

# **ANNUAL REPORT**

## **2016-2017**

**First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany**

405 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12206

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**Annual Meeting**  
**of the**  
**First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany**

Sunday, May 21, 2017

**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 2017-2018 Budget

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.

Report on the Looking Forward Campaign

Comments of the President

Staff Recognition

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 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.

Proposed 2017-18 Budget

Albany UU, May 21, 2017

Ordinary Income and Expense	Account Number	2016-17 Budget	2017-18 Budget	% Difference From Current Year
<b>Income</b>				
<b>Contribution Income</b>	<b>4100</b>			
Back Pledges	4110	\$ 12,660	\$ 12,000	-5.2%
Collection Plate	4120	\$ 8,000	\$ 9,000	12.5%
Current Year Pledges	4130	\$ 431,858	\$ 455,000	5.4%
Other Contributions	4150	\$ 7,000	\$ 6,000	-14.3%
<b>Total Contribution Income</b>	<b>4100</b>	<b>\$ 459,518</b>	<b>\$ 482,000</b>	<b>4.9%</b>
<b>Other Income</b>	<b>4200</b>			
Net Building Rentals	4215	\$ 45,000	\$ 32,000	-28.9%
Interest Income	4220	\$ 250	\$ 100	-60.0%
Coffee Income	4240	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,100	10.0%
<b>Total Other Income</b>	<b>4200</b>	<b>\$ 46,250</b>	<b>\$ 33,200</b>	<b>-28.2%</b>
<b>Program Income</b>	<b>4300</b>			
Net FUN/D Raisers	4320	\$ 26,500	\$ 26,000	-1.9%
RE	4340	\$ 2,900	\$ 3,100	6.9%
<b>Total Program Income</b>	<b>4300</b>	<b>\$ 29,400</b>	<b>\$ 29,100</b>	<b>-1.0%</b>
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>\$ 535,168</b>	<b>\$ 544,300</b>	<b>1.7%</b>
<b>Expense</b>				
<b>Non-Ministerial Sal. &amp; Ben.</b>	<b>5000</b>			
Music Director Salary	5010	\$ 18,740	\$ 16,000	-14.6%
Church Administrator Salary	5015	\$ 45,825	\$ 47,500	3.7%
Office Administrator Salary	5016	\$ 17,108	\$ 17,680	3.3%
Custodian 1 Salary	5025	\$ 19,500	\$ 19,695	1.0%
Custodian 2 Salary	5027	\$ 7,800	\$ 7,878	1.0%
RE Director Salary	5030	\$ 58,609	\$ 59,195	1.0%
Sunday Nursery Care	5035	\$ 2,770	\$ 2,760	-0.4%
Ministerial Intern	5040	X	\$ 18,301	
Staff Benefits	5042	\$ 18,210	\$ 18,483	1.5%
Music Director Prof. Dev	5050	\$ 700	\$ 2,000	185.7%
Church Admin. Prof. Dev.	5051	\$ 1,500	\$ -	-100.0%
RE Director Prof. Dev.	5053	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000	0.0%
Ministerial Intern Expenses	5055	X	\$ 1,000	
Employer Payroll Taxes	5080	\$ 13,032	\$ 13,500	3.6%
Workers Comp. & Disability	5090	\$ 2,811	\$ 2,800	-0.4%
Hourly Custodian	5260	\$ 320	\$ 1,000	212.5%
<b>Total Non-Ministerial Sal. &amp; Ben.</b>	<b>5000</b>	<b>\$ 209,925</b>	<b>\$ 230,792</b>	<b>9.9%</b>
<b>Administration</b>	<b>5100</b>			
Audit, Banking & Payroll Services	5140	\$ 6,500	\$ 8,500	30.8%
Credit Card Fees	5141	X	\$ 1,100	
Office Equipment & Copier	5150	\$ 3,130	\$ 3,130	0.0%
Office Supplies	5160	\$ 2,820	\$ 2,820	0.0%
Postage	5170	\$ 700	\$ 800	14.3%
Communications	5280	\$ 4,116	\$ 4,686	13.8%
<b>Total Administration</b>	<b>5100</b>	<b>\$ 17,266</b>	<b>\$ 21,036</b>	<b>21.8%</b>
<b>Building Maintenance</b>	<b>5200</b>			
Buildings & Grounds	5210	\$ 20,000	\$ 19,309	-3.5%
Janitorial Supplies	5230	\$ 3,250	\$ 3,250	0.0%
Utilities	5270	\$ 18,000	\$ 13,000	-27.8%
Insurance	5470	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000	0.0%
<b>Total Building Maintenance</b>	<b>5200</b>	<b>\$ 50,250</b>	<b>\$ 44,559</b>	<b>-11.3%</b>

4.4% inc. over current pledges + 8,500 new pledges w/5% shrinkage

\$17,000 salary + benefits & expenses - \$11,286 intern fund retirement benefit increased from 9 to 10% of salary

none requested  
professional fees & conferences during 2 month sabbatical - postponed to 2018-19

**Proposed 2017-18 Budget**

Albany UU, May 21, 2017

<b>Church &amp; Community</b>	<b>5300</b>					
Nominating	5330	X	\$ 50			
Art & Aesthetics	5306	\$ 50	\$ -		-100.0%	
Board of Trustees	5310	\$ 200	\$ 200		0.0%	
Annual Dinner Subsidy	5315	\$ 375	\$ 450		20.0%	
Stewardship Committee	5320	\$ 300	\$ 600		100.0%	appreciation dinner
Board Training & Development	5325	\$ 350	\$ 500		42.9%	
Receptions/Appreciations	5335	\$ 100	\$ 100		X	
Child Care (General)	5340	\$ 500	\$ 250		-50.0%	
Membership Committee	5350	\$ 1,050	\$ 1,100		4.8%	
Kitchen & Coffee	5355	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500		0.0%	
Caring Network	5357	\$ 100	\$ 100		0.0%	
Joy Library	5361	\$ 450	\$ 350		-22.2%	
Religious Services Committee	5365	\$ 5,870	\$ 6,170		5.1%	
Publicity Committee	5370	\$ 975	\$ 800		-17.9%	
Music Committee	5375	\$ 4,150	\$ 3,700		-10.8%	
Archives Committee	5385	\$ 75	\$ 75		0.0%	
Growth Through Service	5387	\$ 1,650	\$ -		-100.0%	
PCC	5386	\$ 135	\$ 135		0.0%	
<b>Total Church &amp; Community</b>	<b>5300</b>	\$ 17,830	\$ 16,080		-9.8%	
<b>Denominational Affairs</b>	<b>5400</b>					
Partner Church Council	5410	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500		0.0%	
HMUU	5415	\$ 500	\$ 500		0.0%	formerly known as CRUUNY
CER Dues	5420	\$ 10,907	\$ 11,317		3.8%	formerly known as SLUUD
UUA Program Fund Dues	5430	\$ 22,860	\$ 22,260		-2.6%	
Denominational Affairs Subsidy	5440	\$ 4,300	\$ 3,000		-30.2%	
Unirondack Dues	5450	\$ 150	\$ 150		0.0%	
<b>Total Denominational Affairs</b>	<b>5400</b>	\$ 40,217	\$ 38,727		-3.7%	
<b>Ministerial Expenses</b>	<b>5500</b>					
Professional Expenses	5510	\$ 7,000	\$ 7,500		7.1%	
Salary/Housing	5550	\$ 94,091	\$ 95,032		1.0%	
Insurance	5560	\$ 12,851	\$ 14,301		11.3%	
Retirement	5565	\$ 8,468	\$ 9,503		12.2%	
<b>Total Ministerial Expenses</b>	<b>5500</b>	\$ 115,410	\$ 126,336		9.5%	
<b>Religious Education</b>	<b>5800</b>					
Children & Youth	5800	\$ 6,400	\$ 6,000		-6.3%	
Lifespan Learning	5810	\$ 700	\$ 700		0.0%	
<b>Total Religious Education</b>	<b>5800</b>	\$ 7,100	\$ 6,700		-5.6%	
<b>Social Responsibilities</b>	<b>5900</b>					
Interfaith Impact	5910	\$ 850	\$ 850		0.0%	
Social Responsibilities Council	5920	\$ 2,450	\$ 4,900		100.0%	
<b>Total Social Responsibilities</b>	<b>5900</b>	\$ 3,300	\$ 5,750		74.2%	
<b>Total Expense</b>		\$ 461,298	\$ 489,980		6.2%	
<b>Transfers</b>						
Mortgage Payment	5770	\$ 50,270	\$ 50,000		-0.5%	
Mortgage Interest	5771	X	X		X	included in mortgage payment
Capital Reserve Fund	5775	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000		0.0%	
Ministerial Intern Reserve Func	5780	\$ 1,000	\$ (11,280)		-1228.0%	reimbursement from designated fund
Sabbatical Fund	5785	\$ 600	\$ 600		0.0%	
<b>Total Transfers</b>		\$ 16,600	\$ 54,320		227.2%	
<b>Total Expense and Transfers</b>		\$ 477,898	\$ 544,300		13.9%	



**Proposed Resolution on the Stott funds transfer  
for the Annual Meeting on May 21, 2017**

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.

**Background information to the Stott funds transfer**

Over 35 years ago, the Stott family gave money to Albany UU to support the creation 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. We made a good-faith estimate of what it might cost to maintain the Lounge, and the Stotts sent money, to be kept separately in the Endowment Trust to ensure the Lounge remains well-maintained.

Around ten years ago, we raised a lot of money and 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 Stotts 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 \$5000 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 we 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.

**Minutes of the  
Annual Meeting of the  
First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany**  
May 15, 2016

**Call to Order and Words for Gathering**

Peggy Sherman, President, called the meeting to order approximately 11:45 A.M. Rev. Sam Trumbore opened with a statement regarding the challenges facing Unitarian-Universalism and the vital role that it continues to play, then shared a reading by Heather Jumous: “The Power Comes from the People.”

**Appointments**

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

- Parliamentarian – Kevin Purcell
- Timekeeper – Jean Poppei
- Vote Counters - Laura Churchill and Nominating Committee
- Floor Managers - Dick Dana and Michael Hornsby

**Approval of Agenda**

It was determined that there was a quorum of the members. Peggy asked for a motion to approve the agenda. The motion was made by Dave Munro, seconded by Kathy Hodges, and passed unanimously.

**Adoption/Rules of Procedure**

Peggy summarized the rules embodied in Albany UU’s Policy on Congregational Meetings. She then asked for a motion to adopt the rules, which was made by Terry Way. 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 Heidi Newberg. It was noted that the fifteen minute limit on debate provides another way to cut off discussions that become too long or unproductive. After some discussion, the amendment to eliminate Item 1.B.5 was approved by a vote of 48 to 37, and the rules as amended were adopted.

**Nominating Committee Report and Election**

Laura Churchill, Chair of the Nominating Committee, thanked the members of the Nominating Committee: Mary Myers, Molly Daniels, Bob Franklin, Sandy Stone and the late Sue Berzinis. Laura reported that the changes to the bylaws regarding contested and uncontested elections had prompted more people to volunteer. Laura then announced the names of the candidates for the uncontested elections:

- Dick Dana (President), Patti Joe Newell (Vice President), Linda Hunt (Secretary), Kathy Harris (Treasurer)
- Board of Trustees: Lee Newberg, Annika Pfluger, Ben English (1 year term)
- Assistant Treasurer: Michaela Pochily
- Endowment Trust: John Cooley
- Religious Education Chair: David Quist
- Religious Education Committee: Jim Hutchins, Amy Jesaitis, Elizabeth Baldes, Tracie Tilgner, Becky Edvalson.
- Social Responsibilities Chair: Jean Poppei,
- Social Responsibilities Committee: Annie Metzger, Elena Reynolds

RoseAnne Fogarty, Secretary, made a motion for the election of all uncontested candidates, which was approved.

Laura Churchill 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:

- Micah Ilowit
- Bob Franklin
- Meredith Mercer
- Michele Desrosiers
- Jacqui Williams
- Kathy Hodges

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

### **Update on Stewardship Campaign**

Chuck Manning, co-chair of Stewardship, expressed appreciation for Lynne Lekakis, co-chair of the “We’re All in this Together” Stewardship Campaign this year. He named and thanked the 25 people who had participated in contacting members and friends for the campaign this year, as well as Jack Heinsohn and the crew who put together the dinner for those supporting the congregation at the “Visionary” level. Chuck reported that the average increase among those pledging was 10 percent and that we are at 96 percent of our goal, which is very good. Chuck thanked everyone who had contributed and especially applauded the four pledge units now giving at the 10 Percent level, the 54 Visionaries, 19 Sustainers, and 17 Supporters.

### **Presentation/Adoption of 2016-2017 Budget**

Kathy Harris, Treasurer, presented and explained the 2016-17 budget. She noted that the Finance Committee had two primary goals: paying at least \$15 per hour compensation to our lowest paid staff and by next year raising the compensation of our professional staff to at least the 50 percent range of the UUA guidelines.

The proposed budget was moved by Dave Metz, and seconded by Tracie Tilgner. In the discussion that followed, concerns were expressed about some items. Ann Brandon stated that

she believes that it is not fair to leave a mortgage for future members to pay off; paying off the mortgage quickly should be our primary goal. Ann stated that the UUA guidelines are not mandatory, that this congregation should determine what is reasonable compensation and she believes that we are already paying fair compensation to the professional staff. Michele Desrosiers urged that our primary goal should be to promote the church and increase membership and that we should use our resources on that rather than paying off the mortgage more quickly.

### **Proposed Resolution**

The following resolution was proposed by the Board of Trustees

The congregation of the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany approves the withdrawal of up to \$170,000 of the principal of the Endowment Trust as a no-interest loan for the purpose of mortgage refinancing.

Peggy explained the background for the proposed resolution, which is the result of a year-and-a-half period of study by committee leaders and the Board regarding how best to restructure the debt for building Emerson when the present 10-year mortgage with Berkshire Bank ends and must be refinanced. The church was not financially capable of paying the \$79,000 annual mortgage payment from the money raised annually from the membership. For the purpose of making up the difference, the construction financing included a no-interest \$575,000 loan to the church from the Endowment Trust and creation of a Building Fund to supplement mortgage payments. Although the church has increased the portion of the mortgage payments that it makes from pledges over the years, the church is still not in a position to make all of the mortgage payments from annual pledges. The Board's purpose for proposing a further no-interest \$170,000 loan from the Endowment Trust is to reduce the principal of mortgage that the church needs to refinance and thereby reduce the annual payment that needs to be made from the church budget.

Todd Thomas, Chair of the Endowment Trust Trustees, reported that the members of the Trust, Chris Jensen, Sharon Babala, Tim Burch, Jan McCracken and Kathy Harris, support the proposal. Todd reported that the Endowment Trust Board is responsible to protect the Trust in perpetuity, grow the Trust, and use the Trust's funds to promote the church. The Trust previously loaned nearly the entire fund to the church. In the intervening years, the Trust has regrown to approximately \$340,000. The Endowment Trust supports the proposal to make a no-interest \$170,000 loan to the church, which would leave \$170,000 available for other purposes. Loaning the money is consistent with the Endowment Trust's purposes of protecting the Trust and using the Trust to further the church's mission. The church's commitment to repaying the Endowment after paying off the mortgage ensures that the Endowment Trust will be replenished and can be used to support other future endeavors. The primary effect of the proposed loan on the Endowment Trust is that until the loan is repaid, the Trust's capacity to grant money to other projects will be diminished. Until the Trust is built up by future contributions, those grants will be reduced from the \$4,000 per year that has recently been granted to \$2,000 per year. Todd noted that it is anticipated that that \$2,000 reduction in grants will be offset by the fact that the church's debt service on the refinanced mortgage will be significantly reduced.

There being no one identified to speak in opposition to the resolution, the pro and con microphones were opened.

Larry Gambino questioned whether the present resolution adequately addresses the question of how and when the prior loan from the Endowment Trust will be paid off. Peggy responded that they were separate matters and that both loans from the Endowment Trust would be paid back by the church.

Al DeSalvo asked whether there had been an analysis of the amount of interest that the Endowment Trust is earning on its investments and whether that would be greater than the cost of borrowing a like amount of money from the bank. Peggy responded that the Board had evaluated those scenarios and concluded that the proposal to loan a portion of the Endowment Trust would cost less than borrowing money from the bank.

A member asked how much money remained to be paid on the mortgage. Peggy responded that as of March 2017, it will be approximately \$860,000.

Tom Mercer read a statement by Betsey Miller, who previously served as Treasurer and was involved in the original loan from the Endowment Trust. Betsey opposes the present proposal because it extends the period of time for paying off the original loan and reduces the amount of money to be paid each year. Betsey believes it freezes the annual amount of money to be paid, fails to require the church to pay larger amounts in the event that the church's annual income increases, and reduces the Endowment "too low." Betsey proposes amending the proposal to include restrictions on the agreement that will be made between the church and the Endowment Trust requiring that FUUSA's repayments be indexed to the budget each year.

Reese Satin opposed the proposal stating that it rests on an "unsustainable proposition" that it is proper for the church to repeatedly take interest-free loans from the Endowment Trust and use them for whatever discretionary items the church leaders want now. Reese said that we need to maintain the Endowment Trust for unanticipated circumstances. Reese opposes the proposal because the benefit to the church will enable the church to increase professional salaries to UUA guidelines and other unspecified purposes that are "operational expenses."

Linda Hunt responded to Reese by urging that it is also not sustainable for the church to balance budget shortfalls by underpaying the staff and that the benefits to the church from the proposal are not frivolous. We do not want to encourage the staff to leave and if they do leave, the church would ultimately be harmed by being left with less qualified personnel. Linda stated it would be a mistake for FUUSA to separate itself from the UUA.

Discussion of the proposal was extended for 15 minutes.

Larry Gambino endorsed Reese's opposition to the proposal.

Dave Munro asked what would happen if the proposal is defeated. Peggy responded that the church would seek to refinance the outstanding debt.

Tom Mercer proposed that the church should run a new special mini-capital campaign at this time to retire the debt from contributions from people who either joined the church in the interim and did not contribute to the earlier capital campaign or have come into money and could now contribute more. Tom reported that Betsey Miller had also proposed this and would contribute to the capital campaign.

Reese repeated his opposition to the proposal and urged the congregation to reject the proposal and require the Board to return with a more sustainable proposal.

Sam Trumbore responded to Reese's point that we need the Endowment Trust for unanticipated problems by urging that the proposal is a means of promoting the church's mission by reducing future risk to the church by permitting the church to use the funds at its disposal for responding to the challenges that face all religious organizations at this time.

Bruce Rodgers urged that instead of taking a loan from the Endowment Trust there should be another capital campaign and would contribute to such a campaign.

There being no more speakers, Peggy asked if there were any proposals for amendment.

Chuck Manning proposed the following amendment to the resolution (in italics):

*The congregation of the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany approves the withdrawal of up to \$170,000 of the principal of the Endowment Trust as a no-interest loan for the purpose of mortgage refinancing. The Board, with guidance from the Finance Committee, is directed to include annual payments in the budget to retire the Endowment Trust loan after the mortgage has been repaid. The amount of annual payments for the mortgage and subsequently to the Endowment Trust will be a minimum of nine percent (9%) of the fiscal year budget unless a lower payment to the Endowment Trust is approved at an annual meeting or at a special meeting of the congregation.*

He explained that the proposal expressly directs that the loan from the Endowment Trust is to be paid off after the mortgage is paid off and that the church's annual payments to the Endowment Trust be indexed at 9% of the annual budget unless the congregation determines to do otherwise at an special or annual meeting. Larry Gambino seconded the proposed amendment.

The proposed amendment was passed 51 to 11 with 14 abstentions. The resolution as amended was then passed 52 to 19 with 2 abstentions.

### **Growth Through Service**

Growth Through Service Chair Dick Dana having to leave for another commitment, Jaye Holly, co-chair of Growth Through Service, presented a video of members of the congregation reflecting on their service experiences. The presentation was received enthusiastically by the Congregation.

### **New Albany UU Website**

Patti Jo Newell, chair of Public Relations, introduced Josh Shay, designer and builder of the new Albany UU website.

Although the new website could not be displayed at the meeting, as had been planned, it is up and running, and available for members to view from home.

### **Comments of the President**

Peggy talked about the efforts of the past year, including work to carry out our church's mission as a vital force in the Capital Region and the recently approved transition from the St. Lawrence District to the Central East Region of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

Peggy thanked the Board and asked for a round of applause for outgoing Board members RoseAnne Fogarty, Tracie Tilgner and Michele Desrosiers, and also received special applause for her own three years of leadership of the Board.

### **Announcement of Election Results**

Laura Churchill reported the result of the contested election. The elected members of the Nominating Committee are: Bob Franklin and Kathy Hodges for three years, and Meredith Mercer for two years.

### **New Business**

Hearing no requests to address new business, Peggy Sherman declared the meeting to be adjourned.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 1:30 P.M.

## YEAR IN REVIEW

### Minister's Annual Report

Rev. Sam Trumbore

#### Overview

What a year this has been! The fall election has had a dramatic effect on our congregation and the Unitarian Universalist Association. Stress levels went through the roof for many of us worrying what the new administration might be like and what the 45<sup>th</sup> President might do. Researchers have linked increased stress in people's lives with the shaking up of institutional life. People are much less comfortable with their status quo and start making changes.

Big changes are happening at the top of the Unitarian Universalist Association with **the resignation of Peter Morales as President** three months before his term is up. Three co-presidents have been selected to replace him, Rev. Bill Sinkford, Rev. Sofia Betancourt and Leon Spencer. Two senior white male staff members have resigned and two people of color have moved into leadership positions. The UUA will be doing an audit to discover any covert white supremacy practices that have interfered with the hiring and promotion of the staff leadership. At the end of June, a new UUA President will be elected at General Assembly in New Orleans who will have their work cut out for her to follow through on the changes initiated by the three co-Presidents.

These challenging times are ripe with opportunities for growth and development for both individuals and institutions. May we take full advantage of them in a way that makes us stronger, more committed to one another and the work of creating a Beloved Community among us.

#### The End of the Obama Administration

The election was a shock to many in our congregation. It has reordered some priorities for us, increasing protest activity for many and advocacy for our values that are at risk. We had **several dozen members and friends who went to the Women's March** the day after the President's inauguration. Many participated in the March for Science and the Climate Change March both in April. Our advocacy for Planned Parenthood became more urgent with the appointment of Neil Gorsuch to the Supreme Court and the President's promise to strip federal funding from Planned Parenthood.

One surprising result of the election is **the influx of people to our congregation**. Our attendance numbers and Sunday morning giving are up. And we are starting to get a younger cohort of people coming. Not only are they coming, they are networking with each other in the halls after the service. This is a great sign for the future health of our congregation.

#### Confronting Institutional Racism / White Supremacy



As you'll read in Dick Dana's President's report, the **resignation of Michael Hornsby from our Board** was a big wake up call. He challenged us to take ownership of our diversity work rather than delegating it to him. An immediate result of his resignation was **a trip to a UU workshop in Weston, Massachusetts titled Navigating Whiteness** by five members of the Board, another member of our congregation and me. Several of us also attended a local workshop on using personal stories. As Shirey Archie puts it, "Getting sick is not our fault. Getting well is our responsibility." That is a great summary of the anti-racism, anti-oppression work we are called to do.

### **Social Justice Work**

While I haven't led a lot of work this year, I've attended many events including a protest against the hateful and disrespectful past words of Franklin Graham who spoke at the New York State Capital in the fall. We started the fall with a Moral Monday event but it lost steam after the election as activists reassessed where to focus their efforts.

The illegal deportation executive orders have increased **the priority of immigration issues** for many of us. I've attended demonstrations at the immigration offices in Latham to protest the increasingly threatening actions to undocumented immigrants who are in the process of seeking legal status. I attended a workshop in Schenectady by an Albany Law School professor that discussed the ways people can legally stay in our country and how they are prosecuted. There is much talk about being **Sanctuary churches** as we did in the 1980's. The law here is very unclear as is the potential liability. And the President has sweeping executive power when it comes to immigration policy.

On an up note, I participated in the **playground build for Sheridan Preparatory Academy** this fall that went extremely well. It was a great success for our congregation and partners. Much appreciation goes to Martha Musser and Chuck Manning for their leadership in making this happen.

### **Hudson Mohawk UU Cluster**

We've had good cooperation between our five congregations this year (Schenectady, Albany, Saratoga Springs, Glens Falls, Kingston) and interest from the congregation in Great Barrington, Vermont, Pittsfield and Great Barrington, Massachusetts.

In October we had a "**Fall Gathering**" with the **Rev. Dr. Joan Van Becelaere** as our theme presenter talking on the "Future of Religion." About 45 people gathered for her presentation, lunch and workshops.

We had our **joint service March 26<sup>th</sup>** again at the Golub Interfaith Chapel in Doane Stuart School. The sermon was given by **Tom Andrews**, the Executive Director of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee. The Cluster hosted him for a reception at the Schenectady UU congregation the day before. Attendance was strong, the choirs overflowing the risers, and the

sermon solicited a standing ovation. Even with a boil water advisory, the reception afterwards went off well.

Another new project for the cluster was to **connect our social responsibilities committees** in our congregations by adding a list serve for them on our web site. This increased joint activity, like marching together at the Albany Pride Parade each year, can increase our voice to project our values in the public square.

### **Religious Services**

I continue to use the Soul/Meaning Matters themes being used by other UU congregations as **our themes for the month**. This year they were: September: Covenant; October: Healing; November: Story; December: Presence; January: Prophecy; February: Identity; March: Risk; April: Transformation; May: Embodiment; June: Joy. While I didn't preach specifically each month on the topics for all the sermons, I did touch on and connect with each theme regularly. Sometimes more, sometimes less. The integration of monthly themes with the RE program for the children and my monthly column continues to support people going deeper with their personal growth and development. Having support material supplied for us by the Soul Matters organization is very helpful to Leah and me in preparations.

Here is a sampling of the Sunday services this year:

### **Sunday Morning Service Highlights**

- **“The Occupy Movement: 5 Years Later,”** September 18
- **“Healing Through Repentance,”** October 9
- **“American Fear of Islam,”** October 23
- **“Reconciliation Through a Fuller Story,”** November 20, 2016
- **“A Path of Presence,”** December 11, 2016
- **“The Thread That You Follow,”** December 18, 2016
- **“Tongues of Fire,”** January 8, 2017
- **“Our UU Prophetic Message,”** January 22, 2017
- **“Strong Identity Supports Diversity,”** February 5, 2017
- **“Faith in Group Selection,”** February 12, 2017
- **“Rescuing a Jesus for Liberals to Love,”** February 19, 2017
- **“The Altruist’s Dilemma,”** March 5, 2017
- **“Honoring Agnosticism,”** March 19, 2017
- **“Money Changers in the Temple,”** April 9, 2017
- **“Seeking Other Worlds,”** April 30, 2017

- “**Making the Water Visible,**” May 7, 2017
- “**Honoring our Foremothers: Margaret Fuller,**” May 14, 2017
- “**National Bird: The Automation of War,**” May 28, 2017

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**

**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 that had about thirty people signed up and about twenty regular participants.

The classes I ran were:

- **Exploring the Bible (three six week sessions)** –This was a major effort that began with a discussion organized by the Massachusetts Bible Society in Albany between their Executive Director who is a Protestant, a Catholic priest, and a Humanist on the Bible. The first series of six classes were an exploration of the Bible itself. The next two were first the Old then the New Testament. We pretty much covered the whole thing! Most appreciated it as a great biblical literacy class. About 20 total people participated in all the classes finishing with about 15 participants.
- **Third Reconstruction**, a book by William Barber, class – This book was the common read for the UUA this year. We did the three session version of the curriculum put together by the UUA with about a dozen total participants.
- Organizing support for Rabbi Dennis Ross one-shot class “**When Lying is Not a Sin**”

## **Too Many Memorial Services**

This might be a **record year for memorial services** that ran the Reception Committee a little ragged. By our Annual Meeting, we will have conducted memorial services for **Mark Butt, Bob Thomson, Cathy Perkins, Heidi Newberg’s father Peter Henner** (Heidi Newberg’s step-father), **Jim Gerou, John Meid, Ramona Weissbard, and finally** (I hope) **Jan Satin**. For the elderly, death is a blessing but for many in this group, death came before they were ready to go. Whether it was accident, illness or old age, we mourn the passing of them all.

## **Search for a New Music Director**

It was a very sad start to our fall season to accept **the resignation of Matt Edwards**, our beloved music director. After moving to Bennington, an opening came up down the street and

he took it, getting four hours a week of commuting back for his busy life. We were lucky to have his talent and skill for so long for our music program. His last Sunday was September 25<sup>th</sup>.

I convened a **Music Director Search Committee** that included Ann Brandon, Kathy Harris, Randy Rosette, Chris Jensen, and Annika Pfluger. Chris conducted and Ann accompanied the choir for the fall leaving January to try-out candidates. As it happened, we only had one candidate we all liked and still wanted the job: **Kathy Bawel**. It was a perfect match ... until her husband got a job in Rochester, where they have their home. Thankfully Kathy accepted the position from February through May and has done an excellent job.

The search continues as of this writing for someone to start in the fall.

### **Staff Report**

This year has been a fairly stable one as regards to staff. With the exception of Matt Edwards leaving, the rest of the staff continues in employment and is working well together.

### **Partner Church Work**

Dave Metz and I continued again to collaborate on a **Partner Church trip to Szökefalva**, Romania for this coming August. To stimulate interest, we invited the minister of our partner church, **Rev. Tünde Szász**, to come visit in October. She came with two young adults who grew up in the church. They had a delightful visit with us and Rev. Szász gave a sermon for the congregation.

We planned a trip for the beginning of August, but our numbers dwindled down to the point it didn't make sense to go. This is the second year we've failed to get a group together for a trip. Back to the drawing board for 2018.

### **Intern Selection**

The Board approved my long term desire to have another ministerial intern starting next fall last June. With Board approval, I pulled together an Intern Search Committee, posted the internship on the appropriate UUA site, and received a dozen or so viable applications. The committee sorted through the candidates, interview several electronically, and selected **Eileen Casey-Campbell** to be our intern for the 2017-2018 church year. If you'd like to see and hear her, she provided us with video that I've uploaded to YouTube here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZOPoV7GVGiE&t=232s>

Eileen will be starting August 21<sup>st</sup> and working through till the middle of June.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

I took a survey to detect my level of burnout. I was interested to see how low I scored. My energy and enthusiasm for ministry and for the work we do together hasn't diminished after seventeen years together. Part of the reason comes from the inexhaustible challenge of this kind of work which is never finished. Each new person who comes to our congregation creates new

opportunities for growth and change. Each person we memorialize leaves a hole where they had been we can't replace. Yet somehow, together, the whole is so much greater than the parts. And that wholeness I experience here continues to feed and sustain me as we walk together toward an uncertain future. 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  
Michele Desrosiers  
Ben English  
Lee Newberg  
Jon Newell  
Annika Pfluger

### **Ex-Officio voting members:**

David Quist, Religious Education Council Chair  
Jean Poppei, Social Responsibilities Council Chair

### **Ex-Officio non-voting member:**

Rev. Sam Trumbore, Minister

“We unite in order to create and sustain a non-creedal religious community. Our unity is based upon our concern for the individual and society and for the quality of life reflected in each. Thus we join together to inspire and support one another in a search for the insights and actions that will foster and strengthen this concern.” Those inspiring words from a decidedly dry document, Albany UU’s bylaws, are what the Trustees are responsible for maintaining and enhancing.

### **Inherited Initiatives**

When Peggy Sherman stepped down as president of the Board last June, she handed on to me two initiatives designed to maintain Albany UU as a vital force in our community: an Organizational Effectiveness Work Group, working to bring our governance structure into the 21<sup>st</sup> century; and a Growth Through Service initiative designed to connect congregation members with opportunities that foster personal growth, new friendships, and greater connection with the church community.

### **New Projects**

Since then, the Board has initiated two new projects. Last fall the Board established 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.” This Team grew out of efforts in this area over the past several years, displayed most visibly by our Black Lives Matter banner on the front of the building.

A second new initiative is the project to create this congregation's first ever congregational covenant. As of last month, we have a Congregational Covenant Team, charged 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." We are a covenantal faith, and there are many benefits to creating a covenant that the congregation will be learning more about in the coming months.

### **Looking Forward Campaign**

One new project, not initiated by the Board but warmly embraced by it, could be described as a grass roots initiative. The Looking Forward Campaign, an effort that significantly reduce the size of the mortgage we needed to renegotiate on Emerson Community Hall, was initiated by members who felt that there was more that could be done to reduce our annual mortgage costs than merely borrowing a second time from the Endowment Trust, a move authorized by the congregation at the 2016 Annual Meeting.

Through their efforts, starting early last summer and sustained over many months, we have raised \$223,000 toward retiring the \$527,000 Emerson debt. Not satisfied with just fundraising, the Looking Forward team, working creatively "outside the box," solicited and received an additional \$140,000 in loans from our own members at a significantly lower interest rate than our bank mortgage rate. The result is that not only is our debt reduced from \$527,000 to \$304,000, but the combined interest rate we are paying on all the loans is a very reasonable 4.43%. And our formal bank mortgage has been reduced by more than half to \$142,000.

The money raised plus the loans from members allows us to pay off our mortgage 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.

A huge "thank you" is due to Jon Newell for chairing this effort, and to his team – Al Berzinis, Peter Brown, Bob Franklin, Chuck Manning, Tom Mercer, Dave Metz, Betsey Miller, Reese Satin and Sam Trumbore – for this effort.

### **Looking back, looking ahead**

Special thanks to Michele Desrosiers and Ben English who are completing their terms on the Board. Michele brought her passion and intellect to the Board meetings, pushing us to do more to plan for the future and realize our mission, especially in the area of organizational effectiveness. As she steps off the Board for the second time in two years, second time because she stepped in to fill a vacancy for the remainder of the term, I very much hope she will stay involved with our efforts to chart a course towards more effective governance. Her expertise and passion in this area is just what we need.

Ben has been a stalwart on the Board. His carefully thought through opinions have been valued by his fellow board members over these past three years. And his graciousness has added a civility of discourse to the Board meetings that I doubt we will be able to reproduce without him.

Jean Poppei is stepping down as Social Responsibilities Council chair after three years. We will miss Jean's earnest demeanor and always-dead-on characterizations of the problem being looked at or situation being analyzed. She has taken the SRC to new heights of involvement and set the stage for her successor to welcome an even larger swath of Albany UU members into social justice advocacy.

David Quist has chosen to step down as chair of the Religious Education Council, which closely followed his three years as an RE Council member. In Board meetings, David was always good for an alternative analysis or interpretation, a very helpful skill to have on the Board. And we will all miss his dry humor.

The Board has a lot on its plate and this coming year will be busy. But all these added responsibilities have been willingly taken on. Board members have recognized that these projects have the potential to greatly enhance the experience for all of us here at Albany UU. I look forward to another productive year.



## **Treasurer's Report**

Kathy Harris

As I complete my second year as the Albany UU Treasurer, I am often reminded of the significant financial commitment we, the members and friends of Albany UU, make to this congregation – along with the considerable time and talent that makes Albany UU the vibrant community it is. According to the monthly Treasurer's Report (available in the office or from me), payment of the 2016-17 pledges are coming in ahead of schedule. Keep it up! And your support, both financially and of the community is also evident in our FUN/D raisers (Auction, Bazaar and Wine and Cheese events), which provide significant support to our operations.

Some of you have been following the steps taken to restructure the debt incurred ten years ago when the Emerson wing was built. We have just finalized the restructure. In 2007 we owed \$1,765,000 to our Endowment Trust and to Berkshire Bank. Thanks to ten years of mortgage payments, the Looking Forward Campaign and diligent stewardship of existing savings, we have now reduced our original debt by over 50%. Only \$142,000 remains in a formal mortgage with an outside bank. Ten Albany UU members signed Albany UU Notes, loaning funds to the congregation at an interest level lower than what we must pay to a commercial bank – but higher than most people can get in a current savings account. We are also receiving a gift and an additional short-term loan from the Endowment Trust.

Final retiring of this debt will take many years. But Albany UU is in a good financial position to get there. And the programs and activities our congregation participates in are continuing to attract new members and friends. Keep up your commitment of time, talent and treasure! Albany UU is worth it!

**Income and Expense Summary for 2015-2016**  
**Ending June 30, 2016**

<b>Ordinary Income and Expenses</b>			
<b>Income</b>			
	Total Contribution Income	\$440,815	85.4%
	Total Other Income (Rentals, Interest)	\$44,182	8.6%
	Total Program Income (Fun/d Raisers, RE)	\$30,930	6.0%
	<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$515,927</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
	Total Non-Ministerial Salary and Benefits	\$197,599	45.5%
	Total Ministerial Expenses	\$120,510	27.7%
	Total Church and Community	\$13,490	3.1%
	Total Denominational Affairs	\$35,476	8.2%
	Total Religious Education	\$4,712	1.1%
	Total Social Responsibilities	\$2,158	0.5%
	Total Administration	\$17,962	4.1%
	Total Building Maintenance	\$42,588	9.8%
	<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$434,494</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Transfers</b>			
	Capital Reserve Fund	\$15,000	
	Building Reserve Fund	\$44,255	
	Ministerial Reserve Fund	\$1,000	
	Sabbatical fund	\$600	
	<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$60,855</b>	
	<b>Total Expense and Transfers</b>	<b>\$495,349</b>	
	<b>Surplus transferred to Building Reserve Fund</b>	<b>\$20,578</b>	

**Endowment Trust Annual Report for the Calendar Year 2016**

**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 2016, the Trust had a value of \$944,573. During 2016, gifts to the Trust were made in the amount of \$6,302 and the Trust distributed \$7,000 in grants. Investment gains were \$28,800. At the end of 2016, the Trust had a value of \$972,675. 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 Community Hall into a reality. The remainder of the endowment is invested in mutual funds, and in bonds with the Community Loan

Fund and the Honest Weight Food Coop.

### **Grants**

During 2016, the Trust funded a portion of the construction of the Sheridan Preparatory Academy playground and also offset a portion of the expenses of our partner church visitors from Transylvania.

### **Gifts Received**

During 2016, a total of \$6,302 in gifts was added to the Trust. These gifts honored Priscilla Crago, Matt Odell, Sue Berzini, Dorothy Bellick, Bob Thomson, and Mark Butt.

The Trust Board takes this opportunity to publicly thank 2016 contributors: Judith Plotz, Brian & Karen Managans, Karen Kaufmann, Lois Griffin, The Troutmans, Sandra Smith, Tim & Patty Burch, The Fishburns, Charmaine Wileyesinghe, Carol Rhoades, Roger Simmons, Elizabeth Berberian, Jack & Susan Goertz, David & Martha Musser, Caren & Michael Bianca, Rosemary Tabachneck, Friends of Paul Tonko, Richard Greene, Elizabeth & Charles Dye, Randall & Cynthia Hall, Robert & MaryAnne Lanni, Donald & Elizabeth Kline, Curtis & Rosemary Kline, Joan Lierheimer, Allan & Joanne Sholtes, Ann & Mike D'Attilio, John & Peggy Sherman, Lois Webb, William Morrison, Judith & Joseph Stack, Joan Gary, Eleanor Alland & Katherine Battista, Carolyn Du Brin, Margaret Raymo, Debra Wein, Katharine Harris, Tom Welsh, Kathleen Drumm, Terrence & Jean Nieman, Judith Stevens, Nancy Lawson, Chris Bystroff, Don Odell, John Cooley, and Harold & Mary Hughes.

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

### **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 Albany UU 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,

Todd Thomas, Endowment Trust Chair, Jan McCracken, Sharon Babala, Tim Burch, John Cooley, Kathy Harris, Treasurer (Ex officio)

## **Stewardship Committee and Donor Report**

**Co-Chairs:** Chuck Manning and Lynne Lekakis

**Members:** Barbara Manning, Don Odell, Fred Eames, John Sherman, Kathy Hodges, Linda Hunt, Malcolm Bell, Marshall Miller, Martha Musser, Paula Brewer, Peggy Sherman, Sharon Babala, Toni Daniel

**Purpose:** Raise funds for the annual operation of Albany UU.

The theme this year was: “Sustaining Our Safe and Compassionate Community”

The Stewardship Campaign is the way that we support Albany UU, compensate our staff and maintain our infrastructure so that we can provide the services and outreach we value.

Here is how this year’s Stewardship Campaign was conducted:

1. Budget Highlights: Our Campaign goal is \$470,000. To reach this goal we asked everyone to raise their pledge.
2. Pledge Packets were distributed beginning on Sundays in March.
3. Packets that were not picked up were mailed to members and friends.
4. Calls and email follow-ups were made to finish the campaign.
5. On-line pledging was available for members and friends.

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.

We want to thank all of you for your generosity this year. At the time this report was prepared, we had not finished the Campaign for the next year fiscal year (July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018). We are at 90% of our goal. There has been a significant increase in generosity this year with those who have pledged so far increasing their pledges by an aggregate 5%.

A listing of donors by category is provided below:

### **Ten Percenter**

1 Anonymous

### **Visionary**

13 Anonymous

Kristen and Geoff Abbas

Mary Applegate

Patricia Bailey

Bill Batt

Lorraine Blanchfield and Jeffrey English

Dave and Ann Brandon

Peter and Debbie Brown

Dick and Dawn Dana

Albert DeSalvo and Susan Thompson

Arden and Marilyn Dockter

Diane Dunston

Rodger Fink

Arlene Gilbert

Lois Griffin

Katharine Harris

Kathy Hodges

Eileen Hoffman and David Munro

Linda Hunt and Lawrence Gambino

Chris Jensen and Randy Rosette

Karen Kaufmann  
Chuck and Barbara Manning  
Mary Alice Maynes  
Jan McCracken  
Peter and Donna Meixner  
Steven and Paula Moskowitz  
Jon and Sigrin Newell  
Marjorie Nieh  
Don Odell  
Jean Poppei

**Sustainer**

3 Anonymous  
Laurie Beberwyck  
Jessica Bechard  
Elizabeth Berberian  
John Cooley  
Don and Ann Eberle  
Ben and Linda English  
Virginia Hammer  
Judy Hanson

**Supporter**

4 Anonymous  
Rich and Elizabeth Baldes  
Jon Bick  
Pam Clements  
Barbara Cooley  
Paul Fisk  
Peter and Thelma Gerdine  
Jane Carol Glendinning

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

23 Anonymous  
Scott Allen and Elisa Grimm  
George and Jane Allen  
Meredith and Ray Andrews  
Muriel Asbornsen  
Melanie and Paul Axel-Lute  
Beth Babb  
Lisa Barron

Phil Rich  
Darnell Rohrbaugh  
Reese Satin  
Martha Schroeder  
John and Margaret Sherman  
Peggy Slocum  
David and Sandy Stone  
Sam Trumbore and Philomena Moriarty

Cindee Herrick  
Julie Lomoe and Robb Smith  
Elizabeth McKinley  
Meredith and Thomas Mercer  
Laura Paris  
Patsy Patrick  
Jill Peckenpaugh  
Annika Pfluger  
Lois Thomson

Bob Guerrin  
Amy Jesaitis  
Ilene and Tim Kane  
Marshall Miller and Dorian Solot  
Astrid Pettersen and Neil Rice  
Charles Poltenson and Pam Crane  
Deborah Vogel  
Frank and Nancy Woods

Paul and Laura Bartosik  
Malcolm and Nancy Bell  
Donald and Sarah Birn  
Jean Bolgatz  
Carolyn Bradley  
Richard and Paula Brewer  
Loren Broc  
Chris and Maria Bystroff  
Dorry and Robert Campano  
Brian Carr  
Laura Cayford

Chris Chapple and Carol Young  
Ellen Chernoff  
Tom Chulak  
Laura Churchill and James Hutchins  
Findlay and Marcia Cockrell  
Mitchell Cohen and Anne Marie Haber  
Zach Cunningham and Kelly Smith  
Toni Daniel  
Mark and Molly Daniels  
Cindy Dean  
Cathy DeMille  
Deborah Dewey and Winston Hagborg  
Frederick Eames  
Hugh and Susan Fisher  
RoseAnne Fogarty  
Liz and Ken Halvorsen  
Marion Harwick  
Thayer Heath  
Elissa Kane and Lynne Lekakis  
Joanne Keers  
Sally Knapp and Arnold Patashnick  
Ann Lapinski  
Joe Lemmond  
Amy Lent  
Thomas Levanduski and Jim Reed  
Kathy Lloyd and Don Holmes  
David MacLeod and Debbie Reep MacLeod  
Hanns Meissner and Linda Munro  
William and Beverly Morrison  
Mary Myers  
Michael Myers and Anne Savage

Lee and Heidi Newberg  
Kate Nuding  
Angelo Patti  
Rick Piet and Amie Jamieson  
William and Meme Pittman  
Michaela Pochily  
Elena Reynolds  
Michele and Bryce Rodin  
Deborah Rodriguez  
Lea N'ko and Ed Ryman  
Ruth Salter  
Peter Schiff and Nancy Willie-Schiff  
Matthew Schultz and Megan Murphy  
Jessica Semon  
Sandra Smith  
James and Maryanne Southgate  
Cora Stackelberg  
Susan Standfast and Ted Wright  
Kabel and Sarah Stanwicks  
Abby Sugarman  
Crystal Taylor-Papps  
Todd and Jennifer Thomas  
Christine Vanderlan  
Ann von Linden  
Nancy Wagner  
John Walko  
Barbara Warner  
Keith Woodard  
Lucy Wrightington  
Carol Lynn Youtz  
Jody and Earl Zimmerman

## **Church Administrator's Report**

Amy Lent

### **Staff**

Minister: Rev. Sam Trumbore

Director of Religious Education: Leah Purcell

Church Administrator: Amy Lent

Music Director: Matt Edwards; Chris Jensen, Ann Brandon, Kathy Bawel (interims)

Administrative Assistant: Tammy Hathaway

Custodians: Hadiya Wilborn, Cameron Holloway

Childcare Staff: Anna Carbone-Harms, Aaliah Francis, Brinna Seguine

Summer Childcare Staff: Julianna Bick, Gayle Woods

Summer Services Coordinator: Vee Abbitt (2016), Randy Rosette (2017)

Our staff this year had one *big* change as Matt Edwards moved to a job closer to home. Chris Jensen and Ann Brandon first served in the interim capacity keeping our music program going as the search for a Music Director began. And Kathy Bawel is serving as interim Music Director this spring. There was some turnover among childcare staff, and two of our own will be providing childcare during the summer months. And Randy Rosette has stepped up to fill the Summer Services Coordinator position.

The office is running smoothly, although Tammy and I are at the point of turning down ‘extras’ as we have no time to spare! With the advent of the new website, Tammy has undertaken updating that site, and the ‘old’ site is phasing out. Tammy is also our key person in getting Sunday volunteer spots filled, and she finds that process is working more smoothly than last year. As the person responsible for church calendar bookings she is *the* person to ask if you ever want to know who’s doing what and when.

We are changing providers for our email “blasts” soon, and look forward to improving the design as part of the transition. The simple little weekly Preview email has grown and grown into an unwieldy organism, so we’re re-thinking what content is needed in a weekly email, and how best to deliver longer items, and how to present repeating items without losing readers before they get to the end. We also are thinking about the time it takes to prepare a monthly newsletter, laid out for paper or pdf reading, and wondering if the amount of readership justifies the time used. Anyone out there with communication expertise—or just your own preferences on how you want your church to communicate with you—is welcome to send me suggestions at [admin@albanyuu.org](mailto:admin@albanyuu.org). I look forward to hearing from you.

With staff turnover and temporary positions I had more than my usual amount of human resources work to do this year! Other than general administrative tasks and supervising Tammy, Cameron and Hadiya, I also support the Membership and Stewardship committees and various events during the 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!

For building and grounds maintenance we depend on 30 hours per week of custodian time and the service of many volunteers from the Building & Grounds and Gardening committees. Kudos

to Dave Metz and the B&G crew of many, and Paula Moskowitz (departing chair) and the gardeners who come in all weather to keep us lookin' good outside! The pressure point for custodian time is the winter months when snow removal can cut into time for general cleaning, but once again we've squeaked by snow season.

Volunteers--as always—are a mainstay of everything we do here. I hesitate to thank a few by name when so many of you do so many tasks small or large, seen or unseen, all of which play a role in building our community. Thank you all.

## **Wheel of Life**

### **Joined**

Geoff Abbas, Kristen Abbas, Jessica Bechard, Zachary Cunningham, Susan Cypert, Paul Fisk, Liz Halvorsen, Ken Halvorsen, Don Holmes, Tonya Hotalen, Tom Hotalen, Amie Jamieson, Roger Kessel, Barbara Kessel, Bryant Kuo, Britta Kuo, Tracey Ledder, Kathy Lloyd, Victoria Michael, Megen Murphy, Crystal Papps, Rick Piet, Carole Pink, Matthew Schultz, Nancy Shay, Kelly Smith, Rose Tell-Drake, Robin Tell-Drake, Stacey Thayer, Jon Thayer

### **Died**

Mark Butt, Cathy Perkins, Jan Satin, Michael Sugarman, Robert Thomson, Ramona Weissbard

## **Sheridan Playground Project**

Last November, the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany (Albany UU) celebrated a five-year relationship with Sheridan Preparatory Academy and the accomplishment of a significant goal: the installation of new playground equipment at the school. In early October, more than 60 Albany UU members joined school staff and families and other volunteers to unpack, organize, and assemble the play equipment. For two days, volunteers joined parts, lugged 80-pound bags of concrete mix, mixed concrete and water to stabilize the equipment, raked, picked up trash, and provided lunch and snacks for volunteers. The result was a wonderful new playground and children happily at play.

Our relationship with Sheridan Preparatory Academy, a neighboring inner-city public elementary school, stems from Albany UU's mission to make a difference in the lives of Albany families and is sponsored by the Social Responsibilities Council. Beginning in the fall of 2012, ALBANY UUs have assisted in classrooms, tutored, chaperoned field trips, and provided other assistance.

Each year we meet with Mrs. Gayle, the school principal, to ask how we can help the 450 students at Sheridan. Two years ago, she cited the need for new playground equipment. The original play equipment—well below the standard found in middle-class schools—was recycled from another school and provided few challenges for older children. Our Board of Trustees understood the importance of active play and committed to serving as Sheridan's not-for-profit partner to raise the necessary funds and *pro bono* help to renovate the playground site and provide and erect new playground equipment. Albany UU members formed a committee with Sheridan staff and defined these goals for the new playground: accommodate more students, promote active play, and increase playground safety.



Fundraising began on a Sunday in November 2015, when the congregation dedicated the collection plate to Sheridan. At this service, Mrs. Gayle spoke eloquently about the children's needs—most come from very low-income families, are African American, Hispanic or, increasingly, new immigrants from the Middle East and other countries struggling with war and poverty. Some live in substandard housing and some, at any given time, are homeless.

The congregation responded with overwhelming generosity at this service, contributing over \$9,000. Local and national organizations made significant contributions to the project. In total, the playground committee has raised over \$57,000, in addition to significant *pro bono* help. But the largest source of contributions was our congregation—during the campaign, members and friends donated almost \$21,000 and our endowment trust, \$5,000.

The benefits to the Albany UU community have been tremendous: the project renewed our sense of community and purpose and demonstrated the power of working together to achieve a common goal.

We are continuing our work at Sheridan, both in the classroom and raising funds for additional playground renovations. We are planning another community work day to paint templates on the asphalt for soccer, four-square, and other games. In recognition of the importance of this work to our community, funds for Sheridan are part of the congregation's 2017-2018 budget. The Social Responsibilities Council urges you to help us continue our work to improve the lives of students at Sheridan. You will find this work immensely rewarding.

## **COUNCILS**

### **Program Coordinating Council**

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

**Members:** 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:** 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 2016-17**

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

The Unsung Hero Award, begun in 2005, is awarded to persons who have made significant contributions to the life of the congregation, especially those contributions that have been unheralded or underappreciated by the congregation. Recipients are recognized at a Sunday service with a citation and a token of the congregation's appreciation. This year, PCC awarded the Unsung Hero Award to Barb and Chuck Manning.

PCC has been engaged 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, which was postponed for the fall.

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**

Leah Purcell, Director of Religious Education; David Quist, Religious Education Council Chair

#### **Religious Education Volunteers** (not elected)

**Teaching team members:** Cindee Herrick, Laurie Beberwyck, Rose Tell-Drake, Jessica Rae, Tracie Tilgner, Leah Akins, Britany Orlebeke, Adrienne Mazeau, Sarah Stanwicks, Chuck Manning, Elizabeth Berberian, John Edvalson, Tulin Ture, Terry Way, Vanessa Cayford, Ann Von Linden, Christine Vanderlan, Mary Myers, Linda Hunt, Jim Hutchins, Jan McCracken, Elizabeth Baldes, Elena Reynolds, Geoff Abbas, Lisa Covington, Philomena Moriarty, Tracey Hickey, Mary Fellows, Brian Frank, Jill Peckenpaugh, Winston Hagborg, Christine Carrera, Michael Hornsby, Brian Carr, Eileen Roepe, Marietta Angelotti, Laura Churchill, Lynne Lekakis, Kevin Purcell, John Scaringe, Paula Brewer, Kathy Kelly, Todd Gray, Sheila Gray, Kate Nuding

**Children's Chapel Accompanists:** Karen Greene, Ann Brandon, and Al DeSalvo

**UU Jam Leaders:** Terry Way, Carol Young, Christine Vanderlan, Liz Halverson, Carol Butt and Ed Hancock.

**RE Council Members** (Elected): David Quist (chair), Elizabeth Baldes, Amy Jesaitis, Becky Edvalson, Jim Hutchins, Pam Clements, Neil Rice, Meredith Andrews, Sarah Stanwicks, Mary Fellows, Tulin Ture and Larry Schell.

Meredith Andrews served on the Safe Congregations Response Task Force as the representative of the REC.

There were 101 children and youth enrolled in Sunday school, which is down 18 from last year.

#### **Purpose:**

The Religious Education Council partners with and supports the Director of Religious Education to foster and maintain a religious education program for the children and youth. The Council redefined their mission to create a Guiding Star for Religious Education; the points of the star were

- Community – Give children and youth a place in the congregation; accept families where they are. Be open to the many kinds of Unitarian Universalists.
- Practice Unitarian Universalist Values.
- Offer opportunities for personal and spiritual growth.
- Support action driven by values and learning.

- Foster Unitarian Universalist identity.

### **Accomplishments in 2016-17**

The Council, along with the rest of the congregation, was devastated by the unexpected and tragic death of Mark Butt, who was to have continued his service on the Council this year. His measured and study but humorous and humanitarian perspective continues to be missed by all of us. We are grateful that Mary Fellows agreed to fill out Mark's term. We also acknowledge the 10th anniversary of Leah's service to Albany UU, with joy and gratitude.

The REC members serve as Sunday morning RE Office Assistants to welcome new comers and address contingencies with Sunday school both when Leah is present and when she is attending conferences or has a Sunday off.

The REC planned six multigenerational events: the Halloween Party in October; a Tree Decoration event and New Year's Eve party (at which, in addition to games and other fun activities, the kids packed care kits for the homeless) in December; HUUGGs (Huge UU Greetings and Goodies) packages sent to our recently graduated youth in Feb; Sundae Sunday and Service To Service, both in June. Leah organized and led activities for the annual Picnic in Washington Park in September.

The REC and Leah supported the youth in making a meal for the overflow homeless shelter in March, and volunteering at the Focus Food pantry farm in Altamont in April. REC members volunteered to serve as “liaisons” to the Sunday school groups to help address classroom challenges and celebrate successes.

Leah provided a return of “UU Jams” in January for the elementary groups. This program has multi-age groups and invites adults from the congregation lead a workshop (or Jam) on a topic of their interest or lead the group in activities like yoga. The theme this year was “Prophecy” – looking inside to find what is important and at on our values. She also coordinated RE volunteer support workshops in September and January.

The curricula offered this year:

Red Group (Pre-k) fall and spring: UU Play - stories and activities, free play and learning to be in a group

Orange Group (K/1<sup>st</sup>) fall and spring: Wonderful Welcome from Tapestry of Faith

Yellow Group (2<sup>nd</sup>) fall and spring: Signs of Our Faith; Being a UU Every Day from Tapestry of Faith

Green Group (3<sup>rd</sup>) fall and spring: Moral Tales from Tapestry of Faith

Blue Group (4<sup>th</sup>) fall: Faithful Journeys from Tapestry of Faith; spring: Our Whole Lives

Violet Group (5<sup>th</sup>) fall: Our Whole Lives; spring: Windows and Mirrors from Tapestry of Faith

6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade fall and spring: Neighboring Faiths

8<sup>th</sup> grade fall and spring: Our Whole Lives

Senior High Youth Group fall and spring: sharing, learning, and projects directed by youth with advisors’ support

Leah hired Aaliah Francis to be our nursery/toddler room childcare provider. Aaliah worked with volunteers from the congregation and received high praise for her skills in caring the young children, and in interacting with the volunteers and the parents and caregivers.

The REC and Leah use a lens of anti-oppression to create events and opportunities for children and youth for service work and learning about social justice. Efforts along those lines have been expanded this year to focus on consideration of white privilege and racial justice, particularly in light of public events during the past year. Leah provided support for the adult TeachIn on white supremacy and racism as well as creating a program for the children and youth for the TeachIn. Leah and the REC are continuing to study the issues, locate and adapt age-appropriate curricula, and work to incorporate those issues, and lessons from them, into the RE program as part of the congregation's overall efforts to address social and racial justice. Leah also created a multigenerational learning/service event in January to support the Women's March on Washington.

Leah has continued to align the monthly Soul Matters themes to aspects of the program and work to equip families with tools for faith development at home. The stories in the regular service and Family Chapel were on the theme as were the UU's in Action Sundays. Leah used the theme of the month to curate materials for families to use at home: table blessings, projects, meditations, and story collections. These were publicized on her blog, which was linked to Face Book and emails and also in Leah's weekly printed newsletters, *The Sunday Sparkler*. The monthly themes were also inspiration for the 3 interactive bulletin boards Leah created each month. In June, Leah created "take home" boxes for families with activities for families for the summer.

Leah has been fully participating, to the benefit of RE and Albany UU, in her role as a member of the Board of the Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA), to which she was elected last year. This is an association of US and Canadian Unitarian Universalist Religious Educators. Her portfolio addresses religious educators' professional development. Leah liaisons with committees from the UUA to support trainings; supports the RE credentialing program; she's on a task force on the shared ministry with ministers, religious educators; and she addresses other opportunities and challenges that arise for DRE's and other religious educators. The REC supports Leah and helps cover for her when she's away at LREDA meetings in the spring and fall. Leah also serves as a mentor in the RE credentialing program. Leah's involvement has been particularly valuable because she could easily exchange ideas and curricula to address the many difficult issues highlighted during the past year.

Leah acted in leadership roles to support the congregation. She joined the Inclusivity Team, the UU Connections Committee and the Congregational Covenant Committee. She also serves on the Safe Congregation Response Team.

### **Social Responsibilities Council**

**Chairperson:** Jean Poppei

**Members:** Carol Butt, Karen Kaufmann, Matt Lesniak, Annie Metzger, Laura Paris, Elena Reynolds. Appointees for 2016-17: Ed Hancock, Thayer Heath and Robb Smith

**Purpose:** According to the Albany UU Bylaws: The Council [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 consistent with the policies and positions of the Society, the St. Lawrence District, or the Unitarian Universalist Association. The Council may initiate and promote activities consistent with these statements."

### **Accomplishments:**

**Sheridan Playground Project:** For two years, Albany UU has been actively engaged in fund-raising in partnership with Sheridan Preparatory Academy (Sheridan Prep), a public elementary

school that serves a high number of financially-challenged families, to build a new playground. Their existing playground was highly inadequate and even dangerous but the school district does not fund them, leaving it to school PTAs. Things moved quickly in the fall once we learned we had nearly enough funds and the planning committee (Sheridan Prep staff and AlbanyUU volunteers) made their dream playground choice. Installation, helped along with a bridge loan from Albany UU, occurred in October over a two-day period with lots of Albany UU volunteers. The new playground is such an improvement, although we're hoping for a bit more fund-raising to provide some fun add-ons.

**Focus Food Pantry: Carol Butt, facilitator** On the fourth Sunday of the month (usually) we ask for donations for the Focus Food Pantry (FFP). We are considered a faith affiliate of the FFP. From the FFP website: "The FOCUS feeding programs – FOCUS Interfaith Food Pantry, Breakfast Express, and FOCUS Winter Breakfast – are our primary efforts in an endeavor to help those in need by providing our community with good, nutritious food and hospitality. Along with food, FOCUS is intentional in balancing labors of charity with acts of justice by participating in the work of seeking long term solutions to end hunger and poverty." FFP mission statement: "Six covenant churches, four faith affiliates, and two faith partners, doing together what we cannot do alone. United in a common calling to respond to our neighbor's needs in the city of Albany and beyond..." From September through April 2nd, we have collected a total of \$4635.25 with an average of \$773 per collection. We have two more anticipated before the end of the church year. In addition, various Albany UU congregants volunteer in the FFP programs. A special shout-out to Patty Burch (former SRC member) who organizes and acts as chief chef for our donations of biweekly meals during the winter months to the Overflow Homeless Shelter.

**Give-Away-the-Plate: Karen Kaufmann, facilitator** The Albany UU Board has authorized SRC to donate the Sunday collection (offering) for worthy groups in the Albany area who have (usually) submitted applications. This year, the Baby Institute (\$1,393), UHPP (Christmas Eve contribution \$886), Refugee and Immigrant Support Services of Emmaus (\$1,623.24) and Capital Roots (\$1132) were our beneficiaries. Also, Albany UU congregants contributed \$700 through Guest at Our Table to the UU Service Committee.

**Room Donations: Laura Paris, facilitator** SRC has been authorized by the BOT to make up to thirteen facilities donations for the 2016-17 church year to organizations with limited funds and worthy cause. We focus on: making a difference in the lives of children and families in the city of Albany; becoming a leader in sustainable environmental practices; advocating for public policies that are in line with our UU values and principles. We have donated space to: Mental Health Empowerment (a series of 9 meetings during July and August); Solarize Albany; Albany Peace Project; Capital District Showing Up for Racial Justice; Jail Justice; Capital District Against Islamophobia; Black Lives Matter of Upstate NY; Women's March Huddles; Advocacy training for prison justice; and, In Our Own Voices.

**SRC Fair Trade Table:** A fervent thank you to Ann Kearney for past table hosting and currently, to Thayer Heath—sales person extraordinaire. Coffee, cocoa, chocolate (mmm), adorable stuffed animals, clothing, and more—available for purchase, funding both those who have made/grown/constructed the products as well as supporting the work of SRC and Green Sanctuary. Social Justice information and petitions for signatures often appear on the Table as well.

**Forums:** Across the year, sometimes after church service and sometimes at potlucks, SRC presents opportunities for learning about social justice issues. This church year we held forums

on: Islamophobia; End-of-Life choices; Single Payer Health Care (movie: *Fix It*); Immigration and Sanctuary Church movement (with Joe Paporone from the Focus Churches) Humanize, not Militarize (art show and movie about Syrian refugee camp in Jordan: *After Spring*). In addition, Green Sanctuary presented a number of forums on: Influencing state legislation on climate change and climate justice; community solarizing; movie *Before the Flood*; and others.

**Signatory:** From time to time, we are given the opportunity to sign on social justice petitions, Declarations (such as the UUA Declaration of Conscience), and letters. As with Give-away-the-plate and Room donations, the membership (elected and appointed members) vote as to whether to support, with a simple majority as a requirement.

**Vigils, marches, protests:** We have tried to inform the congregation about social justice actions such as Moral Mondays at the Legislature, advocacy training for lobby days, gatherings such as Capital District Showing Up for Racial Justice, Capital District Against Islamophobia, and Peace marches, often in partnership with other faiths and organizations like Capital Area Against Mass Incarceration or The New Sanctuary Movement.

**Direct Service:** Sheridan Prep, RISSE, Focus Food Pantry, cooking for the Overflow Homeless Shelter at AlbanyUU provide opportunities for volunteer work that is rewarding and growth producing. We also have sponsored collections across the year—for example, for the Simple Day of Giving in October, and warm blankets and clothing drives in the winter.

**Plans for next year:** This is my third and final year as Chair of SRC, although I will be staying on as a regular member. We generally have a planning session in the late summer so I can't say exactly what our agenda will be but I anticipate we will continue our investigation of what it would mean to be a Sanctuary Congregation, as well as supporting efforts to combat racism, challenge white privilege, support immigrants and refugees, resist economic, political and social inequality and work toward a just community for all.

## 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 2016-17:** 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 Emerson Community Hall. Worked with the Looking Forward Campaign and Endowment Trust to refinance the new mortgage. Incorporated Building Fund accounts, Looking Forward pledges and payments, a new short term Endowment Trust

bridge loan, an anticipated \$22,000 gift from the Stott Lounge account, and Albany UU Notes to reduce the amount of external mortgage funding to \$142,000, This represents an 83% reduction in our outside liabilities. Continued discussions with the Board of Trustees about the optimum way to refinance the mortgage. Worked with our bank to refinance the mortgage.

Monitored ongoing financial activities and cash flow.

Presented to the Board of Trustees information on the 2017 refinancing of the mortgage and various options for accomplishing this without compromising the financial health of the Society.

Worked with the Personnel Committee to develop a 2017-18 budget proposal that increases our custodians over the \$15/hour minimum as well as an increase in salary to our other employees that reflects their years of service and expertise in their roles.

Worked with the Looking Forward Committee regarding promissory notes sold to members.

Plans for next year:

As preached and practiced over many past years, continue to carefully monitor the financial health of Albany UU. Monitor cash flow and make adjustments to the budget as necessary.

The Finance Committee will take over responsibility for the ongoing administration of the promissory notes.

We will also work closely with the Board 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 has been very active this year. Our objective is to grow our congregation by welcoming visitors more effectively, creating better connections for new members and working to try to prevent members from drifting away. 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 a an Albany UU ambassador.

We have been working to improve our Getting to Know Unitarian Universalism (GTKUU) sessions to give potential members a better understanding of Unitarian Universalism and Albany UU based upon feedback from participants this year.

### **This year's numbers:**

--We offered four newcomer orientations "Getting to Know UU" on Saturday mornings. The 2 Fall sessions in October and December last year as well as the March 2017 session welcomed 32 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 will be offering one more session in early May 2017.

--We certified (with the UUA) 369 members on January 1, 2016 and January 1 2017 we certified 371. In 2016 we added 16 new members and as of May 1 this year we have added 13 new members. The next six months is looking bright.

We will have had three New Member Recognition Sunday services as of May 21, 2017 for this fiscal year. At these services, we recognize the new members who have signed the Membership Book since the last New Member Recognition Sunday and after the service we have had a reception in the back of Emerson to honor the new members.

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.

Lastly, we want to acknowledge Don Odell who has been a member of the Membership Committee for many years. Don has decided to step down from this role and move on to other volunteer opportunities at Albany UU. Thank you, Don, for your many years of hard work on this committee!

### **Nominating Committee**

**Chairpersons:** Sandy Stone, Molly Daniels

**Members:** Bob Franklin, Mary Myers, Kathy Hodges, Meredith Mercer

In accordance with Articles VIII and IX of Albany UU’s Bylaws, 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 (6)
- Religious Education Council members (8-12)
- Social Responsibilities Council members (6)
- Nominating Committee members (6)
- Endowment Trust trustees (5)

All candidates for elective offices, contested and non-contested, must be active members of the Society for at least 30 days, and their pledge should not be in arrears. Endowment Trust candidates must be active members for at least three years. Also in accordance with our Bylaws, no individual may hold more than one elected position at a time with the exception of membership on a Ministerial Search Committee.

Subsequent to last year’s by-laws changes, the only contested election is for Nominating and the petition process was eliminated. This year we received several self-nominations for un-contested positions.

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, notice is given to the congregation in a Windows article, and the members of the committee are identified by their green buttons they wear while at Sunday service. The committee strives to achieve a diverse slate of candidates that represents the broad spectrum of our congregation.



Potential candidates learn about the responsibilities of elected positions, prior to accepting a nomination, via duties descriptions. These duties descriptions are reviewed for accuracy to ensure they accurately reflect any changes in responsibilities and/or time commitments.

Matching personal interests and abilities with opportunities for growth and development in our Society is an underlying theme of the candidate selection process.

Prior to the Annual Meeting, the committee compiles biographical statements and photos to inform the congregation about candidate qualifications and to encourage participation in the election process. Candidates are encouraged to include in their bios the reasons why they would like the opportunity to serve in the nominated positions. We also post the names and pictures of the candidates in the church lobby. The meet-and-greet the candidates was a welcomed event last year and will continue this year so that members can meet the potential candidates, ask questions, and familiarize the candidates with the election process.

The elections are held as part of the Annual Meeting in May.

The Nominating Committee wishes to thank all of those members who are continuing to serve in their positions for next year, and all those new candidates who have agreed to run and serve in leadership roles. The time and talent of these members benefits us all and helps keep our congregation a vital and nurturing religious community. Thank you.

## **Personnel Committee**

**Chairperson:** Linda Hunt

**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:** Music Director Matt Edwards resigned his position effective the last week in September, 2016, to accept a position very near his home in Bennington, Vermont. Randy Rosette, Chris Jensen and Ann Brandon offered their respective administrative, choral director and accompanist services to keep our music program running through December 2016. St. Rose College music faculty member, Kathleen Bawel, has served as interim Music Director since February, 2017. The Music Director Search Committee has interviewed several candidates, but has found no candidate willing to accept the permanent Music Director position as of this writing.

**Accomplishments:** One major task of the committee each year is to propose staff salaries to the Finance Committee. The Committee's proposal attempted to be both fair to our employees and control costs since long term employees have reached the midpoint of the UUA guidelines, and to assure that everyone be paid at least 15 dollars per hour. UUA guidelines are based on principles of fair compensation, regional, demographic and other characteristics; they provide goals for our salary structures. The Personnel Committee also considers staff performance in making salary proposals. We met our goal to reach the UUA guideline for contributions to retirement in two years. We increased our contribution to 9% in 2016, and increased it again to 10% in this year's budget. We continue to believe that we are making good progress toward achieving fair compensation concerning staff salaries.

A further accomplishment was to continue to meet jointly with the Finance Committee to discuss the proposal we had submitted for staff salaries. Lastly, the Committee began a timely review and revision of the 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 the timely review and revision of the Personnel Manual.

## **SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

### **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 your 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:** Michelle Desrosiers, Anne Marie Haber, Karen Kaufmann, Lee Newberg, Leah Purcell, Deborah Vogel, Ann Von Linden, Sam Trumbore, Jacqui Williams

**Purpose:** Last fall, the Board of Trustees began a discussion prioritizing the need for Albany UU to ensure that all individuals within our community feel welcome, seen, and heard. The Board also acknowledged the need to take real proactive steps towards reaching this goal so that all who enter as visitor or member, feel that their unique differences are received, respected, appreciated, and recognized as a source of strength for our greater Albany UU community.

To that end, a team was authorized, with co-chairs identified, and subsequently tasked with designing and implementing a two-pronged approach for addressing inclusivity generally, and systemic racism and white privilege, specifically at Albany UU. In order to make daily life at Albany UU more inclusive, the Inclusivity Team will work to 1) elevate the discussion, introspection and understanding within our community regarding privilege, generally, and white privilege, specifically, and to 2) evaluate Albany UU policies, programming, practices, assumptions, and attitudes, and make recommendations concerning inclusivity, diversity, and potential barriers to participation.

**Accomplishments:** Outreach was conducted to potential participants for the Inclusivity Team. We held our first meeting in January, and have met monthly since. Members of the team met with the Religious Services committee to submit a proposal for offering a Sunday Service in the

fall, and planning has commenced on that. In addition to creating a plan for launching this initiative and establishing smaller action groups for accomplishing specific elements of same, the Inclusivity Team helped to plan and implement the White Supremacy Teach-in on May 7<sup>th</sup> Albany UU.

**Plans for next year:** The Inclusivity Team will conduct an Inclusivity Worship Service in October 2017, with the goal of bringing the insights and experience of those who have been involved in anti-racism work to the congregation, providing the opportunity for the congregation to consider their personal experiences in the context of a dominant white culture, and working toward the ongoing facilitation of the ministry of the congregation in anti-racism work.

Activities planned to ensure that the values of inclusivity permeate our ministry at Albany UU include:

- Creating an Inclusivity Resource Tool for committees, councils and staff to use to evaluate their activities and inform their decision-making,
- Conduct a review of Albany UU's policies and practices,
- Congregational Reads using books focusing on inclusivity and/or anti-racism,
- Expanded communications & messaging in Windows, Thursday Preview and Orders of Service, focusing on inclusivity and/or anti-racism,
- Create clearinghouse of information and resources for congregational access,
- Offer Lifespan Learning courses focusing on inclusivity and/or anti-racism,
- Enhance Sunday services on an ongoing basis with inclusivity and/or anti-racism messaging,
- Movie nights and discussion focusing on inclusivity and/or anti-racism

## **VOLUNTEER POSITIONS**

### **Childcare Coordinator**

Paula Brewer

**Members:** Childcare Providers, Albany UU Youth aged 13+

**Purpose:** Provide childcare for Albany UU congregational events

**Accomplishments in 2016-17:**

- 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.
- Childcare provided for Getting to Know UU sessions.
- Childcare provided for nominating committee events.

**Plans for next year:**

- Continue to provide for Albany UU congregational events
- Evaluate pay provided, \$10 per hour, as a raise to \$15 per hour was needed secure childcare providers for the annual dinner.

## **Interfaith Impact of New York State (IINYS) Liaison**

**Liaison:** Don Odell

**Members:** Albany UU is a member of IINYS. Albany UU members Robb Smith serves as executive director of IINYS, Don Odell is secretary of IINYS, and Board members of IINYS include Rev. Sam Trumbore and Larry Gambino.

**Purpose:** Interfaith Impact is recognized as the progressive religious voice for justice and human rights in the NYS Legislature and the Executive Chamber. IINYS is comprised of Unitarian Universalist, Protestant, and Reform Jewish congregations and individuals throughout the state.

**Accomplishments:** Interfaith Impact annual advocacy day was on May 1, 2017. Its positions approved by the Board included: Environmental Justice (Climate and Community Protection Act, all clean energy by 2032, and a NY Constitutional right to clean air and water and a healthy environment); New York Health Act--the state universal, "Improved Medicare for All" single-payer health care bill; and Humane Alternatives to Long Term (HALT) Solitary Confinement--Black Lives Matter. Several members of Albany UU participated in this effort.

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

**Plans for next year:** As a coalition of liberal religious groups, we will participate with interest groups as best serves our advocacy. With the opposition of powerful interest groups in areas of progressive concern, our voice is even more important so that the gains of recent years are not lost, and so that we can continue to provide a liberal religious voice in the halls of State government. Information on these and other issues are available on our web site at [www.interfaithimpactnys.org](http://www.interfaithimpactnys.org).

We are also exploring ways to more fully involve Unitarian Universalist congregations in New York State.

The IINYS Board anticipates an annual retreat in August. It is there that we will prepare our overall plans for the next year.

The strength of IINYS in its membership, institutional and individual. We appreciate the continued support of FUUSA as religious organization, and hope that it can continue. We also urge individual members to join. Visit our web site [www.interfaithimpactnys.org](http://www.interfaithimpactnys.org).

## **Receptions**

**Coordinators:** Eileen Hoffman, Barb Manning, Sandy Stone

For many years, this report on Receptions has been written by Jan Satin, our illustrious Reception Coordinator. As many of you know, Jan died early this spring. Prior to that Jan coordinated a number of receptions during the 2016-17 church year – all of them were memorial services. She leaves very large shoes to fill and so we are looking at a different approach to coordinating receptions.

The plan is to share Reception Coordinator duties by having a minimum of three people each taking a couple of months during the year to be the “Lead Coordinator”. The Lead Coordinator will be the contact between Rev. Sam, the church office (Amy Lent or Tammy Hathaway) and

the family to see that their wishes are fulfilled. Our other reception volunteers and church community complete the committee with their generous gifts of food and kitchen help on those occasions.

We would be happy to have more people willing to be Lead Coordinators, so if you would like to join us in that role, please reach out to any one of us listed below or Amy Lent to discuss the plan.

The Christmas Eve reception this past December was ably coordinated by Michaela Pochily and Betsey Kuzia. Currently the Christmas Eve reception is coordinated by volunteers other than the Reception Coordinator(s) and has had various volunteers set up and clean up for this. We will be looking for volunteers again near the holiday time.

Jan will be dearly missed by us all, but we will do our best to meet the needs of our community.

## **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 7, 2017 at the Franklin Terrace in Troy, NY. One hundred and thirty-six Albany UUs and their guests were in attendance. A social hour was held, followed by dinner. The evening's MC was Charlie Poltenson. Congregation President Dick Dana welcomed everyone. The traditional recognition of member anniversaries was given by Meredith Andrews (contrary to what the program said). A Stewardship update was given by Chair Chuck Manning. The skit this year was titled "Harry Posture and the Rehearsal of Uncertainty" and was followed by dancing.

The skit cast consisted of: Pam Crane, Bob Franklin, Kathy Harris, Linda Hunt, Chris Jensen, Julie Lomoe, Dave MacLeod, Debbie Reep MacLeod, Barb Metz, Dave Metz, Sigrin Newell, Charlie Poltenson, and Randy Rosette.

### **Building & Grounds**

**Chairperson:** Dave Metz

**Members:** Reese Satin, Dave Stone, Mike Babala, Jack Heinsohn, Amy Lent, Eric Beeche, Betsey Miller, Charles Poltenson

**Purpose:** To improve and maintain FUUSA's physical facilities, buildings and grounds.

#### **Accomplishments**

- Replaced with LEDs all exterior lights, the stairways and second floor hallway in the RE building, and all of the remaining RE classrooms
- 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.

- Paint all peeling window sills.
- Replace 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**

**Chairperson:** Eileen Hoffman

**Members:** Amy Lent, Ann Lapinski, Barbara Manning, Betsey Kuzia, Betsy Wright, Bobbi Place, Deb Grier, Eileen Hoffman, Judy Hanson, Kathy Hodges, Leah Purcell, Linda Way, Mary Ann Randall, Michaela Pochily, Pam Crane, Sam Trumbore, Sandy Stone, Sharon Babala, Tammy Hathaway, Trish Zima, Andrea Ricard, Bruce Rodgers, Ellen Chernoff, and Linda English. New members this year are: Arlene Gilbert, Kathy Harris, Laura Cayford, and Karen Luisa Smith.

**Purpose:** To provide support and encouragement to Albany UU members who, due to hospitalization, sickness, loss, isolation, etc. need help on a short term basis. Services might include transportation to medical appointments when not available from other sources, meals and shopping during recovery, friendly visiting to name a few services. Additionally, one member publishes the "Joys and Concerns" column for the newsletter each month. Laura Cayford also assumes the responsibility of sending cards for various occasions in behalf of the Caring Network.

**Acknowledgement:** It is with great sadness that we share the loss of one of our long time members, Jan Satin. Jan was always ready to help in any way she could. She'll be a tough act to follow and we will miss her contributions greatly.

**Accomplishments:** Approximately 48 people (both single times and multiple times) have been helped in some way by this group of very responsive and caring individuals. Some requests were received that did not fit with the goals of the committee and were dealt with in other ways (outside resources, Pastoral Care etc). One very important request has been to transport members who are no longer able to drive. While the Network will not be able to take on this duty regularly we are looking toward making appeals to the broader congregation members. The responsibility for the annual Valentine flower delivery was a shared responsibility this year and was again well received. Our December holiday cookie delivery occurred for the third year and was again well received by the members who live in congregate care facilities and private homes.

**Plans:** Maintain goals for next year and continue to seek out volunteers, especially those who are willing and able to drive. We have many people who are not CN members who continue to help out with driving, checking in on members who might not have much contact anymore with the congregation due to inability to drive, or who have relocated. We honor their service and diligence to our congregation. We will seek to investigate ways to transport members of our congregation who are no longer able to drive to service themselves. Some of our members noted the short term need for adaptive devices – wheel chairs, walkers, commode chairs, etc. A collection of these items will be kept in a member's home.

## **Flower Committee**

**Chairperson:** Sandy Stone

**Flower arrangers:** Dorry Campano, Ellen Chernoff, Lorraine Blanchfield, Barb Manning, Barb Metz, 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 seven of our Albany UU members who passed away.

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

### **Albany UU Goods and Services Auction**

**Planning Committee:** Bob and Trish Zima, Randy Rosette, Chris Jensen, Linda Hunt, Kathy Harris, Barb and Dave Metz, Dave MacLeod and Debbie Reep MacLeod, Pat Bailey, Sharon Babala, Paula and Steve Moskowitz, Elizabeth Berberian, Dorry Campano, and John Walko.

In addition, Frank Woods, Peter Brown, Deb Vogel, Deb Rodriguez, Chuck Manning, and Jon Newell 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 food sampling, socializing, raffles, 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 18, 2017 with a theme of Wild West Auction. There were 107 total items up for bid as both live and fixed price auction. These were donated by 65 *households*, including 11 **new** donor households! About 81 people attended the live auction, and others participated by putting their slip in the fixed price envelopes beforehand. 101 people/households participated in bidding, with prices ranging from \$4 to \$500, with a total of over \$23,000 raised. The committee re-introduced a silent auction section, which displayed a number of attractive “hard” goods and art, and allowed bidding on these items throughout the evening. Over the course of a year, the auction committee planned for this event through a series of committee and subcommittee meetings.

**Plans for next year:** The next auction will be held on March 17, 2018. Offers to join the committee and assist can be made to one of the committee members or the chair, Randy Rosette 783-2637.

### **Holiday Bazaar 2016**

**Planning Committee:** Jan Satin, Barbara Metz, Sigrin Newell, Randy Rosette, Karen Kaufmann. In addition, both Albany UU members and outside vendors brought their crafts for



sale, and many members and family helped with the sales on the day of the bazaar and several Sundays after.

**Purpose of group:** FUNdraising for Albany UU while sharing the products of our creativity and crafting skills.

**Accomplishments:** The second ‘reduced size’ 2016 bazaar consisted of several parts. Thirteen crafters made items such as hats and scarves, catnip mice, jewelry and other small gift items. Sixteen people helped to make soups. Lots of people came on Election day to peel apples and assemble the pies after Jan Satin and friends made all the crusts. . After the initial bazaar, we continued to sell ‘leftovers’ for several Sundays.

Each of the three major sections: crafts, soups, and pies/jams brought in a little over \$1000.

Vendors were recruited to set up tables to sell their own work. We targeted FUUSA members, rather than trying to bring in outsiders. Vendors paid 10% of what they earned. We brought in about \$250 from vendors

Jan Satin’s leadership in making 90 pies will be deeply missed, but fortunately, she passed on her recipe and skills to others who will carry on the tradition in years to come.

**Total \$ 3,439.70.**

**Plans for next year:** The planning committee will meet in the next few months and decide whether to continue operating the bazaar.

## **Guided Wine & Cheese Tasting FUNdraiser**

**Chairperson:** Al Berzinis

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

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

**Accomplishments:** This year’s theme was an “Adriatic-Aegean Adventure”, sampling the wines and cheeses of ancient Greece as well as other countries in the eastern Mediterranean such as Croatia, Macedonia and Israel. Attendance was around 60 people, including about a dozen first-timers. All had a very good time, and we raised \$1,126 for Albany UU! Based on the level of interest shown we will 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 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Guided Wine & Cheese Tasting scheduled for Saturday, February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2018 from 7-9 PM. A theme will be determined by our dedicated team of Wineaux sometime around the end of the year, and we invite anyone interested to help in the research and preparations.

## **Gardening**

**Chair:** Paula Moskowitz, 2016-January, 2017; Donna Meixner, commencing February, 2017

**Members:** Many dedicated volunteers who help once or multiple times over the growing season. You will recognize them by their dirty fingernails!

**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 maintained despite challenging weather conditions over the summer months with a resultant continuation of blooms from late April through mid-October.

At the beginning of 2017, members met to discuss a reorganization plan and desired garden enhancements. Specific committee tasks were identified and a leadership team led by Donna Meixner, assisted by Deborah Vogel, Jennifer Thomas, Dorry Campano, Cassie and Vic Artale, and Carol Young was established.

**Plans for next year:**

- Improve three of the gardens and thoroughly mulch all five gardens.
- Develop a Gardening e-Group for posting and sharing information on weekly garden accomplishments and tasks to be done.
- Tackle weeds and rubbish under the hedges along the sidewalk in the triangle area in front of the Sanctuary. Mulch if feasible.
- Develop a long-term plan for the hedges - can we improve the appearance of this area by removing the hedges? If so, develop a replacement plan.

## **History & Archives**

**Chair:** Patricia Bailey

**Members:** Cindy Dean

**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 many of the boxes and articles stored in the Archives as well new items donated by members to maintain only one copy of those 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 explore 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 2017-2018 we hope to continue to reorganize the storage for easier access to many documents and files. We hope to examine additional storage boxes for materials that need to be filed or distributed to other locations.

We gratefully accept archival items for safekeeping and we especially appreciate having dates, including the year and names (especially in photographs) and, if appropriate, the name of the person donating the items. Thank you to those who continue to help preserve our story.

## **Charles R. Joy Library**

**Co-Chairs:** Sally Knapp and Arnold Patashnick

**Members:** Ann D'Attilio, Pamela Crane were members in 2015-2016. We don't know whether they wish to continue.

**Purpose:** The Library supports the mission of the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany, and selectively collects and facilitates 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. The library also holds non-circulating collections of art books and antiquarian books on Unitarian Universalist history.

**Accomplishments in 2016-17:** The unfinished work of last year was the re-shelving of books made possible by the new bookcase acquired the previous year. This work remains unfinished. We planned to work on many as-yet-un-cataloged books in the lower cabinets and in boxes and non-print materials and pamphlets but did not accomplish that either. We continued to acquire some books in support of the Library's mission in 2016, but health and other issues have prevented us from fulfilling our obligations in 2017.

**Books:** Total holdings = 1,481 books as of May 9, 2017, an increase of 10 over 1471 this time last year.

**Circulation:** Our rough estimate is that approximately 40 books were borrowed from July 1, 2016. To April 30, 2017.

**Budget:** As of May 10, 2017 Joy Library had spent \$174.82 (43.70 %) of our total budget of \$ 400.

**Joy Library Notes** appeared in columns in Mid-Summer, September, October, November 2016 issues of Windows.

Some of the titles added in 2016-17 are listed below:

**The Third Reconstruction: Moral Mondays, Fusion Politics, and the Rise of a New Justice Movement**, by The Rev. Dr. William Barber II and Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, (the UUA "common read")

**From Black Lives Matter to Black Liberation** by Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor

**Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis**, by J. D. Vance

**The Plot to Hack America: How Putin's Cyberspies and Wikileaks Tried to Steal the 2016 Election...** by Malcolm Nance

**The Making of Donald Trump** by David Cay Johnston

**Strangers in Their Own Land : Anger And Mourning on the American Right** by Arlie Russell Hochschild

**Winter is Coming: Why Vladimir Putin and the Enemies of the Free World Must Be Stopped** by Garry Kasparov

**The Great Spiritual Migration: How the World's Largest Religion Is Seeking a Better Way to Be Christian** by Brian McLaren.

**Plans for next year:** We had hoped that our rather rough circulation figures might be made more accurate by the addition to our present LibraryThing online catalog of a new circulation system being offered by the same source and built on existing records.. We investigated “Tiny Cat” “an online system for small libraries” which includes a circulation system but also charges a small monthly fee. It would require someone to type the borrower’s name and dates and would restrict borrowing to times when such a person would be available. It seems to us that our “honor system” which allows anyone to borrow books at anytime is better suited to our needs.

With the addition of the new double bookcase, we still need to re-shelve much of the collection and to address the problem of managing non-print materials, pamphlets and the historical collection.

I hope to get a picture of Charles R. Joy, for whom the library was named, to hang with a brief bio in the Library/Stott Lounge. Maybe next year I will find time to do that.

Arnold and I feel we can no longer continue to run the Joy Library, which we have done since 2009. It has been difficult for us to get out Sunday mornings, especially this winter. I cataloged and wrote Windows notes for about half a dozen books even now, need book pockets and covers and to be brought to the Library.

We recently met with Dick Dana to discuss some ideas for future planning for the Library. We would still like to be involved with the library but to have someone else chair the committee. We would be willing to help out with some of the work.

The tasks involved in running the library could be delegated to committee members and I have listed below the operations we have performed. The jobs involved include: Selection; Ordering; Cataloging, de-cataloging and removing titles from online catalog; Processing: putting covers on books, pasting pockets in books, making cards for pockets; Delivering books to Library; Putting books on library display or shelf; Recording books checked out and returned ; Shelving, putting books in order; Weeding; Collecting statistics, writing budget requests and annual reports; Preparing publicity and instructional materials; Liaison between the Library and the rest of Albany UU.

We will complete job descriptions to help recruit volunteers.

### **Lifespan Learning Committee**

**Chairperson:** Paula Brewer

**Members:** Sam Trumbore, Don Odell, Mary Applegate

## **Purpose**

The lifespan learning program provides opportunities for members and friends at Albany UU to learn, grow, and develop in faith, spirit, and action. The function of the committee is evolving from its role in creating learning activities to one that supports learning events for adults in our congregation. Lifespan Learning ensures that these events support Unitarian values and principles including UU history and heritage, UU identity, world religions, spiritual practices, compassionate communication, anti-oppression, end-of-life issues, and leadership. Lifespan Learning also works with program presenters to assist in promoting their program and program logistics, e.g. scheduling, room availability, audio-visual needs, etc.

**Accomplishments:** The following programs were offered under this year's "umbrella" of Lifespan Learning.

--**Wellspring:** Wellspring program focused on spiritual practices, a 9-month program facilitated by Sharon Babala and Jan McCracken, with 8 participants

--**Nonviolent Communication:** 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 in three sessions with 16 participants and 3 facilitators.

A Practice Group was held for ten sessions (20 hours) with a consistent group of 10 - 15 people attending.

Nonviolent communication trainings and activities bring in people from the community, which creates opportunity for more awareness and appreciation for Albany UU.

Another related activity to nonviolent communication that received support from the congregation is Family HEART Camp at Unirondack. Two families from Albany UU attended in the summer of 2016, along with Jan McCracken, Philomena Moriarty, Leah Purcell, Steve Andersen, and Rev. Sam. The Nigel Wright Peace Fund supported the families with scholarship funds.

A Family Fun Night is planned to be held in May at Albany UU with the help of the two families who received the scholarship money last year, and Leah Purcell representing the RE program. The program provides a "taste" of Family HEART Camp and information for families and individuals who may be considering attending. (Event in planning stage as of this writing - to happen on May 12.)

--**The Third Reconstruction: Moral Mondays, Fusion Politics and the rise of a New Justice Movement**— Over three sessions, Rev. Sam Trumbore and Paula Brewer facilitated over 4-sessions the UU Common Read discussion of Rev. Dr. William Barber II's and Johnathan Wilson-Hartgrove's book of how Rev. Barber and allies as diverse as progressive Christians, union members, and immigration-rights activists came together to build a coalition. Dr. Barber offers a trenchant analysis of race-based inequality and a hopeful message for a nation grappling with persistent racial and economic injustice; especially how we as Unitarian Universalists can facilitate this third reconstruction in our communities.

--**All Sides Considered:** Jim Schlembach continued this successful discussion group twice each month. The focus of the group is to share perspectives on the news of the day with emphasis on respecting and learning from the various viewpoints that may arise.

--**Women in Islam** Program presented by Fazana Saleem-Ismail, a muslim woman dedicated to educating persons about Islam and the role of women in Islam. She addressed: historical context of women in Islam; how Muslim women are regarded and supposed to be treated in Islam; current Muslim women leaders and their achievements.

--**Meaning Matters:** Rev. Sam continued this monthly growth and development program using small group format.

--**Exploring the Bible, the Dickinson Series** Rev. Sam and Karen Greene facilitated this 2-part series study of the Old Testament and the New Testament in the fall of 2016 and spring of 2017, respectively; both multi-session offerings were well attended by members.

--**Congregational Potluck and viewing of: ‘Defying the Nazis: the Sharp’s War’**, an account of a daring rescue mission that occurred on the precipice of World War II. It tells the story of Waitstill & Martha Sharp, a Unitarian minister and his wife from Wellesley, Massachusetts, who left their children behind in the care of their parish and boldly committed to multiple life-threatening missions in Europe. Over two dangerous years they helped to save hundreds of imperiled political dissidents and Jewish refugees fleeing the Nazi occupation across Europe. Lifespan Learning coordinated this potluck dinner with a viewing of this documentary to 20+ Albany UU members.

--**Mindful Living for Health and Wellbeing** Dr. Bruce McEwen is a retired biochemist and a certified yoga instructor teaching yoga for the past 20 years presented this 2-hour introductory to mindfulness meditation, healthy eating, physical exercise, and simple yoga poses. These core elements of the lifestyle approach have helped many maintain physical health and a general sense of well-being even during challenging times.

A full-day workshop is planned for June 2017 with Dr. McEwen.

**Plans for next year:** As our congregation changes, we feel that Lifespan Learning should continue to provide a clearinghouse for learning events proposed by members and non-members of Albany UU to ensure that learning events support Unitarian values and principles including UU history and heritage, UU identity, world religions, spiritual practices, compassionate communication, anti-oppression, end-of-life issues, and leadership. Therefore, Lifespan Learning may become an ad-hoc committee meeting only when needed to evaluate appropriateness of proposed learning event and assist program presenters to assist in promoting their program and program logistics, e.g. scheduling, room availability, audio-visual needs, etc. As we look to the future we feel that adult education programming will continue with Rev. Sam providing programs of interest and Jan McCracken and others leading Non-Violent Communication workshops and practice sessions. The current Lifespan Learning Chair also has an interest in leading UUA Common Read program with a co-facilitator. The committee feels that there needs to be a process for reviewing other programs that congregational members and non-members propose to ensure that they meet with Lifespan Learning goal of providing programs that support UU principals and values. As this is a change from how Lifespan Learning has operated currently, we hope to have a recommended plan on how to address this by the end of our fiscal year. Please note that the current Chair, Paula Brewer, is resigning as of September 2017.

### **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, Russ Myer, Don Odell, Darnell Rohrbaugh, Randy Rosette, Sam Trumbore

**Purpose:** To maintain an active relationship with FUUSA's partner church in Szökefalva, Romania.

**Accomplishments:** Albany UU was host to three visitors from our partner church in Romania. Tünde Szasz is the minister at the Szökefalva church. Ami Mátyás and Csaba Losonczi both grew up in the village, but now live and work in Koloszvar/Cluj. All three were delightful guests. They were young and energetic, eager to do and see as much as possible in their 12 days here. The Albany church paid for their transportation and expenses. They stayed with members of the congregation.

As a follow-up to their visit, we had planned to visit to the partner church in Szökefalva in August, 2017. This trip was cancelled in April. The principal reason for the cancellation was that so many who were interested in going had significant conflicts and could not go this year. When the group dwindled to only four, the trip was cancelled with the hope of rescheduling it for another year.

Consistent with the past few years, part of the minister's salary was supported by the partner Church budget.

### **Publicity Committee**

**Chairperson: Patti Jo Newell**

**Members:** Cate Bohn, Bob Franklin, Amy Lent, Josh Shea

**Purpose of group:** 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:** The Publicity Committee (PC) focused primarily on concluding the website development during this year.

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.
- **Website:** The website went live this year. We dedicated considerable time to managing this process, addressing bugs and issues with the system, responding to feedback from the congregation, and working to bring the website in line with our vision. Additionally, we created a template for the website, with supporting documentation and online videos, to

share with other congregations in the district via a password-protected link on the new website. This last fulfills the terms of our Chalice Lighter grant.

- **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 myriad other community calendars. These focused on holidays and special services, unique events, and forums.

### **Plans for next year**

- **Website:** The PC will work with the staff to maintain and update the website, including an ongoing review for inclusivity and accessibility. Additionally, we will finalize the transition of material from the old website, which is more germane to members and more-seasoned visitors, to the new website.
- **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. We are also exploring the option to pool individual contributions to the public radio station WAMC in order to present a challenge grant from Albany UU as a way to make our congregation more visible in the greater Capital District.
- **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. We plan to table for several Sundays re use of social media, encouraging real-time activity. We also plan to fund increased use of boosting and analytic tools on Twitter.

### **Religious Services Committee**

**Chairperson:** Dawn Dana

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

**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 continued with our policy of permitting entry to Emerson by the rear doors at any time, and of reserving several rear rows for late entrants. Lead Ushers felt that blocking reserved rows was preferable to last year's practice of placing signs on end seats of the reserved rows. We procured supplies and assembled clips and cords for blocking rows, and added the set-up and removal to the usher instructions. RSC continued the practice of reserving space in Emerson on Family Chapel days, to ensure that parents entering after the Chapel are able to be welcomed and seated easily.

We continued to strive for diversity in our pulpit roles. Our Announcer role allows presentation of a Committee Focus when the opportunity has been requested by a committee or activity, but



this element is now optional so that the role is available to a broader spectrum of congregants beyond the small cadre of committee chairs.

We decided to eliminate the Offertory gratitude ritual, feeling that the various approaches with which we had experimented in recent years were inconsistently observed and awkward to implement.

We discussed this year several possible changes to our service structure and practices, including moving the community greeting to at or near the end of the service and addressing use of applause to show appreciation during services. We continue to consider options and explore how other congregations handle these matters. RSC provided input on presentation of the Story for All Ages, and Leah Purcell has implemented beneficial changes.

RSC is aware of concerns with audibility in Emerson, and has discussed this issues extensively. We referred this matter to the Board of Trustees as possibly requiring capital improvements. RSC members participated in arranging consultation with an acoustics expert and are awaiting a proposal.

RSC continued 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 high table in the Emerson Lobby, to increase visibility and access. We have seen an increased number of entries this year, and have received useful feedback.

**Pulpit Guests:** We enjoyed a 10-day visit this year from our Transylvanian partners, including the Szokefalva minister, Rev. Tunde Szasz, and two congregants, Ami Matyas and Csaba Losontiu. Rev. Szasz joined with Rev. Sam to present the service on October 2, 2016.

Other pulpit guests this year included Vee Abbitt, Rev. Charles Semowich, Rev. David Weissbard, Heather Mendel, Rev. Lynn Ashley, and Matt Meyer of Rhythm Revelations. Beth Jacobs worked with Sam to present liturgical dance at our Easter service on April 16. Our joint service with the Hudson Mohawk UU congregations was held on March 26 at Doane Stuart School.

A perennially well received service at Albany UU is “This I Believe.” We decided to present only one TIB service this year, and that is planned for May 21. Presenters will include Jacqui Williams, Peter Meixner, and Annie Metzger. 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.

RSC “cleaned” the Usher egroup lists this year so that communications were better targeted. Board efforts to encourage service volunteer commitments early in 2017 have been successful, and there have been many new faces in usher positions.

Training of Service Associates was provided by Cate Bohn and Sigrin Newell in mid-June, 2016, and 4 new Associates were trained. Although we’ve had reduced need for Service Associates this year, with only a handful of pulpit guests, we look ahead to weekly opportunities during the summer.

**Summer Services:** RSC was pleased with response to and attendance at our twelve summer services in 2016. Average weekly attendance was 68, slightly lower than 2015's average of 70. Peak attendance was Rev. Tom Chulak's service, with 113. Vee Abbitt again served successfully as our Summer Services Coordinator.

RSC has been working since early in the year to plan a full schedule of 2017 summer services, running from June 18 through September 3. Randy Rosette will bring her formidable organizational skills to the Summer Services Coordinator role, managing service planning and communications and being present each Sunday to facilitate smooth operations. RSC is working to fill summer service musician and Service Associate slots. We have updated our summer service template, instructions, and scripts. A summer service insert will be published in the June Windows. Summer pulpit guests will include Rev. Chris Antal, Rev. Tom Chulak, Rev. Dick Gilbert, Sigrin Newell, Dan Berggren, and Wellspring program participants, among others. We are pleased to have such an interesting and diverse summer program taking shape.

**Looking Ahead:** RSC also looks forward to opportunities to work with our Ministerial Intern for 2017-18, Eileen Casey-Campbell. We will support our Inclusivity Team in presenting a service tentatively scheduled for early October.

### **Safe Congregation Response Team (SCRT)**

**Convener:** Jean E. Poppei

**Members:** Owen Devine (Member at Large); Meredith Andrews (Religious Education Council-REC), Jean Poppei (Board of Trustees-BOT), 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 met for its annual meeting on April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2017 to discuss plans for the future as well as to review compliance with the Limited Access Agreement (LAA) developed last year. The LAA logbook was reviewed, showing entries beginning in May 2016 and continuing up to the current date. 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. In developing the LAA, we sought to balance our value of maintaining a safe congregation for all with the value of including a person who is as worthy and in need of spiritual community as others in the congregation, in line with our Unitarian Universalist Principles.

### **UU Connections Team**

**Chairperson:** Peggy Sherman

**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:** The UU Connections Team was approved by the Board in the fall of 2016, to follow many years of Don Odell's conscientious service as the Denominational Affairs chair. 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 2016, Kathy Harris, Michael Hornsby, Amy Lent, Jean Poppei, Leah Purcell, and Jacqui Williams attended GA in Columbus as delegates, and Tracie Tilgner served as a remote delegate. The Team sponsored a forum on January 29 to encourage participation in the 2017 General Assembly in New Orleans. The Board of Trustees has appointed Tom Chulak, Dick Dana, Kathy Harris, Jean Poppei, Matt Schultz, John Sherman, Peggy Sherman, and Jacqui Williams as 2017 delegates to GA.

After many years of deliberation and planning, delegates to the St. Lawrence District Assembly in April 2016 voted overwhelmingly to take the final step to adopt a regional organization. Our Central East Region now encompasses four former districts of the Unitarian Universalist Association. The complex process of dissolving the St. Lawrence District was officially completed in December 2016.

Albany UU has been working successfully with the Central East Region for the last several years. The region gives our congregation access to a staff of 13 full-time professionals who work for the UUA, with a designated primary contact for Albany UU. We've also deepened our connections with neighboring UU congregations through the Hudson Mohawk UU cluster. On March 26, the five congregations gathered for the 9<sup>th</sup> annual combined worship service, featuring Tom Andrews, President and CEO of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee.

On April 1, a St Lawrence District tradition continued with Rev. Richard Gilbert offering the 2017 Gould Lecture at the May Memorial Society in Syracuse. The day also included a live-streaming of the UUA Presidential Candidates' Forum. Dawn Dana, Dick Dana and Kathy Harris attended. The UU Connections Team will work to publicize the UUA Presidential race among members of our congregation, so that they can share their preferences with the delegates who will vote this June. Three candidates are competing for a single 6-year term leading the organization of UU congregations: Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray, Rev. Alison Miller and Rev. Jeanne Pupke.

At the end of March, Peter Morales announced his resignation as President of the UUA, in the midst of a controversy over hiring practices that were criticized as perpetuating patterns of white supremacy in UUA staffing. The Team helped organize and publicize an April 2 Congregational Conversation on the events surrounding the resignation of Peter Morales that was attended by about 20 members. Rev. Sam is planning a service on May 7 that will provide an opportunity for learning and sharing about institutional racism. Subsequently, the UUA Board appointed three co-equal interim presidents, the Rev. Sofia Betancourt, the Rev. William G. Sinkford, and Leon Spencer.

The Unitarian Universalist Association and the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee have called on individuals and congregations to sign a Declaration of Conscience that affirms our core UU and American values and commits to translating them into action. The Board of Trustees voted in April to add our congregation's name to the list of those supporting the Declaration, which is a public commitment to resisting hate and bigotry.

**Plans for next year:** Promote greater participation in the social justice 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. Thirty-five 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:

- Joining the UU Humanists in sending an Open letter to the Unitarian Universalist Association On Renewed Relations with the Boy Scouts of America and would like support of Unitarian Universalists nation wide. While complementing the the inclusiveness of the Boy Scouts towards sexual orientation, it was noted that the BSA still required all boys and volunteers to recognize God as the ruling and leading power in the universe and the grateful acknowledgment of His favors and blessings are necessary to the best type of citizenship.
- We covered subjects including: what faith means to a Humanist: how Humanists celebrate Christmas; definitions of Humanism and the variations of Humanism in Unitarian Universalism.
- We had a great discussion relating to Rev. Sam's Mar. 19 sermon on "Honoring Agnosticism".
- Considerable questions were raised and discussed pertaining to the changes at the UUA around the resignation of President Peter Morales.

**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.

### **Channing Circle**

**Chairperson:** Kathy Hodges

Channing Circle is an interesting group of mostly retired members and friends of Albany UU who meet monthly and enjoy sharing the company of friends at Albany UU while sharing lunch and a topic of interest for the day!

Topics which have been enjoyed this past year range from "Favorite Poems Read Aloud" to our latest topic "The Women's March of 2017" held in Washington D.C. and NYC as well as cities throughout the world. The group is always open to new participants and we invite folks to come with an open heart and open mind to share good company and ideas together! It meets on the third Monday of the month from September through June and all are welcome!

## **Choir**

**Chairpersons:** Kathy Harris

**Members:** Mike Babala, Pat Bailey, Alaina Boyle, Ann Brandon, Peter Brown, Jim Buzon, Chris Bystroff, Dorry Campano, Dick Dana, Cindy Dean, Cathy DeMille, Michele Desrosiers, RoseAnne Fogarty, Peter Gerdine, Kathy Harris, Tanya Hotalen, Tom Hotalen, Linda Hunt, Chris Jensen, Tracey Ledder, Julie Lomoe, Dave MacLeod, Debbie Reep MacLeod, Kayla Mancini, Barb Metz, Dave Metz, Jon Newell, Sigrin Newell, Threasa Pasquale, Astrid Pettersen, Lou Rehder, Neil Rice, Randy Rosette, Ruth Russell, Lea Ryman, Nancy Wagner, Terry Way, Betsy Wright, Trish Zima

**Purpose:** Bring music to Sunday Services

**Accomplishments:** The Albany UU Choir has had an interesting year. Our members were all shocked and saddened when, at the beginning of the church year, Matt Edwards, our music director of 16 years, handed in his resignation. We all knew that he had been commuting, first from Greenwich, NY, and then from Bennington, VT, through snow, rain, heat and the gloom of night (description borrowed from the side of the General Post Office in New York City) to work with the choir members to deliver beautiful music at Sunday services. But who knew that he would finally call it quits!?!

But he did. And the Choir moved on with the able help of Chris Jensen as interim choir director, Ann Brandon as accompanist and Randy Rosette as behind scenes coordinator. A small group formed the Music Director Search Committee. It includes Sam Trumbore, Randy, Chris and Ann, Annika Pfluger and Kathy Harris. The position was advertised last fall with local colleges, through the New York State School Music Association to reach out to school music teachers, with the UU Musician's Network, and Craig's List, among many other outlets. We got a few bites and did some interviews. Then Kathy Bawel applied. We were all quite quickly impressed with her resume, energy and skills. She took the job, and then let us know that, due to family circumstances, she was only available through the end of May.

Kathy has been doing wonderful things with the Choir. We are adding new members and acquiring musical and vocal skills that make us all better singers. Meanwhile the search has resumed. We are disappointed that there have been few applicants. One person looked very promising and we quickly told her that we were very interested. Then she decided that returning to the great northeast – with its proverbial winter weather – was not how she wished to spend the next few years.

So the search committee continues searching. We have putting an emphasis on reaching black and minority applicants through connections Annika and Randy have. Our position seems like the most wonderful part-time position for that special person. We just have to find him or her.

The Choir would also like to report that we sponsored a wonderful Pot Luck and A Capella Concert in November. Four collegiate choirs participated with over 120 people present at the dinner and concert. This is definitely an event that we hope to repeat in 2017-18.

**Plans for next year:** Hire a new Music Director, continue to bring music to Sunday Services, repeat the Pot Luck/A Capella Concert.

## **Circle Dinners**

**Chairperson:** Martha Musser

**Purpose of group:** Circle dinners provide Albany UUs and guests with the 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 learn about Albany UU. With these goals in mind, new options for young adults are being investigated.

**Accomplishments:** We scheduled dinners on six nights during the 2016-17 church year. The October and December dinners were cancelled because of conflicts that limited attendance. Two dinners were held on Friday night and two on Saturday. With May dinners still to come, 11 dinners, hosted in 9 different homes, have been held and 64 adults have attended at least one dinner. Twenty-three adults attended more than one dinner. Despite having fewer dinners, 17 individuals attended for the first time in 2016-17, more than in the previous year. The last dinner of the church year is scheduled for Saturday, May 13.

**Plans for next year:** We have planned four dinners for the coming year, beginning in November.

## **Pastoral Care Associates**

**Reporter:** Philip G. Rich

**Members:** Sharon Babala, Dave Munro, Chuck Manning, Phil Rich, Randy Rosette, Jan Satin, Sandy Stone, and Lisa Barron.

In 2010, it was Rev. Sam's wish that a caring and compassionate group of Albany UUs would be able to help him with the pastoral duties of the congregation. Interviews were conducted, people were selected, and our work began.

Our Pastoral Care program is based on the counseling theories of Carl Rogers and Marshall Rosenberg. Through nonjudgmental and empathic listening, Pastoral Care Associates help congregants over a rough time and enable them to summon the necessary resources to overcome their difficulties.

Associates come from varied backgrounds such as pharmacy, social work, secretarial science, engineering, the ministry, and education. Our adviser is Rev. Sam.

Our congregants are responsive to our endeavors showing us that our program works well. We will, however, continue to make adjustments and refinements as needed.

Some Associates are leaving the program at the end of this church year. We wish Dave Munro, and Sharon Babala well and we thank them for their caring and noble service to our congregation. We express our sadness to the Satin family over Jan's death.

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

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

We are still working on our quilt to be raffled 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. We have had a lot of hand-quilting to do on this quilt, as we have quilted a number of designs on it. We are nearing the end and are projecting that we will finish by early fall 2017. Then the quilt will be raffled off. The money raised from this project will be used for "beautification" improvements for Albany UU.

This report has normally been written by Jan Satin, long-time member of P's & Q's as well as of Albany UU. Sadly, Jan died on March 30th of this year. Although she was diagnosed with terminal cancer in December, Jan continued to come to P's & Q's whenever she felt well enough and worked on the quilt. She was an excellent quilter and great fun! We will greatly miss her wonderful laugh and all of her quilting expertise. --Barb Manning, Reporter

### **Walker Book Club**

**Reporter:** Linda Hunt

The Walker Book Club 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 and the book club is open to all Albany UU members and friends. This informal book club has existed for many years and is named in memory of a treasured, deceased Albany UU.

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 UU. 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 four non-fiction books and five novels. The February meeting was canceled due to inclement weather. Attendance averaged 14 persons. Two new participants joined the group, and other visitors participated occasionally in a particular book discussion. Our annual traditions include reading a book considered to be a classic in May and a longer book over the summer for discussion in September. Join the Walker Book Club email list at [BookClub@egroups.churchdb.com](mailto:BookClub@egroups.churchdb.com)

#### **Books discussed in 2016-17:**

The Master: by Colm Toibin

Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End by Atul Gawande.

My Name Is Lucy Barton: by Elizabeth Strout.

Three Junes by Julia Glass.

Moral Mondays, Fusion Politics, and the Rise of a New Justice Movement by Reverend Dr. William J. Barber II, and Jonathan Wilson.

The Marriage of Opposites by Alice Hoffman,

Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis by Robert D. Putnam.

A High Wind in Jamaica (1929), by Richard Hughes.