a Sanctuary Congregation again has begun. In the 1980s we housed a Guatemalan family in our facility. They were threatened with deportation back to Guatemala where their lives potentially would be in danger. Instead, we were able to help them to their final destination, Canada. As I write this report, the Board just approved sending to a vote at the Annual Meeting a resolution declaring us a Sanctuary Congregation. We are not there yet, but there is a committed team of Albany UU members ready to step back into the immigration fray once again, following in the footsteps of a previous generation of Albany UU activists.

Growth Through Service (GTS)

The Growth through Service initiative continues apace, working hard to flip the concept of volunteering here at Albany UU on its head. The flip can be described, somewhat awkwardly by repurposing President John F. Kennedy's famous "ask not" line: "Ask not what task my congregation most needs doing at the moment, but instead ask what task am I best suited for and would I find most satisfying that would benefit my congregation." We have passed the 100 mark on the number of GTS conversations with members, and hope to pass the 150 mark before you read this. We are still working on compiling descriptions of all volunteer positions in the congregation with the goal of posting them on our website. This transparency will make it much easier for newcomers to chart a path into our community through service, and to grow as individuals through their service to our community.

Governance Working Group

As I write this report, the Board has just voted to approve the Governance Working Group's vision of governance changes, and re-charged them with "developing a plan for implementation of this vision, first through presentations of this vision to committees and councils, second through congregational conversations, and third, by drafting changes to Albany UU bylaws and drafting associated policies, in anticipation of a vote by the congregation to adopt these governance changes." So we are firmly on the road to changes in our governance structure intended to

- 1) Streamline to allow us to do more with less volunteers,
- 2) Eliminate unnecessary requirements for meetings in our bylaws,
- 3) Focus our resource less on talking and more on doing: carrying out programs that accomplish what we as a community are here to do, and
- 4) Create a more effective mentoring process for new leaders.

The Inclusivity Team and The Congregational Covenant Team

In the past two years, we have created two new teams, which are working on different aspects of how we treat each other and how we treat "the stranger" at our door. The Inclusivity Team has fast become an integral part of how we approach our mission, how we carry out the day-to-day tasks. We are learning to ask ourselves the question: are my words and actions fitting of a congregation who declares in its mission statement "we welcome everyone?" Both these teams are asking each of us to look deep inside ourselves for our unconscious behaviors or our reactions to others' behaviors that might need a closer look. Are we truly welcoming? Are our actions, words, and other ways of expressing ourselves – through music and art for instance – being perceived by others in a way that we would like them to be perceived?

A perfect example of this self-reflection was our decision this year to drop the name Emerson from our Community Hall. Some research into Ralph Waldo Emerson unearthed a racist perspective which he held throughout his life, a revelation to most of us. Did we want what is very often the first thing a newcomer learns about our facility – "the event [service] [workshop] is in Emerson down that corridor" – to point to Emerson and his racist beliefs? This year, we decided no, and in what I consider an inspired moment we decided it would be the children in our RE program, the next generation of UUs, who would make the final decision on the new name. Yes, I wanted "Beacon Hall" not Community Hall. But I was so pleased with the process of coming up with that name.

In the very near future, we will be repurposing the picture of Emerson to explain how and why we took his name off the hall. Emerson remains one of America's great thinkers and we do not intend to remove his name entirely. Despite his flaws, we have much to learn from him.

Thank you

Special thanks to Al Berzinis for his 3 years on the Board. His final two years on the Board demonstrated his true commitment to this institution. Despite the untimely death of his wife, Sue, he has continued his contributions to the running of Albany UU, even upping his level of commitment by donating significant monies to a fund in Sue's memory for technical improvements to Community Hall, something she would have appreciated.

Special thanks, also, to Jon Newell for agreeing to serve for a second time on the Board, this time as a member and not president of the Board. His many years of experience and knowledge

of how this institution works have proved invaluable, helping to rein us in, and/or straighten us out, when (borrowing a phrase from Robert Browning) our reach greatly exceeded our grasp, our grasp of the implications of what we were attempting to accomplish.

And special thanks, as well, to our treasurer for the past three years, Kathy Harris. This is a job requiring a head for numbers, many hours of working alone at the computer, attention to detail, and a persistence to get to the bottom of each and every numerical inconsistency in our complicated system for accounting for every penny. Kathy has all these qualities in spades, so much so that she has made it very obvious over the past three years that she has greatly enjoyed her tenure in the job. Her volunteer service is a perfect example of where skill and talent is well matched to the job at hand, resulting in benefit to both the individual and the institution. Thank you, Kathy!

Treasurer's Report

Kathy Harris

2016-2017 Year-End

For FY 2016-17, which ended June 30, 2017, Albany UU finished with a positive balance of \$12,833. Income was slightly larger than budgeted at 103%. With the loss of our long-time Music Director, some savings on the expenditure side were realized in salaries and benefits. Other savings were realized with a reorganization of our custodial responsibilities and relatively low spending on building maintenance.

2017-2018 Summary

Most of our income comes from contributions (88%) with the bulk of that from your pledges (82%), with fund-raisers and rentals providing important additional support. As we near the end of this budget year, the Finance Committee hopes to meet or exceed our budgeted income for this year, with expenses pretty much on target.

The use of electronic donations is growing. More than thirty people/families use the service each month to support Albany UU, with new pledges being paid this way monthly. It seems to be meeting more and more peoples' wishes to automate regular financial obligations and make regular donations to Albany UU easier. Access the link for this program through the Albany UU website.

It has been my sincere privilege to serve as your Treasurer. It was an exciting time with the refinancing of the mortgage. Our financial obligation to an outside entity, Berkshire Bank, is steadily shrinking. Thanks to Looking Forward payments I anticipate that this obligation should be paid off by the end of the 2022 fiscal year. We will owe ourselves, especially the Endowment Trust, and including several members who made 10-year loans to Albany UU for several more years. But the plan is in place to pay everything off and is eminently doable.

Proposed 2018-19 Budget

There are ambitious plans for 2018-2019 and thanks to your pledges for next year, they are nearing reality. There is a budget line for a Youth Advisor to work with our young adults during the church year. Our Religious Education Director, Leah Purcell, is planning a sabbatical next spring and we anticipate bringing in a qualified person to fill her role while she is gone. There was also a switch in our custodial staff to a commercial business that is very responsive to our ever-changing needs and costs less than putting staff on the payroll. Working closely with the Personnel Committee and the Board of Trustees, the Finance Committee has prepared a budget for 2018-2019 that is 3.6% larger than the current budget. My thanks to the Stewardship of

Chuck Manning and Patti Jo Newell, and their team, for their effort to make the 2018-2019 budget possible.

Income and Expense Summary for 2016-2017

Ending June 30, 2017

Ordinary Income and Expenses			
Income			
Total Contribution Income		\$473,348	88.2%
Total Other Income (Rentals, Interest)		\$32,118	6.0%
Total Program Income (Fun/d-Raisers, RE)		\$31,277	5.8%
Total Income		\$536,743	100.0%
Expenses			
Total Non-Ministerial Salary and Benefits		\$203,346	45.1%
Total Administration		\$18,933	4.1%
Total Building Maintenance		\$38,877	8.6%
Total Church and Community		\$15,111	3.4%
Total Denominational Affairs		\$36,921	8.2%
Total Ministerial Expenses		\$126,578	28.1%
Total Religious Education		\$7,511	1.7%
Total Social Responsibilities		\$3,162	0.7%
Total Expense		\$450,440	100.0%
Transfers			
Capital Reserve Fund		\$15,000	
Building Reserve Fund		\$50,270	
Ministerial Intern Reserve Fund		\$1,000	
Sabbatical Fund		\$600	
Total Transfers		\$66,870	
Total Expense and Transfers		\$517,310	

Designated Fund Balances June 30, 2017

Designated Fund	Balance	Designated Fund	Balance
Adult Ed	\$1,274	Minister's Discretionary	\$2,315
Annual Dinner	-\$1	Ministerial Intern	\$17,886
Art	\$1,365	New Congregation	\$9,833
Caring Network	\$105	Ordination	\$150
Chalice Lighter's Grant	-\$411	Oriel Magazine	\$178
Choir Fund	\$698	Partner Church	\$4,540
Contingency	\$1,555	Public Relations	\$0
Economic Distress Fund	\$202	Quilt	\$972
Electronics	\$292	RE Family Chapel	\$470
Endowment Trust	\$21,256	RE General	\$313
Evensong	\$1,922	RE Right of Passage	\$2,624
Flower	\$2,045	RE Senior High	\$2,925

Future Year Pledges	\$49,293	Receptions	\$802
Future Year RE	\$85	Sabbatical Fund	\$4,667
Garden Fund	\$1,796	Seder	\$185
HMUU	\$5,726	Selma 50	\$315
Hymnals	\$362	Sheridan Prep	\$2,376
Kitchen	\$36	SRC	\$2,554
Looking Forward	\$143	10 th Anniversary Fund	\$51,833

Endowment Trust Annual Report for the Calendar Year 2017

Trust Purpose

The purpose of the Endowment Trust is to invest and manage gifts and bequests made to the Society by its members and other individuals or entities. We work to assure donors that their bequests will be honored and administered so that income from gifts will always be available to assist the Society in furthering its purposes through special projects.

Trust Status

At the beginning of 2017, the Trust had a value of \$ 972,675. During 2017, gifts to the Trust were made in the amount of \$ \$5,924 and the Trust distributed \$ 2,694 in grants. At the end of 2017, the Trust had a value of \$974,560 . The largest part of the Endowment investment is in Albany UU. In 2006 the Endowment lent the congregation \$575,000 interest-free in order to turn the dream of Emerson Hall into a reality. Additionally, in March 2017, the Endowment lent Albany UU \$90,000 during the mortgage refinancing. The Albany UU congregation voted to gift to the Looking Forward Campaign 22,000, which was then applied to the Endowment Trust loan, leaving a loan value of \$68,000 at an annual rate of 3.5%. Of that total \$31,560 was repaid in 2017 along with \$1,528 in interest, leaving a loan total of \$36,616 at the end of 2017. The remainder of the endowment is invested in mutual funds, and in bonds with the Community Loan Fund and the Honest Weight Food Coop.

Disbursements

During 2017, the Trust funded Albany UU members to attend the Mosaic Makers conference, a dynamic gathering and learning community for teams from congregations deeply engaged in the work of building intentional multicultural community. .

Gifts Received

During 2017, a total of \$5,924 in gifts was added to the Trust. These gifts honored Jan Satin, Sally Downs, Nancy Bell, and Matt Odell.

The Trust Board takes this opportunity to publicly thank 2017 contributors: Adam Bell, Alan and Joan Rosette, Albany Civic Theater, Albert Soria, Ann D'Attilio, Anna Marie and John Bonafide, Antea Group, Arden and Marilyn Dockter, Arletta Seifert, Ben and Linda English, Betsey Miller, Betty Tretler, Catherine Carpenter, Charles and Elizabeth Stumpp, Chuck and Barb Manning, Daniel Cornman, David and Ann Brandon, David and Martha Musser, Dominic and Micaela Cardinale, Don and Ann Eberle, Donald Birn, Donald Odell, Empire Fitness and Physical Therapy, Gorham and Marilyn Cowl, Jean Bolgatz, Jeanne Wehr, John and Janice Hardink, Judith Karis, Judith Maguire, Julie Dougan, Katharine Harris, Keven and Kaaren McCann, KT Shaffer, Lisa Barron, Lois Heyer, Lois Rini, Lois Thomson, Lois Webb, Lynne and

Karl Nisoff, Malcolm Bell, Margaret Cross, Margaret Joynt, Margaret Shalit, Margie Redman, Martha Schroeder, Mary Anne Bensen, Matthew Bell, Nancy Diciaccio, Nancy Redman, Peggy Slocum, Peter and Donna Meixner, Peter and Nancy Willie-Schiff, Phyllis Ries, Richard and Helmi Loesch, Rodger Fink, Sandra LaValle, Sandra Smith, Shiela Giordano, Steve and Paula Moskowitz, Terry and Linda Way,

Your contributions to the Trust are greatly appreciated and will be invested carefully to support the mission of FUUSA.

John Cross Legacy Society

Created the John Cross Legacy Society in 2017 which recognizes members of Albany UU who have included the Society in their estate plans. Members of the inaugural group are: Martha Schroeder, Steve and Paula Moskowitz, Mary Applegate, Jon and Sigrin Newell, Chuck and Barbara Manning, John and Peggy Sherman, John Cooley, Al DeSalvo and Susan Thompson, Sharon Babala, Jan McCracken, Patricia Bailey, Kathy Harris, Rany Rosette and Chris Jensen.

Nigel Wright Peace Fund

Held and accounted for separately by the Trust is the Nigel Wright Peace Fund. That fund was established in 2015 with two gifts totaling \$12,000. \$11,700 was in the fund at the start of 2016. \$3,000 was distributed from that fund to support Family Heart Camp Scholarships and the Muslim Neighbors Community Dinner in 2016 and investment earnings were \$253. \$8,953 remains available to support the goals of that fund – to support programs that educate and engage our congregation in activities that create peace within ourselves and the larger community and develop awareness of obstacles to peace. While not part of the FUUSA Endowment, the Trust is the custodian for these funds.

Our Impact

The Endowment Trust has an impact on our community in several ways. The trustees hold the trust of those who contributed by learning about and applying investment practices that honor gifts as well as promoting giving and granting opportunities. Members of Albany UU use the Trust to create a legacy, whereby their values can continue into the future through their gifts to the Trust. And members of Albany UU who have ideas for supporting the mission of our society can look to the Trust for financial support. As Trustees, we look forward to continuing to grow the Trust and responding to the needs of our congregation.

Thank you for your continued support,

Tim Burch, Endowment Trust Chair, Jan McCracken, Sharon Babala, Tom Mercer, John Cooley, Kathy Harris, Treasurer (Ex-officio)

Stewardship Committee and Donor Report

Co-chairpersons: Chuck Manning, Patti Jo Newell

Members: Kathy Harris, Linda Hunt, Jim Hutchins, Debbie Brown, Jim Reed, Tom Levanduski, Betty Head, Barb Cooley, Jon Newell, Astrid Pettersen, Neil Rice, Chris Bystroff, Barb Manning, Peg Sherman, Mary Applegate, Meredith Andrews, Angie Stokes, Jean Bolgatz, Rick Piet, Amie Jamieson, Kathy Lloyd, Don Holmes, Karen Kaufmann, Michaela Pochily, Peter Schaeffing, Jan McCracken, Kelly Smith, Al DeSalvo, Nancy Willie Schiff, Fred Eames, Malcolm Bell, Cindee Herrick

A successful campaign requires the assistance of many. We used volunteers for two sessions of envelop stuffing, three Sundays of packet distribution, plus a couple more staffing the stewardship table in Channing Hall after the service, testimonials during several services, and follow-up calls and emails. We distributed these tasks broadly, resulting in limited overlap among volunteers. And we had excellent support from the office staff.

Purpose:

The Stewardship Team plans and implements the stewardship campaign each year. A successful fundraising effort is essential to keep our congregation healthy and growing. We must pay our minister and staff, heat, cool, and pay for our building, support the causes and programs we embrace, and pay for our building.

Albany UU exists because we all support it with our time, talents, and treasure. The campaign also represents an opportunity for members and friends to consider what Albany UU means to them and to determine how they want to support it financially.

Accomplishments in 2017-18

The theme this year was “Do Your Part to Keep Our Beacon Bright”. This year the Stewardship Team made substantive changes to the stewardship campaign format. We wanted to make the stewardship process less daunting, less labor-intensive and time-consuming and more attractive as a way of service to the congregation. With an eye toward succession planning we streamlined the approach, compartmentalizing tasks so that the primary role of being on the team is not attending meetings, but engaging in specific tasks and adopting a model of leadership using co-chairs with a two-year term of service, staggering terms to ensure continuity of experience.

We also created an incentive for returning pledges within a shortened timeframe. The names of those who returned their pledge by April 1 were entered into a drawing that was conducted at the Annual Fellowship Dinner. Sharon Babala won the first prize of \$100 UU Bucks and Paul Fisk and Luba Reep each won second prize of \$50 UU Bucks. UU Bucks can be redeemed for goods and services at any Albany UU event.

- Our campaign goal was to increase overall pledge revenue by 10%. In addition to strengthening our financial security and programmatic capacity, this increase would provide new support for:
- Our inclusivity and anti-racism work
- A part-time youth advisor to coordinate programming for teens
- Increasing our annual contribution to our Ministerial Intern Fund with the goal of hiring an intern biennially.

We're pleased to announce we expect to be at 98% of our goal at the time this report was prepared, resulting in a significant increase from last year's campaign. This increase will support each of the three new initiatives identified above.

Albany UU uses a modified version of the Unitarian Universalist Association recommended giving guide that accounts for different income levels. The guide recognizes four levels of giving – Supporter, Sustainer, Visionary, and “10-Percenter”. We encourage donors with higher incomes to give a greater percentage than those with lower incomes. By following the guide, all of us have the opportunity to be visionaries, regardless of income. For example, a retiree on a fixed income, a dual income family, or a college student could all be visionaries.

Plans for next year

We plan to continue with this new format and explore other ways to make the process more efficient, accessible and successful.

A listing of donors by category is provided below:

Ten Percenter

2 Anonymous
Katharine Harris
Chris Jensen and Randy Rosette
Ruth Salter
Sam Trumbore and Philomena Moriarty

Visionary

5 Anonymous
Mary Applegate
Mike and Sharon Babala
Bill Batt
Lorraine Blanchfield and Jeffrey English
Dave and Ann Brandon
Peter and Debbie Brown
Vanessa Cayford and Matt Lesniak
Tom Chulak
Dick and Dawn Dana
Albert DeSalvo and Susan Thompson
Diane Dunston
Frederick Eames
Rodger Fink
Eileen Hoffman and David Munro
Tom and Tanya Hotalen
Linda Hunt and Lawrence Gambino
Karen Kaufmann
Kathy Lloyd and Don Holmes
Chuck and Barbara Manning
Mary Alice Maynes
Jan McCracken
Peter and Donna Meixner
Dave and Barb Metz
Jon and Sigrin Newell
Patti Jo Newell and Bruce Rodgers
Marjorie Nieh
Don Odell
Astrid Pettersen and Neil Rice
Bobbi Place
Phil Rich
Reese Satin
Barbara Sekellick
John and Margaret Sherman

David and Sandy Stone
Nancy Wagner

Sustainer

4 Anonymous
Patricia Bailey
Laurie Beberwyck
Don and Ann Eberle
Ben and Linda English
Paul Fisk
Virginia Hammer
Judy Hanson
Julie Lomoe and Robb Smith
Steve and Paula Moskowitz
Jill Peckenpaugh
Annika Pfluger
Elena Reynolds
Lucy Wrightington

Supporter

7 Anonymous
Liliana and Mark Abendroth
Fred Barker
Lisa Barron
Jim Buzon
Mark and Molly Daniels
Seth Edelman
Peter and Thelma Gerdine
Arlene Gilbert
Bob Guerrin
Cindee Herrick
Amy Jesaitis
Rudy Johnson
Elissa Kane and Lynne Lekakis
Sally Knapp and Arnold Patashnick
Thomas Levanduski and Jim Reed
Meredith and Thomas Mercer
Marshall Miller and Dorian Solot
Angelo Patti
Saurabh Tendulkar
Regina Trzcinski

Deborah Vogel

Other (*This category includes anyone who did not indicate a giving level on their pledge form.*)

41 Anonymous

Kristen and Geoff Abbas

George and Jane Allen

Meredith and Ray Andrews

Cassie and Vic Artale

Muriel Asbornsen

Rich and Elizabeth Baldes

Paul and Laura Bartosik

Jessica Bechard

Malcolm Bell

Elizabeth Berberian

Donald and Sarah Birn

Fred Boreali

Michael Braunstein

Richard and Paula Brewer

Loren Broc

Chris and Maria Bystroff

Laura Cayford

Chris Chapple and Carol Young

Ellen Chernoff

Pam Clements

Findlay and Marcia Cockrell

Barbara Cooley

Nancy Croce

Zach Cunningham and Kelly Smith

Ann and Mike D'Attilio

Cindy Dean

Cathy DeMille

Michele Desrosiers

Deborah Dewey and Winston Hagborg

Bob Franklin and Carolyn Stetson

Brian Frank

Jane Carol Glendinning

Katharine Gordon

Lois Griffin

Marion Harwick

George Hastings

Betty Head

Thayer Heath

Suzanne Hicks

Kathy Hodges

Jaye Holly

Martin Hotvet

Amie Jamieson and Rick Piet

Joanne Keers

Bryant and Britta Kuo

Ann Lapinski

Amy Lent

David MacLeod and Debbie Reep MacLeod

Kathy Magee

Meghan Marohn

Zack and Annie Metzger

Linda Munro

David and Martha Musser

Michael Myers and Anne Savage

Lee and Heidi Newberg

Anita Patka

Patsy Patrick

Maria Phillips and Bradford Workman

Mary Phillips

Michaela Pochily

Jean Poppei

Tina and Joe Raggio

Mary Ann Randall

Darnell Rohrbaugh

Lea N'ko and Ed Ryman

Ruth Samuels

Peter Schiff and Nancy Willie-Schiff

Martha Schroeder

Julie Shaw

John and Susan Simon

Peggy Slocum

Sandra Smith

Susan Standfast and Ted Wright

Abby Sugarman

Crystal Taylor-Papps

Todd and Jennifer Thomas

Marian Tischler

John Walko

Barbara Warner

Arlen Westbrook

Lois Webb

Patricia Zima

Music Director's Report

Richard Porterfield

Librarian: Sigrin Newell

Choir: Mark Abendroth, Mike Babala, Lois Bailey, Patricia Bailey, Alison Boynton, Ann Brandon, Peter Brown, Jim Buzon, Chris Bystroff, Dorry Campano, Dick Dana, Cindy Dean, Cathy DeMille, Michele Desrosiers, , Rodger Fink, Peter Gerdine, Kathy Harris, Tina Haq, Tanya Hotalen , Tom Hotalen, Linda Hunt, Chris Jensen, Tracey Ledder, Julie Lomoe, David MacLeod, Debbie Reep MacLeod, Kayla Mancini, Barb Metz , Dave Metz, Jon Newell, Sigrin Newell, Threasa Pasquale, Astrid Pettersen, Neil Rice, Jill Rifkin, Sherrie Roberts, Deborah Rodriguez, Randy Rosette, Ruth Russell, Lea N'ko Ryman, Barbara Spink, Nancy Wagner, Wyatt Waterman, Terry Way, Betsy Wright, Trish Zima

Purpose: I propose three primary purposes for music at Albany UU services:

1. to add intellectual, spiritual, and emotional depth and delight (see UU Sources 1 – 6);
2. to add diversity and perspective by honoring and giving voice to creative, prophetic, and agitating individuals and traditions of various peoples, places, and times, and by welcoming representatives of various traditions as guest artists (see UU Principles and Sources generally); and
3. to build community through congregational participation, through the work of the choir, and by offering performances of which all may be proud (see especially UU Principles 1, 3, and 6).

Accomplishments

In June 2017, following a thorough process of interviews and auditions, the Search Committee invited me to take up the duties of Music Director at Albany UU starting August 15. Since that date (and even before it), I have met weekly with Minister Sam Trumbore, RE Director Leah Purcell, and Ministerial Intern Eileen Casey-Campbell to plan services with close integration of music to support both the weekly focus of service leadership and the ongoing mission of the congregation. Congregational hymns and songs are generally proposed by the service leader and agreed upon in committee; the Music Director is responsible for leading the hymns, also for choosing, rehearsing, and directing choir music, for performing vocal and instrumental solos and small-ensemble performances, and for recruiting guest artists and coordinating their efforts to harmonize with the daily theme and with general UU principles.

The result has been a program of consistent quality, inclusivity, and variety. The congregation has participated in hymns, rounds, and songs in English, Latin, Arabic, and Haitian Creole, and has heard instrumental music of popular, classical, and folk traditions. The Albany UU Choir has sung music ranging from Gregorian chant to Brahms to South-African freedom songs to the Beatles, and it has sung songs in English, German, Hebrew, Latin, Sanskrit, Spanish, and Zulu. By the end of this program year, we will have had world premieres of new works by Chris Bystroff and of my own composition, Albany premieres of new works by Christopher Bakrignes and Michael Harrison, and guest artists representing Abenaki, African-American, Bluegrass, Folk rock, Jazz, New Age, and Western Classical traditions.

We count among our musical capital a fine Steinway grand piano in Community Hall, the 1967 Memorial Organ in the sanctuary, two additional pianos, a keyboard synthesizer, and a battery of percussion instruments. The most valuable asset of our music program, however, is the Albany UU choir, a dedicated ensemble of adult volunteers. Throughout the program year, the choir

rehearses most Wednesday evenings and usually performs three featured pieces at the 10 am service; this year it has accomplished this feat nearly every other Sunday. Some 40 people have participated this year, with attendance of 20-to-30 the norm on any particular occasion. Choir membership is open to all who come regularly to rehearsals and services. Several new choir members have joined this year, some of whom have gone on to become pledging members of the congregation. The majority of choir members have attended for five years or longer.

This has been a period of adjustment for me and the choir. My strengths and weaknesses are different from those of previous directors, and for at least one former member, these differences proved intolerable. Initial problems were exacerbated by a lack of direct communication; with guidance from the Minister, choir members and I have learned to reach out to one another in ever more constructive ways. A detailed questionnaire which I sent to the choir this spring shows that most of the 21 respondents are happy with fundamental aspects of the current program, but that many feel too much is expected of them in terms of quantity as well as quality, given the time it takes to prepare adequately for performances.

Another valuable resource is our choir library, which under the leadership of Sigrin Newell has been purged of ethically-questionable photocopies; yet another is our resident ensemble the Helderberg Madrigal Singers, which in exchange for regular rehearsal space performs for us two Sundays per year. Finally, I am grateful for trained musicians who volunteer or take reduced fees for work they might be paid for more fully elsewhere: this season these will have included Mark Abendroth, Ann Brandon, Chris Bystroff, Al DeSalvo, Kathy Harris, Tanya Hotalen, Chris Jensen, Debby Reep McLeod, and Randy Rosette.

Besides music for services, Albany UU has hosted numerous informal musical events including Christmas caroling, and the occasional concert. This year Alyssa Yeager performed a concert benefitting Albany UU, there was a pot luck dinner with music by a capella groups from local colleges, and on Friday, June 22, we will host a concert by UU musician Peter Mayer (author of "Blue Boat Home").

Goals

In the coming year I hope to solidify and further diversify our choral repertoire and our roster of guest artists, and to strike a better balance between courage and comfort zone in choir performances. The fifty-year-old Memorial Organ needs work to the tune of some four or five thousand dollars to keep it in good playing order and to insure its future viability, and the music library needs further upkeep. I hope to move these projects along in the summer, and to publish a schedule of choral selections and guest artists for the entire fall season by mid-August, and for all of spring 2019 by the first of the year. Such advance planning will make life easier for me and the choir, and may be useful for attracting further support for our activities, and new members to our choir and congregation.

I see tremendous potential for musical events in our Sanctuary and Community Hall, so I will be taking steps to revive the Music Committee to assist me and the choir in our shared ministry, and to explore other ways we can use our resources to further the musical life of our congregation and community.

Church Administrator's Report

Amy Lent

Staff

Minister: Rev. Sam Trumbore

Director of Religious Education: Leah Purcell

Church Administrator: Amy Lent

Music Director: Richard Porterfield

Administrative Assistant: Tammy Hathaway

Sexton: Izzy Wright

Childcare Staff: Anna Carbone-Harms, Aaliah Francis

Summer Services Coordinator: Randy Rosette

Change! We said farewell this year to Custodians Hadiya Wilborn and Cameron Holloway.

We welcomed Izzy Wright, with a reinvention of a job title we used to have here: Sexton.

We welcomed a new Music Director, Richard Porterfield.

We welcomed—and soon must say farewell to—Eileen Casey-Campbell, Ministerial Intern.

Randy Rosette is returning to serve again as Summer Services Coordinator.

There are two summer childcare staff coming on board soon.

We will be posting job openings soon for Administrative Assistant, Lead Youth Advisor, and Religious Education Assistant (the latter two are new positions.)

I am saying farewell as your Church Administrator, and Tammy Hathaway will be stepping up to a new role! (Which is why Tammy's current position, Administrative Assistant, will be open.)

Communications We had expectations of changing on our weekly email 'blast' provider this year, but never had the time to focus on it. We also made only a small amount of headway on the process of incorporating the remaining useful material on the 'old' website, now named members.albanyuu.org, to the 'new' website albanyuu.org. I think it's fair to say the 'new regime' in the office will need to evaluate Albany UU's communications and come up with their own shiny new game plan for getting the word out.

Building Use and Maintenance You wonder how the building is getting cleaned with no custodians? We have contracted with a cleaning service whose cleaners are usually done and gone before we even get here in the morning. The benefits of having a cleaning service have turned out to be reduced cost overall AND hugely reduced supervisory time. We will ensure all contractor employees working at our site are paid \$15/hr. in line with our congregational decision to pay a living wage. And we have expert cleaners. We also have on demand snow removal--which is a great boon. The contractor has a larger pool of people available to work, whereas we were limited to two part-time custodians who were not necessarily available when it snowed! I am very pleased to be leaving my job with this excellent new cleaning service in place.

Let me repeat in its entirety a line from my report last year: And yes, I do grumble about building rentals; they are very time-consuming, but they feed a budget income line and also provide a never-ending stream of interesting people in the office! All still true. Our system of paying

Building Hosts to ‘supervise’ rental events works well, but we’ll need to recruit and train more soon as the corps has shrunk.

On Mondays, Izzy, in this newest iteration of the Sexton role, does a lot of picking up and putting back after Sunday’s activities. He also is charged with minor repairs, specific cleaning projects, and reporting larger repairs that need attention. And soon he’ll be mowing the grass and trimming the hedges.

For building and maintenance oversight we still depend on Dave Metz—he’s done this for years and he’s great at putting together problems and solutions! I don’t know how much longer he’s going to want this volunteer role (chair of Building and Grounds) but if you get a chance, please tell him you appreciate his work. Dave’s got a crew of volunteers he can call on for various tasks, and we thank them, too! The revised, expanded Gardening Committee under the guidance of Donna Meixner is doing fabulous work keeping our gardens lovely. On the spring clean up day a few weeks ago over 20 people showed up and the work was done in no time. Thank you all, too!

Office Thank you to all who have pitched in to help with office activities this year—from counting money and making deposits to folding and mailing the newsletter and various assorted tasks. Some of our ‘regulars’ were Michaela Pochily, Don Odell, Linda Way, and Reese Satin. And then there are the mystery plant caretakers: Thank you to Ann D’Attilio for watering the plants in Community Hall, and thank you to the Mannings for caring for the jades in the Sanctuary!

The best news of the spring was the acquisition of a new photocopier: Thank you to all for putting up with the old one for far too long, and for preventing me from kicking it to the curb before we had a new one lined up....

My personal favorite project this year was the opportunity to work with the 175th Anniversary Environmental Team, planning ways to make our visitor experience more welcoming from the sidewalk to Community Hall. I look forward to continuing on this effort even when no longer an employee! Yes, I will still be here, just wearing the ‘member’ hat. You’ll still see me around, I am not disappearing. And on that note, I give to you our new Church Administrator, Tammy Hathaway.—Amy Lent

It is with bittersweet joy that I will assume the role as Albany UU Church Administrator on July 2. The bitter is that I will miss working with Amy very much. We had a wonderful almost three years together – and I do mean wonderful. The sweet and the joy is that I look forward to serving as your Church Administrator and giving my very best for as long as you’ll have me. I also look forward to working with the next person to fill my current role as Administrative Assistant. Change can be challenging but it is also an opportunity. I accept this opportunity to work together with all of you in my new role and will strive to make this transition as seamless as possible.—Tammy Hathaway

Wheel of Life

Joined

Liliana Abendroth, Mark Abendroth, Leah Akins, Lois Bailey, Michael Braunstein, Tina Haq, Martin Hotvet, Ela Kessel, Tyler Kessel, Meghan Marohn, Maria Phillips, Luba Reep, Ali Schaeffing, Peter Schaeffing, Brad Workman

Died

Nancy Bell, Bob Blank, Dorothy Bursik, Lawrie Lierheimer, Jody Zimmerman

COUNCILS

Program Coordinating Council

Chairperson: Patti Jo Newell (Vice President, Board of Trustees)

The Program Coordinating Council is made up of Albany UU's lay leaders and consists of all chairs of its committees and councils, leaders of affiliated groups, the Church Administrator Amy Lent, and the Director of Religious Education Leah Purcell.

Purpose of group

Our task is to oversee and coordinate the lay ministry of Albany UU. This involves coordinating a calendar of all major church events; taking up issues for discussion as identified by the Board of Trustees; and serving as a point of contact for committees and groups needing to communicate with or get feedback from the diversity of lay ministries as represented by PCC. PCC is also a resource for the minister and religious services committee in the provision of announcers for Sunday services. PCC has traditionally been a resource for the Board of Trustees regarding coordination and recruitment for church events and initiatives, and for troubleshooting in the event of glitches along the way.

Accomplishments in 2017-18

In addition to fulfilling the ongoing tasks identified above, PCC also undertook the following:

PCC has continued to engage in a discernment process regarding its role in the life of the congregation. Begun at the request of the Board of Trustees, PCC has been reviewing its roles and responsibilities as identified in the bylaws and established over time in practice.

Plans for next year

-PCC will help coordinate the Get Connected Activity Fair

-PCC will help the Inclusivity Team work with teams and committees to customize and utilize the Inclusivity Assessment Tool.

-As the Board of Trustees continues its organizational effectiveness initiative, PCC expects to provide feedback and perspective regarding reimagining an improved approach to governance at Albany UU, including a continuation of its discernment regarding the roll of PCC within it.

Religious Education Council

Religious Education Program for Children and Youth and work of the Director of Religious Education

Our Religious Education Program continues to be highly valued by our parents and caretakers of children and youth; to offer support to families in their faith development; and is well supported by DRE, Leah Purcell with input and volunteerism of the RE Council.

Director of Religious Education: Leah Purcell

Religious Education Council Chair: Jim Hutchins

Religious Education Council: The REC sponsored 4 congregation- wide events this year: Holiday Tree Decorating; HUUGS – sending out packages of goodies and good wishes to our recently bridged young adults; a pot luck and game night and Sundae Sunday – our special Coffee Hour to celebrate the multigenerational RE Sunday in June. The RE Council members were Sarah Stanwicks, Larry Schell, Amy Jesaitis, Elizabeth Baldes, Becky Edvalson, Tracie Tilgner, Sheila Gray, Michele Desroisers, Paula Brewer, and Liz Halvorsen. Jim Hutchins served as chair. The Council met with Leah each month Oct – May and also held a retreat in Aug and June. The REC members volunteered to serve as the RE Office Assistant on Sunday mornings and to be the Sunday Superintendent on Sundays Leah was away or had off.

The Sunday School enrollment reported to the UUA in early 2018 was 104; however, by April the number of children and youth attending was 77.

Team Members for Sunday School (including guides, supporters, assistants, Our Whole Lives facilitators, and youth advisors): Cindee Herrick, Laurie Beberwyck, Rose Tell-Drake; Britany Orlebeke, Amy Jesaitis, Christine Vanderlan, Elizabeth Berberian, Meredith Andrews, Jill Peckenpaugh, Mary Fellows, Brian Frank, Elisa Grimm, Leah Akins, Sarah Stanwicks, Terry Way, Sharon Babala, Chuck Manning, Tracie Tilgner, Vanessa Cayford, Ann Von Linden, Lou Rehder, Brian Carr, Christine Carrera, Darnell Rohrbaugh, Liz Baldes, Deb Bennett, Jim Hutchins, Eileen Roepe, Winston Hagborg, Geoff Abbas, Kevin Purcell, Laura Churchill, Tracey Hickey, Paula Brewer, Marietta Angelotti, John Scaringe, Robin Tell-Drake, Sheila Gray, Todd Gray, Kristen Abbas, Ela and Tyler Kessel,

Paid childcare staff: Aaliah Francis and Anna Carbone

Curricula: Our pre-school group continued a story-based curriculum Leah wrote. The children in Kindergarten through 6th graded used curricula from the Tapestry of Faith program. The K/1 group held K/1 Our Whole Lives, which is 9 sessions, in the spring.

K/1 – World of Wonder, fall/Our Whole Lives, spring

2nd grade – Signs of our Faith, Being UU Every Day

3rd/4th grade – Faithful Journeys

5th grade – Love Connects Us

6th grade – Amazing Grace, Exploring Right and Wrong

7th/8th grade – Our Whole Lives

9th-12th grade – High School Youth Group - Highlights of the Youth Group activities included service (Food Pantry Farm, cooking for the overflow shelter, helping with Albany UU tree decorating event); fun (Escape Room and games to start Sunday morning meetings); social and training overnights at Albany UU: (overnight at Albany UU with Schenectady youth; mini con with local youth groups in December; Youth Ministry Training for Upstate NY youth groups) Some youth also attended cons and trainings at other congregations.

Rite of Passage: Leah and Rev Sam offered this program outside Sunday school time for 9th and 10th graders, assisted by our ministerial intern, Eileen Casey-Campbell. The 11 youth participants and 8 adult mentors met in small groups once a month and with Leah, Rev Sam and Eileen as a whole group once a month. The adult mentors were: Barb Metz, Laura Churchill, Winston Hagborg, Jon Bick, Peggy Sherman, Dee Van Riper, Ed Hancock and John Sherman

YSOP: Leah also ran a social justice program for high school youth outside Sunday school time. The program was about hunger and homelessness; the focus was the overnight trip to NYC through the Youth Services Opportunities Program (YSOP) run by the Friends for direct service and learning. The group was made up of 8 youth and 4 adult volunteers. The adults were Robin Tell-Drake, Tracie Tilgner, Sheila Gray and Dave Quist.

Special Sundays in RE: For the children in Pre-k through 6th grade their curricula was supplemented by 2 special types of Sunday school:

Family Chapel: Leah planned and lead, Family Chapels Oct through May, except in April when Eileen Casey-Campbell let the Family Chapel. There were based on the Soul Matters theme of the month. Leah wrote follow up activities for each group for each Family Chapel. Family Chapel give children in Pre-k through 6th grade and their parents/caretakers and younger siblings the opportunity to experience many elements of a regular service in a child-centered way.

UU's in Action: Leah created activities and sessions for multi-age groups on holiday weekends for service projects or learning about social justice topics. There were 5 UU's in action Sundays this year.

UU Jams – Black People Matter: This was the theme for our special programming for the month of January this year for pre-K through 6th grade and also for youth group. Leah used a 2-week curriculum written by her colleague Beryl Aschenberg. This curriculum is geared for especially for white parents/caretakers with white children to learn to talk about race. This was also the focus of Family Chapel and the UU's in Action session in January. Leah recruited members of the Inclusivity Team, Anne Marie Haber, Patti Jo Newell and Lee Newberg, to help lead Black People Matter Sunday school sessions.

Special Programming for May: At the time of the writing of this report, Leah was creating special programming for multi-age groups for children in Pre-k through 6th grade, including Family Chapel on the theme of Creativity

Thematic RE: Leah used the Soul Matters theme of the month to create interactive bulletin boards, Newsletter column, spiritual practice for families, parent support group. Soul Matters is the program that also provides material for the Meaning Matters Small Groups the Rev Sam and Eileen ran for adults.

Religious Services: Leah worked with Rev Sam and Eileen on 6 multigenerational services: Ingathering, Wheel of Life, Winter Solstice; Christmas; Easter and RE Celebration Sunday. She and Eileen partnered to plan and present a multigenerational White Supremacy Teach In on Oct 15. At the time this report was written, Leah is creating a child-friendly, full adult sermon service she will present on May 27 on the theme of Creativity. Leah supports the Rite of Passage service to which children and youth in grades 5 and older are invited. Leah worked with Rev Sam, Eileen and Richard Porterfield, our Music Director, to include youth in some regular services.

Leah Committee Work to Support the Congregation: Leah served on the Inclusivity Committee in the fall, until the group was functioning well without her input; the UU Connections Committee; the Congregational Covenant Committee; the Safe Congregation Response Team; and the Board of the Hudson-Mohawk cluster. Leah facilitated the building-wide evacuation drill which was held Oct 8

Leah's Support to the Denomination: Leah finishes the last of her 3 year term on the LREDA Board (Liberal Religious Educators Association) July 1 this year - she held the portfolio on Professional Development. At the time of this writing she is on a UUA team to implement a racial inclusivity assessment for RE programs; and a UUA task force to develop accountability groups for white religious educators. She and Rev Sam planned a workshop at the cluster event in the fall exploring new innovations in RE and Family Ministry; and Leah led a workshop at the spring Seaway gathering on the same topic. Leah convenes the cluster LREDA meetings. She also serves as a mentor in UUA RE Credentialing Program.

Social Responsibilities Council

Chair: Matt Lesniak

Members: Zach Cunningham, Matt Lesniak, Anne Metzger (through March), Laura Paris, Jean Poppei, Elena Reynolds, Ann von Linden. Appointees for 2017-2018: Carol Butt, Ed Hancock, Karen Kaufmann

Purpose: To aid the Albany UU community in social responsibility, both by providing social-responsibility related activities, and by vetting groups for donations and collaborations. From the Bylaws: “[SRC] 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 ... The Council may initiate and promote activities consistent with these statements.”

Accomplishments: Thirteen room donations to a variety of local, regional, and even national organizations such as Indivisible, Girls Inc., and Sane energy. Three Give-away-the-plate Sundays raising funds and awareness for the Sanctuary for Independent Media, for COREFi of Vieques, Puerto Rico, and for Sheridan Preparatory Academy field trips.

There were also three informational forums: Christine Ahn/Women against War on Korea, Albany Cuba Solidarity's speech from the Cuban Embassy's first secretary, and Sanctuary Movement forum with Terry Diggory of Saratoga's Presbyterian – New England Congregational.

The Terry Diggory forum laid the groundwork for the Sanctuary resolution, pending at May's congregational meeting.

SRC also voted to formally join the Labor Religion Coalition with a two-year commitment of financial support.

The SRC cosponsored or issued letters of support for several Katal Center initiatives related to bail and prison reform, and signed on to a letter asking the Rensselaer County Sheriff to reconsider its plans to cooperate with ICE via the 287g program.

Thanks to the continued efforts of Jean Poppei and others, Albany UU has had a front seat view of some hard-won improvements to New York State's Parole Board (its make up and its practices).

Ann von Linden has also made sure that each month's collection for the FOCUS Food Pantry were collected, counted, and packaged up.

Green Sanctuary Committee (GSC): Chris Bystroff, chair.

Members of Green Sanctuary Committee: The Green Sanctuary Committee (GSC) has 21 active members in its core group and approximately 50 members in its general group. The core consults by e-mail during the month; the general group receives monthly updates. Visitors and

new members are welcome at our meetings at all times. Our meetings occur on the first Sunday of the month after the service. Our decisions are made primarily by consensus. Minutes of our meetings are placed in a notebook and can be found in the workroom.

Officers: Chris Bystroff - chair; Carol Butt – vice-chair and liaison to Social Responsibility Committee; Betsy Wright – recording secretary; Tim and Ilene Kane – corresponding secretaries and contributors to Windows; Anne Marie Haber and Mitch Cohen – liaisons to Religious Education.

Purpose: The GSC operates under the UU 7th principle, respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part. In the era of planetary crisis due to climate change, the GSC seeks to provide moral compass on environmental issues, and urges each person in the congregation to be active on an individual as well as a societal basis. We try to do this by providing education, encouragement, camaraderie and fun.

Accomplishments in 2017-2018 Year:

Religious Education -- Anne Marie Haber and Mitch Cohen maintain worm composting bins in most RE rooms and answer questions about them.

Spring Clean-up -- Kathy Harris is organizing a Corning Preserve clean-up for Saturday, April 21. RE students are encouraged to attend with their parents.

DO MORE PLEDGE -- The GSC asked the congregation to pledge to DO MORE over the year. The GSC is currently tabulating what people have done, and has discussed the congregation's actions in announcements, in Windows, and on the bulletin board.

Religious Services and Education -- The GSC offers to provide announcers for services in April during Earth Month. Tim Kane prepares articles for Windows each month.

Recycling -- The GSC collects items for recycling in the cloakroom. Items such as jackets, hats, mittens are donated to the Interfaith Shelter or the refugee center. Some items, such as corks, have been repurposed in craft items that were sold at the UU Bazaar. In conjunction with the RE director, the GSC collected used and broken toys for recycling. Other recycled items were sent to terracycle.com, where we accumulated more than 10,000 points. These points were redeemed for the planting of 10 trees in a American forest. The total trees planted by this congregation in the last few years (outside of individual pledges) totals 14. Deborah Vogel has started a new recycling item – Tyvek envelopes.

Forums -- The GSC assisted Carol Butt in her efforts to bring Judith Enck, the former regional director for the Environmental Protection Agency, to Albany UU for a speech on “The Trump Assault on the Environment and What You Can do About it.” Various environmental agencies were invited to table, and food was available. Following the speech, the GSC sponsored a letter-writing campaign to encourage the government to use sustainable energy in the areas destroyed by the hurricanes of 2017.

The GSC presented a forum on geothermal energy, which is a method of using core temperatures in the earth as a basis for heating and cooling. Several attendees requested more information from the presenter, Dandelion Co.

The GSC also held a forum, given by Meghan Marohn. She discussed the current status of climate change and possible solutions.

Tabling -- Carol Butt made and sold cloth gift bags in order to eliminate some of the waste produced by gift wrapping. Dave Musser was available to answer questions about community solar and geothermal. Betsy Wright brought in a backyard (small household) composter and a water barrel to advocate for their use.

Community Involvement -- Astrid Pettersen and Barbara Spink have attended meetings of agencies whose emphasis is on community solar and geothermal energy. Having coordinated with the minister, the board, and the SRC, , GSC members (including Chris Bystroff, Sandy Steubing, Astrid Pettersen, Barbara Spink, David Musser, Chuck Manning, Betsy Wright, Rich Sinclair, Kathy Harris) participated in SHARE meetings and/or demonstrations concerning the Sheridan Hollow Microgrid. Immediate State action on the fossil fuel infrastructure of the microgrid was avoided when the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) decided to consider the use of a sustainable energy source. Members of the GSC assisted in the preparation of a letter to be signed by religious leaders in the community. This letter was sent by SHARE to the New York Power Authority and the DEC.

GSC members attended the March for Science in 2017. A similar march is expected on April 14, 2018. An Earth Day action is planned for April 23.

GSC member Rich Sinclair, independently and with Stop NY Fracked Gas Pipeline, organized a Renewable Energy Fair, which was fun and provided much valuable information.

MHUU Community -- For the past few years, the GSC has participated in a picnic potluck/hike with the other UU green sanctuaries in the area. These events are universally pleasant and open to all.

Plans for 2018-2019: The Green Sanctuary Committee generally holds a special meeting in the summer to discuss plans for the upcoming year. Suggestions from non-GSC members are always welcome.

Black Lives Matter: Ed Hancock

Ed attended CAAMI (Capital Area Against Mass Incarceration) meetings when they were regularly scheduled, and Ann Von Linden shepherded a SURJ (Showing Up for Racial Justice) chapter in the past year. The team and SRC in general is also appreciative of Jacqui Williams' involvement and notifications about CAAMI events.

The focus of the Black Lives Matter task force this year was on justice, especially involving special prosecutors for police killings of people of color. Other issues constituting race-related injustice were also of concern, such as housing, food insecurity, unequal educational opportunity, and access to community activities such as scouting and YMCAs.

Through the efforts of the task force, Albany UU hosted participants in CAAMI's Prison Justice Walk in September. We also provided last-minute meeting space for the Parole Justice committee in October. The film "The 13" was also shown to an appreciative Albany UU audience.

Overflow Shelter Meals: Patty Burch, coordinator

Patty has marshalled the efforts of a number of Albany UU members and friends to provide a weekly meal for 25 men who have sought shelter during the winter months at the First Lutheran Church Overflow Shelter. There were 11 days of meals this winter: meals consisting of an entrée, side dishes, salad, and dessert, provided on the 2nd and 4th Mondays.

In fall of 2018, Patty will determine the level of interest from Albany UU, and the need from the Overflow Shelter, and will decide when and how to continue the work of providing meals.

Sanctuary Task Force: Eileen Casey-Campbell, coordinator

Members:—Elizabeth Berberian, Zach Cunningham, Jerry Deighan, Deborah Dewey, Arlene Gilbert, Winston Hagborg, Karen Kaufmann, Dave Munro, Jean Poppei, Sam Trumbore

The Sanctuary Task Force grew out of Terry Diggory's forum in January. Through discernment and discussion, and especially thanks to the writing skills of Karen and Dave, the task force developed a congregational resolution to declare Albany UU a Sanctuary congregation. The task force brought the resolution through three congregational conversations, and the resolution was endorsed both by the SRC and the Albany UU board.

The Sanctuary Task Force also reached out to allies in the Capital District, finding a handful of other congregations Albany UU will likely partner with to provide Sanctuary. The SRC has been charged with continuing the work of the task force next year, after Eileen has left Albany UU to continue her training.

Peace Team: Ed Hancock, coordinator

Honoring Nigel Wright, the Albany UU Peace Team hosted, cosponsored and participated with many peace initiatives. Pastors for Peace presented in Channing Hall the educational and health initiatives in Cuba. In August Water Protectors walking from New Jersey to the Grafton Peace Pagoda were greeted with a potluck dinner and an overnight in Albany UU. Weary walkers even took showers on our sidewalk, camp style!

The new election brought new levels of anxiety to many parts of the community. The new administration's proposed bans on Muslims from entering the country inspired anti-Islamic attacks as well as anti Jewish, neo NAZI and white supremacist attacks. The Capital District Coalition Against Islamophobia (CDCAI) which had been meeting monthly at the Mosque on Central Avenue added a monthly meeting at Albany UU on a weekday for those who could not make Sunday nights. A steering committee to plan for those meetings began meeting monthly at Albany UU as well.

Through Ed's participation in CDCAI, Albany UU hosted 13th Anniversary dinner of Yassin Aref's and Mohammed Mosharref Hossain's incarcerations. The dinner was in the summer of 2017.

Anti Jewish concerns added to the issues concerning people of Jewish heritage who form the Albany chapter of Jewish Voice for Peace. JVP is appalled at the right wing treatment of the indigenous Palestinian people in Israel as such treatment is inhumane and is a disgrace to their Jewish heritage. JVP meets monthly, sometimes at Albany UU and its members overlap with CDCAI and the more specific Palestinian Rights group. The Boycott, Divest, Sanction movement (BDS) is a priority of JVP as a tool for change but is a hotly opposed and a divisive issue in the Jewish Israeli community. In the US, some governments will not contract with organizations that support BDS, a position that is opposed on the grounds of freedom of speech and association. The position of Palestinians in Israel is much like that of Native Americans in the 1800s when confined to reservations. Palestinians are prohibited from certain roads and those in Gaza are restricted to the Gaza reservation. Even Palestinians who are Israeli citizens are subject to Jim Crow like limitations and obstacles Jewish citizens do not face.

With the new administration, concern for women's rights led to a very large protest march and the immediate formation of Huddles or action and support groups of which one met on a very snowy night at FUUSA. People still meet in various parts of the community: By attending these, at least on occasion, Ed Hancock shows Albany UU's support for them: Bethlehem Neighbors for Peace, Bethlehem Morning Voice, Interfaith Alliance of Capital District.

Looking forward into 2018 and 2109, issues of peace and justice have proven daunting and draining for many. Wars supported by US tax dollars in Yemen, Syria, Africa, and potentially Korea are mind boggling. The team hopes to continue to develop reading lists, bring in speakers, and present films addressing these issues.

SRC's Plans for next year:

Sanctuary-related activities will likely take up a large amount of SRC's effort next year, especially as plans solidify to partner with other area faith communities to offer physical sanctuary.

We also hope to take some of the skills learned from the Sanctuary activities to increase the opportunities for the Albany UU community for service to our neighborhoods and to participated in direct action.

One important service Albany UU is especially suited for is to host grass-roots lobbying organizations, but we need to increase both our involvement in lobbying efforts, and our capacity to quickly provide logistical support when it is requested.

We also plan to have a role in leveraging Albany UU's resources to help revitalize West and Bradford streets.

STANDING COMMITTEES

Finance Committee

Dick Brewer, Chair

Chuck Manning, Stewardship

Steven Moskowitz, Budget

Dick Brewer, Insurance

David Musser, Member at Large

Dave Metz, Buildings and Grounds, Mortgage Loan refinancing

Sheila Gray, Personnel Committee Liaison

Kathy Harris, Treasurer (elected)

Michaela Pochily, Assistant Treasurer (elected)

Purpose of group: To sustain a vital and nurturing religious community by ensuring a solid financial foundation for the daily inspirational and aspirational activities of the Society.

Accomplishments in 2017-18: Produced and supervised a balanced budget that reflected real income versus actual expenses; maintained adequate and appropriate insurance coverage; and fully funded payments of the mortgage on the Community Hall.

Worked with our bank to refinance the Community Hall mortgage. Mortgage closed 10/5/17.

Monitored ongoing financial activities and cash flow.

Worked with the Personnel Committee to develop a 2018-19 budget proposal that increases salaries to our employees commensurate with their years of service and expertise in their roles.

Plans for next year: Continue to carefully monitor the financial health of FUUSA. Monitor cash flow and make adjustments to the budget as necessary.

We will also work closely with the Board of Trustees, Personnel Committee and other groups to advance our mission in a fiscally responsible way.

Membership Committee

Chair: Peter Brown

Members: Barb Manning, Elizabeth Berberian, Kathy Hodges, Don Odell, John Sherman, Peggy Sherman and Sam Trumbore

The committee continues to focus on growing our congregation by welcoming visitors more effectively, creating better connections for new members and working to try to prevent members from drifting away. We would like to encourage everyone to make it a point to welcome visitors. This is very important in encouraging visitors to become members.

PLEASE be an Albany UU ambassador.

We have made more changes to our Getting to Know Unitarian Universalism (GTKUU) sessions to give potential members a better understanding of Unitarian Universalism and Albany UU.

We offered 4 newcomer orientations (“Getting to Know UU”) on Saturday mornings. We welcomed 46 participants in all. Many of them have connected with and joined the congregation or are planning to join in the near future. We are thankful for their contributions!

We certified (with the UUA) 371 members on January 1, 2017 and January 1 2018 we certified 366. In 2017 we added 20 new members and as of May 1 this year we have added 9 new members.

We have had one New Member Recognition Sunday service as of May 1,2018 for this fiscal year. At this service, we recognized the new members who have signed the Membership Book since the last New Member Recognition Sunday and after the service we had a reception in the back of Community Hall to honor the new members. All new members are invited to attend the Annual Dinner in April as guests of Albany UU. This year we had nine new members attend the dinner.

The Hospitality team now has a core group of trained volunteers to be at the Welcome Table on Sunday mornings with each volunteer working at the Welcome Table about once every four to six weeks. We also have a growing core group of volunteers who are Greeters on Sunday mornings. Barb Manning is in charge of these two groups and is always looking for more volunteers willing to be a Greeter or “Welcomer” on Sunday morning. Anyone interested in becoming a Greeter or “Welcomer” should contact her. (barbaracmanning@hotmail.com)

Nominating Committee

Chairperson: Bob Franklin

Members: Mary Applegate, Al DeSalvo, Kathy Hodges, Meredith Mercer, Mike Myers

Purpose: The Nominating Committee is responsible for the recruitment and selection of candidates for elective offices as follows:

Officers: President; Vice President; Secretary; Treasurer; Assistant Treasurer

Chairperson: Religious Education Council

Chairperson: Social Responsibilities Council

Board of Trustees members

Religious Education Council members

Social Responsibilities Council members

Nominating Committee members

Endowment Trust trustees

In recruiting candidates for elective offices, the Committee reaches out to the congregation in a variety of ways. Announcements of the openings are made during the service and notice is given to the congregation in a WINDOWS article. Additionally, the Committee worked with Growth Through Service to identify the fit between the talents of Albany UU members and the available positions. The Committee successfully recruited both members who have joined recently and members who have not previously held leadership roles.

Accomplishments:

At the time of publication of the Annual Report, 2018 elections have not been held. This year, there are two contested elections; Nominating Committee (as per Bylaws) and Endowment Trust. The slate of candidates is as follows:

President: Dick Dana

Vice President: Patti Jo Newell

Secretary: Linda Hunt

Treasurer: Reese Satin

Asst Treasurer: Seth Edelman

REC Chair: Jim Hutchins

SRC Chair: Matt Lesniak

Board of Trustees: Meredith Andrews, Frederick Eames

REC: Leah Akins, Ela Kessel, Mike Myers

SRC: Michael Braunstein, Zach Cunningham, Karen Kaufmann

Nominating: Sharon Babala, Pat Bailey, Carol Butt, Ann Lapinski

Endowment Trust: Jeff English, Larry Gambino, Jon Newell

Meredith Mercer and Mike Myers have completed their terms on the Nominating Committee. The Committee wishes to thank them for their time, talent and dedication.

Personnel Committee

Chairperson: Linda Hunt

Members: Ben English, Sheila Gray (Finance Committee Liaison), Karen Kaufmann, Bobbi Place, and Jacqui Williams.

Purpose: The Personnel Committee oversees the administration of personnel policies 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, provides feedback on performance, and encourages and supports the staff toward professional growth.

Personnel Changes: Several personnel changes have occurred or will happen before the end of June. Dr. Richard Porterfield accepted our offer to serve as Music Director beginning in August 2017. We experienced various difficulties filling and maintaining two custodial positions. Therefore, Amy Lent needed to obtain the temporary services of a contractor to clean and remove salt from our floors this winter. Amy's efforts resulted in our hiring a contractor to clean our building, along with arranging for snow removal, at approximately half our current employee costs. This decision coincided with the departure of Cameron Holloway, who was looking forward to exploring new life opportunities after having provided custodial services at Albany UU for the past four years. The Personnel Committee abolished our custodial positions. Izzy Wright now serves as sexton for 10 hours per week. Another significant change will be that Amy Lent will retire at the end of June after serving for 16 years as our Church Administrator. Tammy Hathaway will take on the position of Church Administrator.

Accomplishments: One major task of the committee each year is to propose staff salaries to the Finance Committee. Once again the Committee's proposal attempted to be both fair to our employees and control costs. We continue to believe that we are making good progress toward achieving fair compensation concerning staff salaries.

The Stewardship Committee accepted the Personnel Committee's recommendation to include funds in next year's budget for the services of a part-time youth advisor.

Another important accomplishment was to establish a policy to provide all employees with a paid, job-protected leave of absence under the New York State Paid Family Leave Benefits Law, effective January 1, 2018. Lastly, the Committee as continued its review and revision of our Personnel Manual.

Plans for next year: The committee will continue to monitor personnel policy issues and employee benefits. We also will continue to review duties assigned to staff with regard to those assumed by volunteers to assure efficient functioning. We will continue with routine review of the Personnel Manual to remain in compliance with frequently changing employment laws. Other initiatives are to review our employment policies and practices pertaining to diversity and inclusivity.

SPECIAL COMMITTEES

175th Anniversary Environmental Committee

Facilitator: George Shear

Members: Lisa Barron, John Cooley, Janet Hunter, Britta Kuo, Amy Lent, Dave Metz, Patti Jo Newell, Diana Shear, Dave Stone.

Purpose: Develop a plan to improve the welcoming nature of our building from Washington Avenue, and our entrance while also re-evaluating and recommending improvements to the environment of our lobby and the corridors that lead to our Community Hall Sunday services.

Accomplishments: Plan outline presented to the congregation at the April 8th Sunday Service. THE PLAN presented to Dick Dana and the Board.

Plans for next year: Serving the church administrator as aesthetics advisors. Implementing some of the suggested projects.

Congregational Covenant Team

Chair: Dick Dana

Members: Brian Frank, Jan McCracken, Zack Metzger, Patti Jo Newell, Leah Purcell, Kelly Smith, and Jacqui Williams, Sam Trumbore, minister

Purpose: In April, 2017 the Board charged the Team with “gathering input from the congregation and creating a congregational covenant for Board Approval and, ultimately, an up-or-down vote at the 2018 annual Meeting.”

Accomplishments: The team was an outgrowth of the original Covenant Planning Team, which had spent 8 months educating the congregation through congregational conversations, presentations in services and even an original skit. During that time, Rev. Sam did several sermons on the topic. Ultimately, the conclusion was that the congregation was ready for, and interested in, working towards creating a congregational covenant.

Since the current Team was created in April 2017, they have researched covenants, spent many hours in discussion, and held three congregational conversations to gather input from the congregation. An interactive display is currently up in Channing Hall soliciting ideas about what is important to the congregation; and a survey will shortly be distributed to the congregation so people can decide what concepts they would like to see in a covenant.

The hoped for congregational vote in May of 2018 was an ambitious goal that the Team agreed a number of months ago they should let slide in the interest of getting more input from the congregation before putting pen to paper.

Plans for next year: The Team will use the results of the interactive display and the survey to create a congregational covenant. The covenant will be presented to the congregation, and comments and suggestions for changes will be factored into a final covenant, which will be presented to the congregation for an up-or-down vote.

Governance Working Group

Members: Molly Daniels, Nancy Shay, Peggy Sherman, Rev. Sam Trumbore

Purpose: At its August 2017 retreat facilitated by the former director of our UUA Central East Region and governance expert Rev. Joan Van Becelaere, the Board agreed it was time to start a process to evaluate which governance changes would be best for our congregation and how they might be implemented. In September, the Board appointed a Governance Working Group (GWG) with the charge “to work with the Dan Hotchkiss model of governance, adapt it to our

congregation's needs and aspirations, and propose to the Board changes to Albany UU's governance structure."

The Hotchkiss model of governance is an adaptation of policy governance, which has long been a favored form of governance in the non-profit world. Dan Hotchkiss adapted it specifically for use by congregations. His seminal book "Governance and Ministry: Rethinking Board Leadership," describes the model and clarifies the different roles of ministry and governance in a congregation. This allows more effective goal setting, both near term (annual) and long term. It also assures that roles are closely matched with responsibilities, and that lines of accountability are clearly defined, making the carrying out of these goals easier.

Accomplishments: The GWG has looked at congregations that have recently made governance changes using the Hotchkiss model, both locally (Schenectady in particular) and elsewhere. In mid-November the GWG met with Rev. David Pyle, our District UUA representative for governance, to get his opinion on some of their ideas.

After presenting an initial proposal for a new governance structure to the Board, the GWG discussed it with members and leaders of the Program Coordinating Council, Social Responsibilities Council, Religious Education Council, Endowment Trust, Membership Committee and Caring Network. The GWG made additional changes based on the constructive feedback received from these discussions. A revised proposal was presented to the Board of Trustees at its April meeting. The Board of Trustees affirmed the proposed governance structure and vision and charged the GWG with developing a plan for implementation. The proposed governance structure is depicted in a chart and described in the following Governance Vision Statement:

Through democratic process, the congregation of the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany chooses a Board of Trustees as its governing body and a minister as its spiritual, programmatic and administrative leader.

Through its long-term planning and fiduciary responsibility, the Board ensures that the congregation will fulfill its mission far into the future. Through its policy-making, the Board establishes a clear governance structure so that Board members, minister, staff and volunteer leaders understand where decisions are made and where accountability rests.

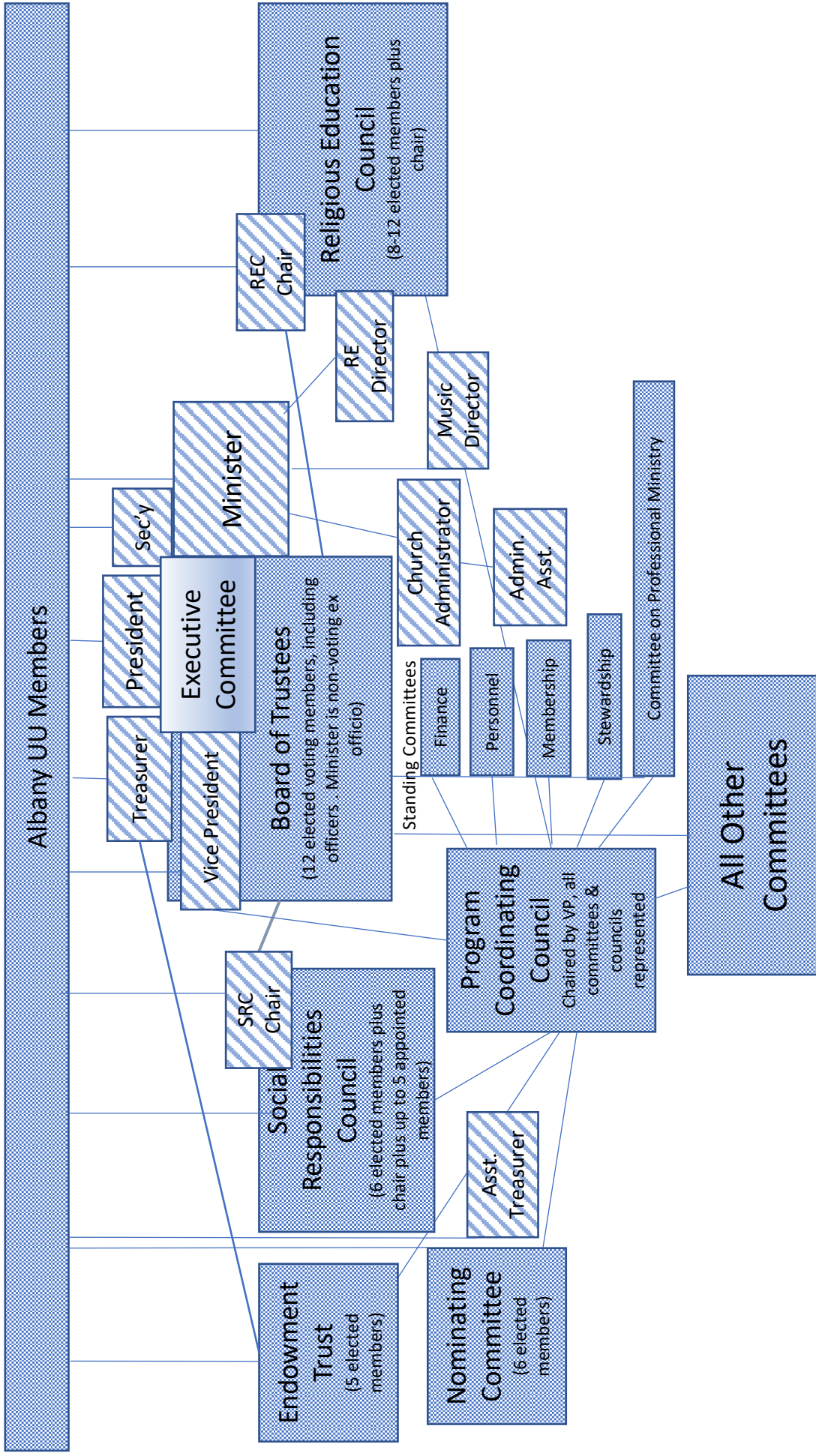
The Board communicates frequently with the congregation, encouraging broad input and diverse voices on issues, explaining how its decisions and directions support the mission of the church, and bringing major decisions to congregational vote.

The minister serves as Chief of Staff and on the Program Team, which also includes appointed lay leaders. The Program Team leads staff and volunteers in setting annual goals, planning programs and carrying out the work of the congregation to achieve its mission. Staff and volunteer leaders understand their roles and responsibilities. With guidance, they are empowered to carry out their responsibilities in creative ways and respond quickly to opportunities and choices. At the same time, each volunteer or staff leader works in collaboration with others to align his or her programs with others in a coherent congregational program.

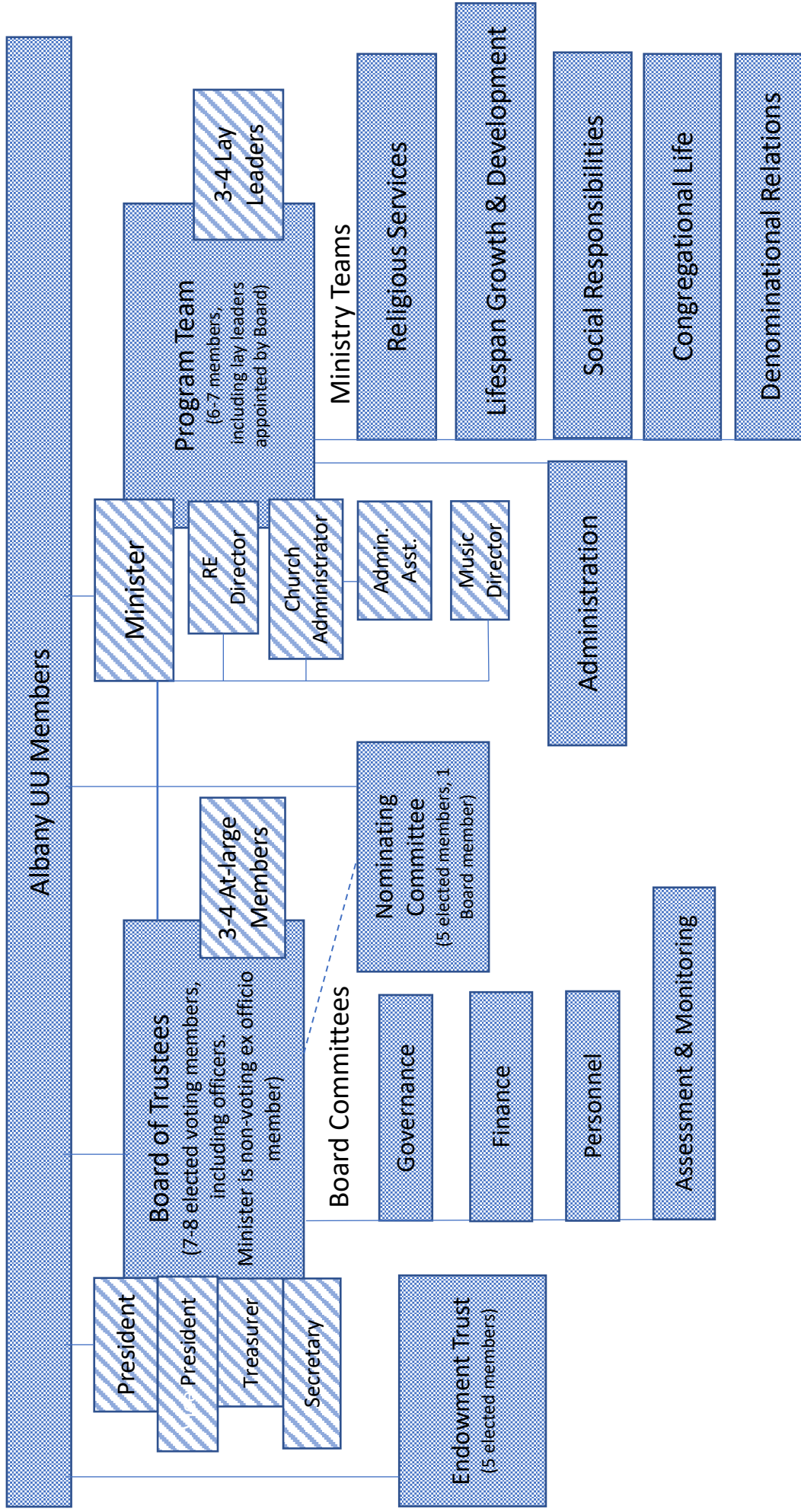
There is a strong sense of partnership and shared mission and vision among the Board, minister, Program Team, and staff and volunteer leaders. Volunteers and staff take pride in and enjoy their work.

Plans for next year: The GWG will work to fulfill the Board's charge to develop a plan for implementation of the governance vision, first, through presentations of this vision to committees and councils; second, through congregational conversations; and third, by drafting changes to the Albany UU bylaws and drafting associated policies, in anticipation of a vote by the congregation to adopt these governance changes.

Current Albany UU Governance



Proposed Albany UU Governance



Growth Through Service

Co-chairs: Dick Dana, Jaye Holly, Betsey Miller

Conversation Leaders: Laura Churchill, Dick Dana, Jaye Holly, Linda Hunt, Betsey Kuzia, Ann Lapinski, Jan McCracken, Barb Metz, Betsey Miller, and Bruce Rodgers.

Purpose: The Growth Through Service (GTS) program is designed to connect congregation members with opportunities that foster personal growth, new friendships, and greater connection with the church community. GTS is also about creating connections among members of our congregation through serving a higher purpose, something greater than our own individual needs. A key premise of the program is that part of being UU is serving others and each other, and that by serving, one grows as a person.

Source of the GTS Program: Four members of our congregation attended a presentation at the June 2014 General Assembly by Jody Malloy and Laurie Cooke, two women from the UU Congregation in Media, Pennsylvania, who created the GTS program for their own congregation. The four members were so impressed by its potential, they brought it back here. Sam Trumbore came on board with the GTS concepts, and shortly after that, the Board of Trustees voted to explore its possibilities here at Albany UU.

With the Board's approval, Dick Dana began leading the process of bringing GTS to life. Forums were held to inform the congregation and to determine the interest level in the congregation for pursuing the program. A sense of excitement began to build for the possibilities that GTS presented. Workshops were conducted early in 2015 with one of the GTS program's creators, Jody Malloy, and an Albany UU GTS team was formed.

Goals: Conversations are being held with each member of the congregation. The goal of the conversation is to talk about your aspirations, to explore what opportunities here at Albany UU might best fulfill those aspirations, and to discuss how you might take advantage of the opportunities here to participate in the life of the congregation.

For some, that might include volunteering and connecting to others through service. For others, it might mean doing things like taking a Lifespan Learning course, joining Small Group Ministry or attending Circle Dinners. And some people find connection simply attending the service once a week, but may be interested in exploring other opportunities in the future. Wherever you are in your journey, we want to hear about it.

For those members who are already very involved, the conversation focuses on what they are already doing. Questions that are explored include: are you still finding you volunteer work rewarding, and are there things that you might want to try next when you decide to move on from your current volunteer activities?

One way to foster connections among Albany UU members is to make it easier to volunteer. A second goal of the GTS team is to collect descriptions of every service opportunity at Albany UU no matter how small, and posting that information on our Website for all to see. I have heard many newer members use the term "overwhelming" to describe the process of learning how they might fit into our community and where the best opportunities are for them to contribute. Making these descriptions available to all in searchable format should take some of the mystery out of who we are and what we do together as a congregation, and will be especially useful for those just joining us on this journey.

Accomplishments: To date the ten members of the Conversation Leaders Team have held conversations with approximately 75 Albany UU members. The number changes weekly.

Approximately 50 Service Opportunity Descriptions have been created. There are another 65 to 75 still to create.

Plans for next year: The Conversation Leaders will continue to hold conversations, with the goal of completing a conversation with all Albany UU members in the next year and a half. The GTS leadership is working on collecting the remaining 65 to 75 Service Opportunity Descriptions by the end of the next church year and posting all of them on our website.

Inclusivity Team

Co-chairs: Annika Pfluger and Patti Jo Newell

Members: Anne Marie Haber, Linda Hunt, Karen Kauffman, Lee Newburg, Jean Poppei, Elena Reynolds, Phil Rich, Jacqui Taylor, Sam Trumbore, Deborah Vogel

Purpose: In January 2017, the Albany UU Board of Trustees suggested an Inclusivity Team, made up of members of the congregation and tasked the team with designing and implementing a two-pronged approach for addressing white supremacy culture at Albany UU, as well as to plan activities that will facilitate an exploration of white privilege, create opportunities to identify and challenge our assumptions, learn about the cumulative impact on People of Color of seemingly small offenses (micro-aggressions), and to identify and provide resources for our ongoing education and reflection. We continue to work hard and invite everyone into the circle.

The Inclusivity Team is a working group that meets in Room B-8 at 11:45am on the second Sunday of the month. Contact the team at inclusivity-team-albanyuu@egroups.churchdb.com.

Accomplishments

Emerson Community Hall Renaming Members of the Inclusivity Team initiated and actively promoted the effort to rename Emerson Community Hall. Team members researched Emerson's white supremacist views, wrote articles for Windows, held congregational conversations, served on the renaming team which solicited new name suggestions and facilitated the final vote by the religious education classes to rename the hall Community Hall. The team also reframed the picture of Emerson that was in Community Hall to include a brief write-up on the process of the renaming, including acknowledging Emerson's literary and philosophical contributions, so that future generations will remember this history.

Monthly Order of Service Inserts:

- April 2018 – Forging an Anti-racist Identity: Staying the Course
- March 2018 – What is Your Experience at Albany UU? Excerpts from the Inclusivity Team's "Assessment for Individuals: Creating a More Inclusive Congregation"
- February 2018 – Black History Month
- January 2018 – Ever Wonder What Else Should Have Been Taught in History Class?
- December 2017 – Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) Launches "The Promise and the Practice of Our Faith Campaign for Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism (BLUU)"
- November 2017 – Celebrating Our Rich Shared History
- October 2017 – Making a Personal Commitment and Congregational Read: Centering

- September 2017 – Welcoming Versus Othering
- May 2017 – What is White Supremacy?

Individual and Group Assessments Created an individual assessment titled: “Assessment for Individuals: Creating a More Inclusive Congregation.” The Inclusivity Team bulletin board in Channing Hall features additional material for your consideration from this same document. All congregants were encouraged to use this tool to participate in the inclusivity work at Albany UU in the privacy of their hearts and minds. Using it as an opportunity to reflect on assumptions and perceptions, actions and habits, and responses and reactions as they relate to racism, white supremacy culture, and white privilege in general, and to our inclusivity and anti-racism work here at Albany UU.

A group assessment is currently being finalized for use by Albany UU committees and teams.

Windows Articles Monthly “Inclusivity Insights” column and occasional special articles.

Bulletin Board Set up an information bulletin board in Channing Hall with rotating topics and hardcopy take home handouts.

Blog Developed and created an Inclusivity Team page within the Albany UU website. It will act as a clearing house and resource for all of our past and present activities, and also as an educational resource for other materials.

Aesthetics In an effort to create a more welcoming space, purchased posters and received a donation of frames to hang welcoming messages along the main corridor.

Installed a welcoming message in the wayside pulpit.

Get Connected Fair Tabled at the Get Connected Fair - copies of the congregational read “Centering” and copies of previous monthly order of service inserts.

Services Participated in the May 2017 Teach-In and October 8, 2018 service.

Events:

Hosted two movies

- “13th” for adults - shown as a daytime event
- “Akeelah and the Bee” for children and youth - shown as part of an evening family potluck event.

Educational Classes

- Eileen Casey - Campbell facilitated a multi-session class on the congregational read, “Centering”
- Sam Trumbore - facilitated two multi-session classes on Robin DiAngelo’s talks on white supremacy culture at GA 2017.

Professional Development Several members of the team traveled to California to participate in the Mosaic Conference.

Plans for next year Inserts, blog, Windows articles, classes, events, services, special projects

Ministerial Intern Committee

Members: Sharon Babala, Jean Poppei, Winston Hagborg, Linda Hunt, Bruce Rodgers, Eileen Casey-Campbell

We meet every month to review, discuss and support Eileen Casey-Campbell in how she is progressing with her growth and development as an intern here at Albany UU. Our conversations are wide-ranging based on the learning agreement that was created last fall . Topics range from Youth Group, Sermons, Pastoral Care, Social Justice, Governance and congregational relationships.

Our job has been pleasurable and we have deep appreciation for all Eileen's hard work, gifts and commitment. We hear resoundingly positive feedback from her sermons and leadership in learning groups. And we know she will be an asset wherever she is called and chooses to minister, we will miss her.

VOLUNTEER POSITIONS

Childcare Coordinator

Paula Brewer

Members: Childcare Providers, Albany UU Youth aged 13+

Purpose: Provide childcare for Albany UU congregational events

Accomplishments:

Developed Childcare Guidelines for childcare providers .

Increased hourly childcare rate to \$15 per hour per provider.

Childcare provided for social and community building events such as the Annual Dinner, Stewardship Gatherings, Auction and Wine and Cheese Tasting.

Childcare provided for learning activities as needed such as Non-Violent Communication introductory workshops.

Childcare provided for Getting to Know UU sessions.

Plans for next year: Continue to provide for Albany UU congregational events

Continue the childcare hourly rate of \$15 per hour.

Groups with their own Albany UU budget, such as the Annual Dinner and Getting to Know UU will reimburse for any childcare needed. Childcare Coordinator will continue to arrange for childcare as needed. See challenges below for more information.

For cost efficiency, consider paying a flat rate to youth providing childcare for more than 3 hours: 4 hours of service - \$50, 5 to 6 hours of service - \$75

Challenges: Despite pay increase to \$15 per hour, it has been a challenge to secure youth willing and available to provide childcare necessitating the use of other paid Albany UU staff such as the nursery staff and congregational members. Childcare arranged by Albany UU Childcare Coordinator has been paid out of the Albany UU Childcare Budget Line. However, with the increase in hourly rate, this budget line is inadequate. Therefore, groups with their own Albany UU budget, such as the Annual Dinner and Getting to Know UU will reimburse for any childcare needed. Childcare Coordinator will continue to arrange for childcare as requested.

Guidelines for Childcare Providers

Upon Arrival

1. Please arrive on time; you will be paid for your service beginning with your arrival time.

2. Report to the person that you were told to report to in the email confirming that you are one of the childcare providers.

3. Room location at church: for the most part you will have the choice of one of the upstairs rooms in the Religious Education wing –the building with the glass door entry. Your choice of room may depend upon the age of the children you will be watching; as the nursery (room 22) is appropriate for children aged 1 to 2 yrs old, and the double classroom (rooms 24 – 25) across the hall has toys for children 2 to 5 yrs old. Check the closet (near the windows) in room 21 for games for older children.

Caring for the Children

1. Introduce yourself to the parents of the children in your care. A good procedure is to write your name on the black board. Determine how the parents prefer to be contacted if needed. You may wish to exchange cell phone numbers for this purpose.

2. Please have parents sign their child/children in and out of your care. Check the cupboard in the room for paper, etc.

3. Your responsibilities include engaging the children in your care. You may use paper, crayons and playdough from the classroom closets for the children in your care. There are toys and puzzles on the shelves in the class rooms.

4. If a child arrives with a hand held electronic device – cell phone, game, etc. – check with the parent (when child is dropped off) regarding continued use of it while under your care.

5. A child/children requesting to leave the room to use the restroom, to retrieve their parent, or for any reason, must be accompanied by one of the childcare providers. The remaining children will continue to be supervised by the other childcare provider. Children must not be left alone.

Upon Leaving

1. Clean-up and return the room to how you found it. Have the children put toys away as they move from one activity to another and to help you put the room to rights before they leave.

2. Ensure that the children are picked-up by their parent, and that the parents check their children off the signup sheet when they pick them up.

3. Please make note of the time that the last child was picked-up/room cleaned, as this is your end time to determine how many hours you provided childcare. Please email your end time to the childcare coordinator Paula Brewer at p.blizniak@gmail.com. Leave the sign in sheet in the classroom.

Interfaith Impact of New York State (IINYS) Liaison

Liaison: Don Odell

Members: Robb Smith is Executive Director, Don Odell is IINYS secretary. IINYS Board members include Rev. Sam Trumbore and Peggy Sherman

Accomplishments: Interfaith Impact most recent annual advocacy day was on May 1, 2017. The next annual advocacy day is May 7, 2018.

On the upcoming Advocacy Day members of IINYS and participants advocate will advocate for Compassion and Justice, focusing on the environment and clean energy (Climate & Community

Protection Act), Criminal Justice Reform (HALT Solitary Confinement Act and Cash Bail Reform), and Voting Reform (Early Voting Act and other needed changes).

Conscience in Public Life forums continue in Rochester. In addition to the issues above, we continue to monitor activity and partner with other organizations in such areas as single payer health care, campaign finance reform, reproductive health, and more, as our resources permit.

Plans for next year: The IINYS Board plans a retreat during the summer months, at such time when the more specific directions for the upcoming IINYS year is discussed..

Receptions

Coordinators: Eileen Hoffman, Barb Manning, Sandy Stone

This year the Reception Committee tried a new organizational format and we have three people who are sharing the role of Reception Coordinator. Currently these three are Eileen Hoffman, Barb Manning and Sandy Stone. Each time a memorial reception is needed, one of the three becomes “Lead Coordinator” to be the contact between Rev. Sam, the church office (Amy Lent or Tammy Hathaway) and the family. Our other reception volunteers help with providing some of the food, set up, clean up and prepping food donations brought by the rest of our church community. During this past year we provided a memorial service reception for Nancy Bell’s and John Meid’s services. By the time that you read this we will have also provided a memorial service reception for Jody Zimmerman (5/19) and Bob Blank (5/21).

We would be happy to have more people willing to be Lead Coordinators as well as volunteers to assist with receptions, so if you would like to join us in one of these roles, please reach out to any one of us listed below or Amy Lent to learn more about what is involved. We have a good crew of volunteers who all work well together and have fun.

This past December we tried a new format for the Christmas Eve reception. Tables were set up by our custodian and people attending the services brought cookies to share in a pot-luck fashion. Since we did not serve any beverages, there was little work that needed to be done by volunteers.

COMMITTEES

Annual Fellowship Dinner Committee

Chair: Bob Franklin

Members: Ann D’Attilio, Amy Lent, Meredith Mercer, Linda Way

The Annual Fellowship Dinner was held on April 6, 2018 at the Franklin Terrace in Troy, NY. One hundred nine Albany UUs and their guests were in attendance. A social hour was held, followed by dinner. The evening’s MC was Charlie Poltenson. Reverend Trumbore welcomed everyone. Following dinner, Congregation President Dick Dana gave a few remarks...and some jokes. Stewardship Co-chair Chuck Manning gave an update on the canvass and presented the first winners of the “UU Bucks”. The traditional recognition of member anniversaries was given by Meredith Andrews. This year’s skit was titled “FAKE SKIT! FAKE SKIT!”, and was followed by dancing.

The skit cast consisted of Pam Crane, Seth Edelman, Bob Franklin, Kathy Harris, Tanya Hotalen, Tom Hotalen, Chris Jensen, Julie Lomoe, David MacLeod, Debbie Reep MacLeod, Barb Metz, Dave Metz, Charlie Poltenson, Randy Rosette and Jeffrey Sedam.

Building & Grounds

Chairperson: Dave Metz

Members: Reese Satin, Dave Stone, Mike Babala, Amy Lent, Eric Beeche, Betsey Miller, Charles Poltenson, Seth Edelman

Purpose: To improve and maintain Albany UU's physical facilities, buildings and grounds.

Accomplishments:

Purchased and had installed a safety rail along the west side of the roof to prevent accidental falling off while clearing drain grates.

Purchased and had installed handrail next to the lectern on stage.

Purchased and had installed new light bulbs in the ceiling of the Community Hall.

Repaired and painted window sills on the West Street side of the RE building.

Hired cleaning, pointing and sealing of masonry as needed on exterior.

Installed new sump pump and associated plumbing in the basement of the original building to prevent flooding.

Routine maintenance tasks, some of which were formerly done by staff.

Many minor repairs as needed.

Plans:

Basically more of the same that we have been doing on an on-going basis for years.

Fix plumbing to the RE drinking fountain.

Solve the problems with the columns on the Robin Street side of the Sanctuary.

Routine maintenance tasks, some of which were formerly done by staff.

Many minor repairs as needed..

Caring Network

Coordinator: Todd Thomas

Members: Mary Applegate, Sharon Babala, Elizabeth Berberian, Dorry Campano, Laura Cayford, Ellen Chernoff, Pamela Crane, Arlene Gilbert, Deb Grier, Judy Hanson, Kathy Harris, Tammy Hathaway, Thayer Heath, Rebekah Hinckley*, Kathy Hodges, Eileen Hoffman, Betsey Kuzia, Ann Lapinski, Amy Lent, Kathy Lloyd*, Barbara Manning, Jan McCracken, Barbara Metz, Sigrin Newell, Carole Pink*, Bobbi Place, Michaela Pochily, Leah Purcell, Mary Ann Randall, Andrea Ricard, Karen Smith, Sandy Stone, Jennifer Thomas*, Todd Thomas*, Sam Trumbore, Deborah Vogel, Barbara Warner, Linda Way, Betsy Wright, Trish Zima. Those listed with an asterisk joined the Caring Network this year.

Purpose: The Caring Network reflects the words of our chalice lighting- "to sustain a vital and nurturing religious community." We provide support and encouragement to Albany UU members who, due to hospitalization, sickness, loss, or isolation, need help on a short term basis.

Services typically include transportation to medical appointments, meals and shopping during recovery, and friendly visits and “check in’s” from Caring Network members. Cards are regularly sent on behalf of the Caring Network by Laura Cayford.

Accomplishments: As of the end of April, approximately three dozen members of the Albany UU community were helped in some way by the Caring Network this church year. In addition, the Network sponsored a CPR workshop, conducted by Britta and Bryant Kuo, developed a database of assistive devices available to lend, and delivered treats and warm wishes over Christmas and Valentine’s Day to members who are no longer able to regularly attend services.

While the Caring Network is a more formal way of helping members of our community, there are many people who are not Caring Network members who help out Albany UU members and friends. We honor their service and thank them for their contributions.

Flower Committee

Chairperson: Sandy Stone

Flower arrangers: Debbie Brown, Dorry Campano, Ellen Chernoff, Lorraine Blanchfield, Barb Manning, Barb Metz, Sigrin Newell, Lois Webb, Trish Zima, Jody Zimmerman, Sandy Stone.

The Flower Committee provides flower for or Sunday Services 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. One of our favorite projects is “greening” the sanctuary for our Christmas services.

It was an honor this year to supply flowers at the Memorial Services for several of our Albany UU members who passed away. We will miss the very special arrangements from Jody Zimmerman, who passed away this spring.

If you have an interest in flower arranging, or just love flowers, we welcome any new members to this committee. Look for our table at the “Getting Connected Fair” in the fall or contact Sandy Stone directly.

Fun(d)raising Committee

Chair: Chris Jensen

Holiday Bazaar–2017

Chairperson: Sigrin Newell

Members: Dorry Campano, Karen Kaufmann, Randy Rosette, Sandy Stone, Deborah Vogel plus a large number of crafters and cooks.

Purpose: Provide a fun activity to honor the winter holidays and raise funds for Albany UU while sharing the products of our creativity and cooking skills.

Accomplishments The 2017 bazaar consisted of three parts: Crafts, Soups, and Pies

Twenty one crafters made items such as hats and scarves, catnip mice, jewelry, holiday decorations, jams, and other gift items. In addition to crafts donated by volunteers, vendors were recruited to set up tables to sell their own work. We targeted AUU members rather than trying to

bring in outsiders. Vendors paid 10% of what they earned and some donated more. We earned almost twice as much from vendors in 2017 as we had in 2016.

Seventeen donors made twenty-seven!! types of soup which accommodated dietary needs of all kinds. These were sold on two Sundays plus a few left-overs for a final Sunday sale. Some soups were frozen to be eaten later, and others were sold fresh for an easy, nutritious after-church meal.

Lots of people came on Election Day to peel apples and assemble pies. To get ready for this, Sandy Stone and Dorry Campano made crusts for more than 80 pies, using the wonderful recipe created by Jan Satin. We boxed the assembled pies and froze them to be ready to sell. Buyers took these delicious pies home to bake when they wished.

Crafts were sold on Dec. 3 and 10. After the initial bazaar, we continued to sell 'leftovers' for several Sundays. The organizing committee is grateful to all who helped make crafts, soups, or pies, as well as all those who helped to sell, set up and clean up. This fund raising activity would not be successful without willing workers.

Plans for next year: More of the same

Crafts: \$1,080 : (crafts \$579, vendors \$501)

Soups: \$1,665

Pies: \$1,000

Grand Total: \$3,745

Guided Wine & Cheese Tasting FUNdraiser

Chairperson: Al Berzinis

Members: Eric Paul, Alifair Skebe, Toni & Marc Daniel, Ben English, Al DeSalvo, Peter Meixner, Don Odell, Rick Whitebread, John Sherman

Purpose: FUNdraising event that traditionally feature 5-6 pairings of wine, cheese and condiments from an area of the world along with informative and entertaining background information.

Accomplishments: This year's theme was a visit to South America, sampling wines from Chile, Argentina and Uruguay and combining condiments from those countries with cheeses from around the world. Attendance was up this year at 75 people, all had a very good time and we raised \$1,249 for Albany UU! Based on the level of interest and comments from attendees we will continue to seek to explore other areas in the world this event has not yet visited rather than re-visiting well-known regions.

Plans for next year: The 14th Annual Guided Wine & Cheese Tasting is scheduled for Saturday, March 2, 2019 from 7-9 PM. A theme will be determined by our dedicated team of Wineaux sometime around the end of this year, and we invite anyone interested to help in the research and preparations.

Albany UU Goods and Services Auction

Planning Committee: Bob and Trish Zima, Randy Rosette, Chris Jensen, Linda Hunt, Kathy Harris, Barb and Dave Metz, Reese Satin, Dave MacLeod and Debbie Reep MacLeod, Pat Bailey, Sharon Babala, Paula and Steve Moskowitz, Elizabeth Berberian, Kathy Lloyd, Lea and

Ed Ryman, and John Walko. In addition, Frank Woods, Sigrin Newell, Debbie Brown, Al DeSalvo, and Bob Franklin assisted the evening of the auction. Many other attendees also helped take down and clean up after the event.

Purpose of group: FUNdraising for Albany UU while sampling food, socializing, and sharing events and services among our community were the mission.

Accomplishments: The annual Albany UU Goods and Services Auction was held on the evening of March 17, 2018 with a theme of Over the Rainbow. There were 105 total items up for bid as live, fixed price, and silent auction. These were donated by 60 households, including 9 new donor households! About 87 people attended the live auction, and others participated by putting their slip in the fixed price envelopes beforehand. 100 people/households participated in bidding, with prices ranging from \$4 to \$800, with a total of over \$21,000 raised. Over the course of a year, the auction committee planned for this event through a series of committee and subcommittee meetings. We will enjoy our hard-earned success at a Celebration Dinner in June.

Plans for next year: The next auction will be held on March 16, 2019. We welcome newcomers to the Committee. Don't hesitate to contact one of the committee members or the chair, Randy Rosette 783-2637 at rosette_jensen@juno.com.

Gardening

Coordinator: Donna Meixner

Members: Many dedicated volunteers who help once or multiple times over the growing season.

Purpose: Tend the gardens surrounding our buildings and maintain the welcoming appearance of Albany UU. Provide opportunities for members and friends to participate in a community building activity.

Accomplishments: Our five garden areas were well maintained and looked lovely this past season. We had a great turnout of gardeners for our spring and fall clean-ups, and we had good weekly coverage throughout the gardening season. In the spring, we spread two yards of mulch on the gardens. The mulch and the adequate rains kept the gardens looking lush and lovely. A gardening e-group was established to share information about the gardens.

Plans for the 2018 gardening season: Continue to maintain the five gardens.

History & Archives

Chair: Patricia Bailey

Goals: Continuing to keep good order, to preserve our history and to make records accessible to all Albany UU members along with organizing, systematizing and updating the archives as needed. We continue to work on organizing new items donated by members while striving to maintain only one copy of most materials. We have an alpha list of the files along with a list of the location of items of interest and value. We continue to consider the cost and value of putting all cassette tapes (over 600) of services and other events 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 and continuing with the First Unitarian Church in 1940's and on. Some of these records are irreplaceable. The Archives also contain many items saved by members and

later turned over to us for preservation. 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. Continuing in 2018 we hope to as possible reorganize the storage for easier access to many documents and files. 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. We hope to protect valuable books with archival papers for better, safer storage.

Thank you to those who continue to help preserve our story.

Charles R. Joy Library

Co-Chairs: Melanie & Paul Axel-Lute

Members: Cassie Artale, Lucy Wrightington, Sally Knapp

Purpose: The Joy Library supports the mission of the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany by selectively collecting and facilitating access to information resources on Unitarian Universalism and other spiritual traditions, social and ethical issues, philosophy, theology, Bible study with a liberal religious perspective, and other issues of interest to our congregation.

Accomplishments: New co-chairs Melanie and Paul Axel-Lute assumed responsibility for the Joy Library in early November, and completed recruitment of three other committee members in early January. We purchased 21 new books, of which 11 were published by Skinner House, 8 by Beacon Press, and 2 by other publishers. We obtained the Skinner House titles directly from the UUA, and the Beacon Press and others through the Book House of Stuyvesant Plaza. Some of the new books were listed in the January 2018 issue of Windows, and more will be listed in the May and June issues. We went through some of the books that had been left as donations, added 9 of them to the library, and disposed of a number of others by donation to Better World Books. In order to provide more space for the addition of new books, we arranged through Dave Metz for the addition of one more bookcase, paid for from Stott funds in the Endowment Trust, and we began a project of weeding selected older books and duplicates from the collection. We had weeded 24 books by the end of March, and as of then the total number of titles listed in the catalog was 1503. Records of loans for this year are incomplete; we estimate that about 20 books were borrowed from fall through the end of March. Of our \$350 budget, we expended \$342.63, of which \$321.15 was for books and \$21.48 was for book supports to use in the new bookcase. We also obtained a step-stool, paid for by the Buildings and Grounds Committee.

Plans for next year: After the new bookcase is installed, we will shift the collection to distribute the empty space uniformly over all the available shelving. We will finish going through the backlog of donated books, continue the weeding project, and continue to purchase new books.

Lifespan Learning

All Sides Considered

Chairperson: Jim Schlembach

Members: Varies. “Regulars” include Reese Satin, Kathy Harris, Ed Hanson, Sue Cypert, Linda Hunt and Larry Gambino, Don Holmes and Cathy Lloyd, Kathy Hodges, Kathy Harris, Lucy Wrightington, JP Podgorski,

Purpose: Discuss current social and political events.

Accomplishments: Share information, consider different points of view, try to predict effects of current events, etc.

Plans for next year: Continue to continue

Nonviolent Communication

Members: Jan McCracken, Philomena Moriarty (**Co-Chairs**), Sharon Babala

Purpose Nonviolent Communication (NVC), also referred to as Compassionate Communication, is based on the principles of nonviolence - the state of compassion when no violence is present in the heart. The practice begins with the assumption that we are all compassionate by nature and that violent strategies, whether verbal or physical, are learned behaviors that are supported by the prevailing culture. NVC also assumes that we all share the same, basic human needs and that each of our actions are a strategy to meet one or more of those needs. People who commit to this practice find greater authenticity in their communication, increased understanding, deepening connection and conflict resolution. In our own UU community, why wouldn't we want to use a practice such as this to support putting our Principles into action and bring compassion into all we do?

Accomplishments The study and practice of nonviolent communication continued to be supported by our congregation with a variety of activities. An eight hour introductory training was held on two occasions; one in the fall and the other in the winter. A total of 50 people attended these two workshops, the majority coming from outside of our own membership. A Practice Group that meets twice a month for 10 sessions began in early March with 22 registrations and a core group of 12 people attending consistently. This group functions on a drop-in basis for anyone who registers. Nonviolent communication trainings and activities bring in people from the community, which creates opportunity for more awareness and appreciation of Albany UU.

Plans for next year We hope to continue offering trainings and Practice Groups as long as the facilitators, Jan McCracken and Philomena Moriarty are available and willing to do so. Support and interest from our own UU community will enhance this prospect!

UU Wellspring

This year the Wellspring Sources program had 4 participants led by facilitators Anny Lapinski and Liza McKinley. Jan McCracken and Sharon Babala are working on creating two programs for the fall - Sources (the foundation program) and Deep Questions (for those who have taken Sources.)

Wellspring at Albany UU provides a safe space for you to explore the sacred within; to understand how we UU's got to be who we are; to read, think and talk about life's big questions; and to reflect upon what we are called to do in the world. There are five interconnected components: commitment to a daily spiritual practice, monthly spiritual direction (self-reflection with a guide), small group meetings, readings; audio; video material, and putting our faith into action. Coming closer to your own purpose and meaning can enhance your UU faith community in countless ways. Wellspring participants express that their experience gives them deeper acceptance and understanding of the many paths that UU's take on their personal and spiritual journeys. This awareness contributes to sustaining the living mosaic of beliefs and practices that hold us together as a community.

Partner Church Committee

Chairperson: Dave Metz

Members: Sharon Babala, Pat Bailey, Dick Brewer, Debbie Brown, Peter Brown, Dawn Dana, Dick Dana, Ben English, Judy Hanson, Chris Jensen, Barb Manning, Chuck Manning, Barb Metz, Dave Metz, Betsey Miller, Don Odell, Darnell Rohrbaugh, Randy Rosette, Sam Trumbore

Purpose To maintain an active relationship with Albany UU's partner church in Szökefalva, Romania.

Accomplishments Continuing from last year's attempts to launch a visit from Albany to Szökefalva, we have finally made concrete plans to visit this church year. As of this writing, April 2018, the group will be in Transylvania from May 23 until June 4. In the first few days we will visit several places in Romania, many of which are historically important for Unitarians. We will go to the village itself on May 30 and leave there to start coming home on June 4. We will live with families while there and help build and install a new fence for the church grounds. The group consists of Sam Trumbore, Dick Dana, Barb & Dave Metz, Peggy and John Sherman, Kathy Harris, Betsey Miller and Reese Satin.

Consistent with the past few years, part of the minister's salary will be supported by the Partner Church budget. In addition, we will contribute some of the funds for the new fence.

Publicity Committee

Chairperson: Patti Jo Newell

Members: Bob Franklin, Amy Lent, Patti Jo Newell

Purpose: The Publicity Committee manages event- and issue-specific communications between Albany UU and the community at large. These include:

Work with Albany UU committees to promote events and prepare media communications; ensure committees work within established protocols for media and policymaker contact

Publicize Albany UU events and issues to community at large

Conduct media outreach, including development/distribution of media advisories and releases

Act as spokesperson for Albany UU as needed/appropriate

Manage and promote social media

Accomplishments in 2017-18

Specific activities included:

Social media: The PC continued to promote social media, and explored ways to enhance and expand both the tools and their use. Facebook and Twitter accounts are routinely monitored and posted-to. Increased effort on taking photos at Albany UU events was initiated.

Media: The PC created and distributed media advisories and media releases as requested by others, typically the SRC.

Advertising: The PC engaged in free online advertising because of costs associated with print advertising. We made heavy use of postings to the Times Union, The Spotlight, The Alt and other community calendars. These focused on holidays and special services, unique events, and forums.

Plans for next year

Inclusivity: The PC will help the Inclusivity Team work with teams and committees to customize and utilize the Inclusivity Assessment Tool.

Media: In addition to continuing with current activities, the PC will conduct outreach to committees in order to review policies and procedures for media releases and representing the congregation.

Advertising: The PC will continue with current activities, seeking innovative and inexpensive ways to broaden our message and advertise unique events.

Social media: The expansion and enhancement of social media, and the promotion of its use within the community, will continue.

Religious Services Committee

Chairperson: Dawn Dana

Members: Peter Meixner, Jon Newell, Randy Rosette, Rev. Sam Trumbore

Role The Religious Services Committee (RSC) helps plan Sunday services with pulpit guests, arranges for our annual This I Believe service, and coordinates services during the summer. We manage and orient the Service Associate and Lead Usher corps, and maintain and update instructions and scripts for all service roles. We assist pulpit guests in coordinating their service planning with the Service Associate, RE director, music director, and Albany UU office staff. The RSC attends to service logistics, including ushering, Joys and Sorrows, Community Greeting, and the Offertory. Our goal is to provide a high quality and integrated flow to the service.

Service Matters We continue to strive for diversity in our pulpit roles. We have maintained the practice of having the Committee Focus aspect of our Announcer role be optional, so that the role is available to a broader spectrum of congregants beyond the small cadre of committee chairs.

RSC referred frequently-expressed concerns with audibility in Emerson to the Board of Trustees. We are delighted that improvements are being made as part of our capital project. We resolved longstanding difficulties with audio broadcast of the service in the balcony lobby, so that this space is available to those with fussy children or related needs. RSC also addressed concerns

related to whether Channing Hall provides welcoming space for families to view and hear the service.

RSC continues to promote and monitor our Sunday Service Comments Logbook. Members and friends can record criticism, praise, or suggestions about the service. RSC regularly reviews comments, and responds as appropriate. The Logbook is displayed on the table in the Emerson Lobby, to increase visibility and access. The frequency of entries continues to grow, and we have received much useful feedback.

RSC has offered input to review of Albany UU's music program and our new Music Director, Dr. Richard Porterfield. We have also fielded congregational comments about service music and have channeled feedback as appropriate.

Pulpit Guests We have benefitted greatly this year from the contributions of our Ministerial Intern, Eileen Casey-Campbell. Eileen has presented thought-provoking and inspiring services, and seems well on her way to ministerial excellence. During Eileen's term, we have had limited need for pulpit guests in 2017-2018. Guests have included Rev. Crystal Muldrow and Rev. David Weissbard. Our Inclusivity Team presented an effective service in October. Glen Thomas Rideout led an inspiring joint service with the Hudson Mohawk UU congregations at Doane Stuart School on March 25.

A perennially well received service at Albany UU is "This I Believe." This year's TIB service is planned for May 20. Presenters will include Thayer Heath, Karen Kaufmann, and Dave Metz. The committee greatly appreciates the willingness of members of the congregation to participate in these services.

Service Volunteer Coordination All instructions and scripts for service roles have been updated and made available on the website, on the Sign-Up volunteer site, in pulpit binders, and other locations as appropriate. Scripts are available on the web site in Word format, allowing easy customization.

Summer Services RSC was pleased with response to and attendance at our twelve summer services in 2017. Average weekly attendance was 74, about 9% higher than average 2016 attendance. Peak attendance was again at Rev. Tom Chulak's service, with 90 people present. Randy Rosette served successfully as our Summer Services Coordinator.

RSC has been working since early in this calendar year to plan a full schedule of 2018 summer services, running from June 17 through September 2. Randy Rosette will again bring her organizational skills to the Summer Services Coordinator role. Music Director Rick Porterfield is working to fill summer service musician slots, and RSC will recruit summer Service Associates. A summer service insert will be published in the June Windows. Summer pulpit guests will include Reverends Chris Antal, Tom Chulak, Dick Gilbert, Amanda Poppei, Beth Dana, Lynn Ashley and Kimberley Debus, among others. We are pleased to have such an interesting and diverse summer program taking shape.

Safe Congregation Response Team (SCRT)

Conveners: Jean E. Poppei, Leah Purcell

Members: Meredith Andrews (Member at Large), Jean Poppei (Member at Large), Liz Halvorsen (Religious Education Council), Lee Newberg (Board of Trustees Representative), Leah Purcell (Director of Religious Education), Sam Trumbore (Minister of Albany UU)

Purpose: Ensure that any violations of the Albany UU Safe Congregation Policy are properly investigated and responded to. Monitor that those who are required to take the NEARI Balancing Acts: Keeping Children Safe in Congregations have certificates of completion on file with the DRE. Respond to questions/challenges about the Albany UU Safe Congregation Policy. Educate the congregation on the Albany UU Safe Congregation Policy.

Accomplishments: The SCRT, composed of last year's members, reviewed (just before the start of the new church year) compliance with the Limited Access Agreement (LAA) developed previously in order to send a recommendation to the Board as to whether some alterations were now in order. The LAA logbook was reviewed, showing entries beginning in May 2016 and continuing through the 16-17 church year. No concerns were raised as compliance has been very good, on the part of both the person for whom the LAA was designed and her Covenant Partners. Therefore, the SCRT proposed changes to the LAA were sent to President Richard Dana for the Board Meeting of October 19th, 2017. The proposal was accepted with minor changes made by the Board and then published in the November Newsletter by the Board president so that anyone with concerns could express them before the November Board meeting, to allow for possible alterations. The Board subsequently directed the current SCRT to develop a process and schedule for monitoring compliance with the altered LAA. This has been the focus of this year's SCRT activity, which began with a face-to-face meeting on March 20th continued subsequently via email. The proposal, approved by the SCRT, was sent to the Board for its April 19th meeting and accepted by a vote of the Board.

UU Connections Team

Chairperson: Peggy Sherman

Members: Members: Linda Hunt, Don Odell, Leah Purcell, Jean Poppei, with Dick Dana and Sam Trumbore ex officio

Purpose: Promote, support and coordinate Albany UU's active participation in the Unitarian Universalist Association, as well as its connections with UUA member congregations and affiliated organizations.

Accomplishments:

General Assembly One of the Team's goals is to publicize General Assembly, the annual meeting of the Unitarian Universalist Association, and to help the Board identify delegates to represent our congregation. In 2017, Tom Chulak, Dick Dana, Jean Poppei, Leah Purcell, Matt Schultz, John Sherman, Peggy Sherman, Rev. Sam Trumbore and Jacqui Williams served as delegates to General Assembly in New Orleans. In addition, Kathy Harris served as a remote delegate, participating in GA online. At the 2017 GA, Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray was elected to a 6-year term as president of the UUA.

As of this writing, the Board has appointed Jean Poppei and Jacqui Williams as onsite delegates to the 2018 GA in Kansas City, Missouri and Linda Hunt as a remote delegate. The UU Connections Team requested and received a grant of \$1500 from the Endowment Trust for travel stipends to assist young adults and emerging congregational leaders with the costs of serving as a 2018 GA delegate. Although the availability of these stipends has been publicized, no applications have been received so far.

Campaign for BLUU In October 2016, the Board of Trustees of the Unitarian Universalist Association committed to raise and invest \$5.3 million for Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism. This commitment recognized that supporting black leadership is crucial to building multiracial, multicultural religious communities and to advancing the justice work that is consistent with our values. The UUA committed \$1 million from its endowment, and a UU family made a \$1 million gift to match donations from congregations.

On Sunday, January 14, Albany UU took up a special collection for the Promise and Practice of Our Faith Campaign for Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism (BLUU). Several Albany UUs pledged to match donations up to a total of \$4000. Our congregation's response surpassed this target and resulted in a total Albany UU contribution of \$8326 for the campaign.

Other activities connecting Albany UU to our larger UU community:

-On Friday, Oct. 20 and Saturday, Oct. 21, a joint event at Albany UU brought together our Hudson Mohawk UU (HMUU) Cluster of congregations (Saratoga Springs, Glens Falls, Schenectady, Albany and Kingston) with the New York State Convention of Universalists (NYSCU) Annual Meeting. Friday night featured a concert by the folk musician Dan Berggren. Saturday featured a keynote by the Rev. Dr. Richard S. Gilbert titled, "Climate? Change?" as well as eight different workshops.

-Leah Purcell organized the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee's Guest At Your Table initiative for our congregation.

-Singing Our Faith To Life! The 10th annual Hudson-Mohawk UUs celebration occurred on March 25, featuring Dr. Glen Thomas Rideout, Director of Worship and Music at the First UU Congregation of Ann Arbor

-You Can't Spell Church without J-O-Y: The 2018 Seaway Spring Gathering drew UUs from across New York for worshiping, learning and connecting April 13-14 at First UU Society of Syracuse. DRE Leah Purcell presented a workshop at the Seaway Spring Gathering - "Trends in Family Ministry – Looking beyond the classroom to foster faith development."

Plans for next year Promote greater participation in the social justice, educational and governance activities of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

Albany UU Humanists, A Gathering of

Convener: Don Odell

Members: There are no members per se. Any and all who are interested in learning about and promoting Humanism at Albany UU are welcome to participate. Attendance at monthly meetings has ranged from five to fifteen. Fifty-two individuals are currently on the Albany UU Humanist group list.

Purpose: The purpose of the Albany UU Humanists is to give an identity to Humanists at Albany UU. It also provided interested persons the opportunity to discuss their interpretation of humanism with guidance of each other and the UU Humanists, an affiliate group of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

Accomplishments: We have met monthly during the current Albany UU year, with each one resulting in a lively exchange of views. Some subjects have included:

Discussion of Rev. Sam's sermon "Vulnerable Humanism of the Heart,
Making Humanism more apparent in Albany UU.

Steven Pinker, the Enlightenment and Humanism

Discussion of Rev. Sam's sermon "Collapse of the Enlightenment Era" with others over a three week period including Dr. Jon Mandel, SUNYA philosophy professor.

Anti-pornography, toxic masculinity with the help of a TED talk.

Plans for next year: We plan to continue to meet monthly to continue discussions about Humanism, and to learn from each other and other sources. There is no set agenda as the group at each meeting tends to find its own voice, and to provide ideas as to future meeting agendas, and other activities as may be determined by those present.

Circle Dinners

Chairpersons: John and Peggy Sherman

Purpose of group: Developing personal connections among Albany UUs and newcomers makes our church community strong. Circle Dinners are a great opportunity to socialize over a potluck dinner in a private home and get better acquainted with fellow members and friends. As well as giving members the opportunity to strengthen their connections with Albany UU and contribute to a vital, nurturing religious community, the dinners provide an extraordinary opportunity for newcomers to appreciate Albany UU.

Accomplishments: We have facilitated 4 very successful Circle Dinners dinners during the 2017-18 church year. Several first time hosts have stepped forward and we have seen many newcomers who have become members. The last dinner of the church year is scheduled for Saturday, May 12.

Plans for next year: We plan to have 4 dinners for the coming year, beginning in November.

Pastoral Care Associates

The Pastoral Care Associate (PCA) team offers supportive listening to members and friends of Albany UU. With Sam acting as Supervisor, the group meets monthly to hone skills and learn about potential areas of pastoral care need. Some areas of training have included loss and grief, depression, and Alzheimer's. Current PCAs include Lisa Barron, Eileen Casey-Campbell, Chuck Manning, Donna Meixner, Phil Rich, Randy Rosette, Sandy Stone, and Dee Van Riper. Anyone requiring a compassionate "ear" is encouraged to reach out directly to one of the above PCAs for assistance, email listeners@albany-uu.org, or contact Rev. Sam Trumbore or the Albany UU office at 518-463-7135.

Projects & Quilts (P's & Q's)

Reporter: Barb Manning

Members: Fran Berg, Joan Byalin, Joan Ekengren, Virginia Hammer, Janet Hunter, Michaela Pochily, Abby Sugarman, Barb Manning and assorted visitors.

P's & Q's meets every Wednesday from 10 am until 12:30pm. We work on group quilt projects and

individual knitting or other hand-work projects while sharing stories and solving the world's problems. At noon we eat our bag lunches that we each brought, drink tea and eat chocolate. Tea and chocolate are provided by the group.

We finished our quilt and held a raffle for the church. It is called "Glenna's Quilt" in memory of Glenna McClamrock, who was a long-time member of P's & Q's and an excellent quilter. The winner was Betsy Wright. We raised over \$300 and the money raised from this project went to the City of Albany Public School - Sheridan Prep Academy - to help defray the cost of field trips.

This winter and spring we have been working on a table runner to be given to our partner church in Szokefalva, Romania, as a gift from our congregation to their congregation. It will be presented by Rev. Sam when a group from Albany UU goes to Szokefalva in late May.

We have some other projects underway which we hope to finish up this summer. In the fall we hope to start our last large quilt that will be done in memory of Jan Satin, long-time member of P's & Q's and an excellent quilter. We welcome any new members and, if you like to sew, we can teach you how to quilt. Contact Barb Manning (518-439-4226 or BarbaraCManning@hotmail.com) for further information.

Walker Book Group

Reporter: Linda Hunt

The Walker Book Group meets at Albany UU for a potluck and lively book discussion on the second Sunday of the month from September through June at 5:30 pm in Channing Hall. Newcomers are always welcome. The book group is open to all Albany UU members and friends. This informal book group has existed for many years and is named in memory of a treasured, deceased Albany UU member.

Purpose: Participants search for UU truth and meaning by reading and discussing a wide-range of fiction and nonfiction literary works. Members greatly expand their reading horizons and develop a deeper sense of community and connections with other Albany UUs. Books are selected by group consensus, and the person who suggests a book must have read it recently. The book must be available in paperback or electronically, at low cost or through libraries.

The group read and discussed two non-fiction books and six novels. The group's traditions are to read a "classic" book in May and short stories in June. Attendance averaged 12 to 14 persons.

Books read from September 2017 through June 2018 "Alexander Hamilton" by Ron Chernow, "The Underground Railroad" by Colson Whitehead, "Remains of the Day" by Kazuo Ishiguro, "Anything Is Possible," by Elizabeth Strout, "History of Wolves: A Novel" by Emily Fridlund, "The Fortunes" by Peter Ho Davies, "Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood" by Trevor Noah, "Commonwealth" by Ann Patchett, "The Prince" by Niccolo Machiavelli, a political treatise published in 1532, Short stories from "Fine just the way it is: Wyoming Stories" by Annie Proulx.

Accomplishments: Despite competition from various other activities and busy schedules, the group continues to thrive and generate interest in reading and discussing literary works of fiction and non-fiction books. We changed our name from "The Walker Book Club," to a more inclusive name, "The Walker Book Group." The group participated in the Albany UU "Get Connected Fair" in September, 2017.

Plans for next year: Group members will continue to search for UU truth and meaning by reading and discussing various books.