

ANNUAL REPORT

2014-15

First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany

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YEAR IN REVIEW

Minister's Annual Report

Rev. Sam Trumbore

Overview

Once again, I'm pleased to report the state of our congregational health is very good. Under Peggy Sherman's capable leadership, our Board has been reviewing our strategic plan and organizing visionary changes to the institutional structures of our congregation. These changes promise to release more energy for service to our members and to the larger community around us. I'm grateful our Board is able to work in a visionary role and avoid struggling with internal problems between members and/or leaders. This is worthy of highlighting because we may not notice what isn't happening. I celebrate the harmony and collaborative atmosphere in our leadership as we strive to find better ways to serve each other, the community and the growth of Unitarian Universalism. May it continue and may we build upon the excellent work done in previous years.

Black Lives Matter

Beginning with the shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, an important congregational focus could be summed up in the refrain, "Black Lives Matter." Greater (White) awareness of deaths of Black men and boys on a monthly basis has reminded (mostly White) members of our congregation of the work left to do to end racism and oppression in this nation. These deaths and the 50th anniversary of "Bloody Sunday" in Selma has motivated us to increase our efforts to dismantle the institutionalized dimensions of oppression. One place to find them is in our police departments.

My work was stimulated when Paul Murray and Don Hyman walked into my office with Mark Morrison-Reed's recently published book on Selma wondering if we might be able to invite him to come to speak in Albany. That conversation turned into weekly meetings from August through February planning a **50th Anniversary of Selma event on Saturday, February 28 at the Swyer Theater in The Egg**. It was followed May 1 with a **Capital Region UU's of New York joint service at Doane Stuart School's Golub Chapel**. The **Rev. Dr. Mark Morrison-Reed** spoke at both events. We raised over eight thousand dollars to put on the Saturday event partly through the UUA Funding Program and a M & T corporate donation but mostly through individual donations to the Honorary Committee. Putting on an event like the Saturday event was new for me. It fired my imagination for ways to raise the profile of our congregation in the

community. Both events were well attended and very successful. And I'm very grateful no snowstorms shut us down.

In September, some of my ministerial colleagues were taking the "**ice bucket challenge**" as a way to bring attention to Ferguson. Leah and I talked about it and decided we could take the challenge too. So after our homecoming service in the fall, Leah and I each marched outside with an ice bucket in hand. We stood in front of the Peace Pole and dumped it over our heads with the video cameras rolling to document the event. Being doused with ice water wasn't pleasant. Still, it was far less unpleasant than I imagined the experience might be! The event was a splashy way to get our year started.

With the **lack of Grand Jury indictments** against police officers in the deaths of Brown and Gartner, I participated in **community meetings and demonstrations** along with members of our congregation. We are fortunate to have a police review board in Albany but other communities in the Capital Region need them as well, particularly Troy. I'm glad we have a Social Responsibilities Council Black Lives Matter task force to help us organize our efforts in this area to work in coalition and agitate for change.

Growth Through Service

Peggy Sherman shared her excitement with me after attending a workshop at General Assembly titled "Growth Through Service." I listened then watched a video of the workshop describing the program created by the UU Church of Delaware County (Pennsylvania). **The vision of "culture change"** to make service the center of congregational growth and development greatly appealed to me - and not just as a way to get more volunteers for our current activities. The workshop presented a vision of member growth, development, satisfaction and deepening commitment through doing service. That service could be inside the congregation such as our Caring Network does delivering food and offering rides to those in need. They could also be projects in the community and our neighborhood. What was different about this design was the attention to how the participant in the service opportunity would experience growth and development. And that forced the Delaware County congregation to look at how they structured their service opportunities to make sure that component was part of the experience of service.

I did a **presentation at the fall Board Retreat** on Growth Through Service using the video of the workshop from GA. Then Dick Dana did a magnificent job of presenting that video to about a hundred members of our congregation to stimulate their interest and enthusiasm for the program. We had a great weekend workshop with one of the architects of the program in Delaware County, Jody Malloy, and got many volunteers to help in the implementation.

I'm very excited about this program and its potential to stimulate the culture of service that is already well established in our congregation. We already know that member satisfaction levels track closely their level of activity and involvement. The more one does here, the more satisfied one is with the congregation, and the more one feels a sense of congregational ownership. Any program that stimulates growing commitment and satisfaction is one we should enthusiastically endorse. There is great promise here and I look forward to the development of this program.

UUMA Chapter Harmony

One of the side effects of the movement from UUA Districts to UUA Regions is the impact on UU Minister Association's chapters. Historically, these chapters have met in alignment with UUA Districts. The **St. Lawrence UUMA Chapter** meets once in the fall and once in the spring in proximity to the annual District Assembly. When the Ohio Meadville District and the St. Lawrence district started having a joint District Assembly, this created tensions. The **Ohio Meadville UUMA Chapter** hadn't been in the habit of having a full spring meeting the way the St. Lawrence chapter did, so we invited them to "our" meeting. This was fine the first time, but the second time, they didn't feel included in the design which caused tensions.

To resolve those tensions, olive branch in hand, I **attended the OMD UUMA Chapter fall retreat** to invite their involvement in the design of this year's spring retreat. A representative from their chapter, Mary Grigolia, and I took responsibility for jointly planning the meeting. This meeting also includes both Liberal Religious Education Directors Association (LREDA) chapters as well, so we decided to invite their collaboration too for the first time. I'm happy to report a high level of satisfaction was attained with this retreat and very good participation from all chapters.

A Vision of Humanistic Buddhism

Another big March event this year was the biannual **UU Buddhist Fellowship Convocation**. This year it was held in Garrison, New York at the **Garrison Institute**. Our featured speaker was **Stephen Batchelor**, a respected Buddhist Scholar whose book, *Buddhism Without Beliefs*, was important not just for Western Buddhists but also many Unitarian Universalist humanists. Attendance for this event was excellent, over 120 people, the best ever since our first Convocation in 2005. I video-recorded and audio-recorded Batchelor's talks which can be found on the UUBF website <http://uubf.org/> Again, satisfaction with this retreat was very high, providing a platform for future development of the relationship between Buddhism and Unitarian Universalism. Mindfulness oriented Buddhist meditation provides a non-theistic growth and development tool that can be right at home in an Unitarian Universalist context. Given how popular mindfulness meditation methods are right now, it is a great way to bring people into our

congregations. (This is one of my personal legacy projects that I hope will be looked back on with appreciation fifty or a hundred years after I'm gone.)

Sunday Services

I've continued this year with **Sunday Service themes** without being slavish to them. My column usually includes the theme which I then integrate into the theme packet used by the Meaning Matters groups. The themes this year were: September: **Promise**; October: **Renewal**; November: **Grace**; December: **Wonder**; January: **Integrity**; February: **Faith**; March **Resilience**; April: **Interdependence**; May: **Tradition**.

Matt, Leah and I continue to collaborate each Wednesday planning the Sunday service. Our integration of music and message from Leah continues to get stronger as do our multi-generational services.

Here are a few memorable services this year:

- **“Overcoming Betrayal of Faith,”** September 14
- **“A Sensual Faith”** October 5 – I showed slides of paintings I photographed in Europe as part of my mini-sabbatical last May.
- In November’s services, I explored grace from different angles: **“Hindered by Doubt;”** **“Rescued by Love;”** **“Poisoned by Craving;”** and **“Redeemed by Gratitude.”**
- **"Fulfillment Through Passing the Bucket,"** January 25 – included one of the architects of Growth through Service who was visiting for a workshop January 24. Explored the theme of growing through service.
- **"Faitheist?"** February 1 and **“Pentacostal UUs?”** March 8 – investigated two different UU theological trends, the new atheists movement from the angle of those who are not resistant to traditional religious concepts but are atheists and the merger of a Black Pentecostal church with the Tulsa UU congregation and asked if there are lessons for us.
- **“Making a Commitment to Climate Justice,”** April 26 – social justice themed service. This service was part of a three way pulpit swap with Saratoga Springs and Glens Falls
- **"Fighting For Lost Causes,"** January 11 – another social justice themed service that

used video clips from the movie, “Mr. Smith Goes to Washington” as part of the presentation.

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

Lifespan Education

This was my second year of the small group educational initiative called **Meaning Matters**. Meaning Matters, a revised program drawing materials from the Rochester Unitarian Church program called Soul Matters, coordinates with the theme for the month bringing together the benefits of small group ministry techniques with a greater emphasis on content and learning. At the beginning of the month, the participants get a 8-12 page packet of materials related to the theme. The components are: 1) introductory essay, 2) deepening exercises, 3) exploration stimulating questions, 4) reading and viewing resources including quotes, books, articles, web links, movies and video clips. The text for the sermons (when available) are posted on my web site blog. At the end of the month, the small groups gather to check in, and discuss the deepening exercise and the questions. Rather than discuss the questions individually, each participant has the opportunity to discuss the question that grabs them and stimulates their reflection. Thus there is the content of the question to consider as well as why did that question engage them, adding a heart dimension to the conversation. Support and enthusiasm for the program continues. Whereas last year only one group did well, this year both groups thrived. It looks like the program is beginning to take root. I hope I might be able to add a third session next year.

Leah Purcell, Tom Mercer and I collaborated on presenting a six week UU history class based on six DVD's titled *Long Strange Trip* we watched then discussed. There were about ten of us who participated. I was happy to offer some UU history in a format that people found attractive and held their interest to the last DVD.

Pastoral Care Associates

The Pastoral Care Associates program continues to be a critically important aid to the pastoral care ministry in our congregation. Many more people are getting support than I could offer alone. Plus having eight people paying attention to members of the congregation is also very helpful. I find out about pastoral care needs I might not know about otherwise. This year we had two PCA's step down, Jerry Deighan and Jon Newell, and two new ones get installed, Chuck Manning and Dave Munro.

Concluding Thoughts

While many UU congregations in the Northeast are seeing declines in membership, we are maintaining our base though we too are seeing the numbers slip a little bit. The glow of building Emerson has worn off and the excitement and enthusiasm generated by our expansion process has settled down.

This is a problem because we haven't integrated our full mortgage payment into our budget and we are not currently able to pay our employees at the appropriate UUA salary guidelines. We have significant financial needs that demand growth.

Membership growth hasn't been the center of the work I've done in our congregation. Going forward, I'm realizing I need to invest more energy in the day to day work of cultivating new members. Thankfully, I've been reducing my commitments and responsibilities outside FUUSA to focus more intently on member recruitment and retention. I hope I'll be reporting to you success in that process next year about this time.-- Rev. Sam

Board of Trustees

Officers: Peggy Sherman, President
Dick Dana, Vice President
Sue Berzinis, Treasurer
RoseAnne Fogarty, Secretary

Trustees: Michele Desrosiers
Erik Eddy
Ben English
Bob Franklin
Michael Hornsby
Patti Jo Newell

Ex-Officio: Rev. Sam Trumbore, Minister
Tracie Tilgner, Religious Education Council Chair
Jean Poppei, Social Responsibilities Council Chair

How does our Albany UU congregation continue to evolve and change in the 21st century? How do we live up to the revised mission statement that we adopted last May? This year, your Board of Trustees has been asking, discussing, and sometimes even answering questions like this.

Our mission statement affirms our intent to welcome all, to seek truth, to pursue justice and to cultivate compassion. We want to make a difference in the lives of our members and in our greater community--but the shape of our lives and of our community continues to change. Through the year, the Board has explored opportunities and realities facing our Society and has identified a number of areas as priorities for action.

Growth Through Service

Through this new approach brought to our attention by the UU Congregation of Delaware County, we will offer members of our congregation opportunities for meaningful service that will support their own personal development goals and help our congregation to achieve our mission. Dick Dana introduced many congregational leaders and volunteers to this concept through a series of small group meetings and a January seminar with Jody Malloy, one of the founders. Following that session, a workgroup prepared and presented a concept paper to the Board, and the Board appointed Dick Dana and Sue Berzins to the Growth Through Service Project Leadership Team. Watch for more news of this exiting program -- just discussing it generates positive energy!

An anti-racist, anti-oppressive, multicultural congregation

We are pursuing this vision in a number of ways. Members of our congregation have joined in local protests against the injustices of police killings of black men, with encouragement from Jean Poppei and our Social Responsibilities Council, Rev. Sam, and Leah Purcell. Michael Hornsby and Patti Jo Newell launched the third session of Beloved Conversations, a series of small group study/discussion sessions about race. Michael also represented our congregation at a seminar in Tulsa and brought back a vision of the large and dynamic All Souls church, with diverse worship styles serving a diverse congregation. With our fellow Capital Region UU congregations, we met in a shared worship service to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Selma, and Rev. Sam was instrumental in leading and organizing a community symposium that also marked that anniversary. The Board of Trustees affirms that “Black Lives Matter.”

Organizational structure and governance to support our congregation’s mission

In 2013, our congregation adopted many changes to update our bylaws, but we did not address the basic structure of the congregation’s governance, which has been in place for decades. This year, the Board continued to discuss how we can be more effective as an organization, enabling staff and volunteers to focus more on the meaningful work that aligns with our mission. We identified some practices that get in the way and others where we could be more effective. Michele Desrosiers, Tom Mercer, Patti Jo Newell and Dave Quist have been appointed as an Organizational Effectiveness Work Group to explore these questions, identify specific goals, and make recommendations about the timeframe to address these issues.

Multi-site congregations and opportunities for partnerships

The Capital Region Unitarian Universalists of New York, or CRUUNY, provides an example of the accomplishments that are made possible through collaboration. Our annual shared worship service is always inspiring, and our sponsorship of programming on WAMC generates public awareness of the four local UU congregations and what they offer.

One CRUUNY effort that did not come to fruition was the initiative to start a new congregation in Clifton Park. This year, the Board discussed the benefits and risks of renewing this outreach to the Clifton Park community, but with the different approach, of establishing a branch of our Albany congregation. Ultimately the Board felt that we could not immediately support this effort with available resources. With the encouragement of our regional UUA lead, Rev. Joan Van Becelaere, we intend to continue to explore opportunities in this area. A regional meeting of UU ministers and lay leaders will take place at our church in early June.

A multigenerational congregation

In Board discussions, we began to delve into ways that worship and other congregational activities can be designed to welcome all generations and bring them together. Tracie Tilgner and the RE Council launched a task force to work on multigenerational worship opportunities. Rev. Sam has brought ideas for a multigenerational Saturday worship service to the Board for consideration. While decisions have not yet been made, the Board sees this as an area for innovation and a way to welcome all into our congregation.

Letting our beacon shine

We began the year by reviewing and discussing research about church growth and how it applies to our congregation. Diversity, multigenerational worship, and a clear mission and purpose are all associated with growing congregations. More directly, we want to make sure that those who are looking for a liberal religious community are able to see all that our congregation has to offer. This year, the Chalice Lighters Fund of the St. Lawrence District approved a grant application proposed by Patti Jo Newell and the Public Relations Committee. The resulting award of more than \$12,000 will be used to design and implement a new and vibrant Albany UU web site to engage those who are new to Unitarian Universalism and to us.

Thank yous

Special thanks to Ben English, who is completing a one-year term on the Board, and Bob Franklin, who is completing a three-year term on the Board. Ben brought us a fresh perspective as both a new Board member and a life-long member of our Society. Bob helped craft new bylaws and analyze matters before the Board with the same skill and humor that he brings to annual dinner skits.

I will miss the wise counsel of Sue Berzinis, who is leaving the Board and the position of Treasurer after serving three years. Sue's organized and energetic leadership will help propel our Growth Through Service program forward.

It is a great pleasure to work with Board members, Rev. Sam, our professional staff and all the other volunteer leaders who share a commitment to our Society and its mission.--Peggy Sherman

Treasurer's Report

Sue Berzinis

2013-2014 Year-End

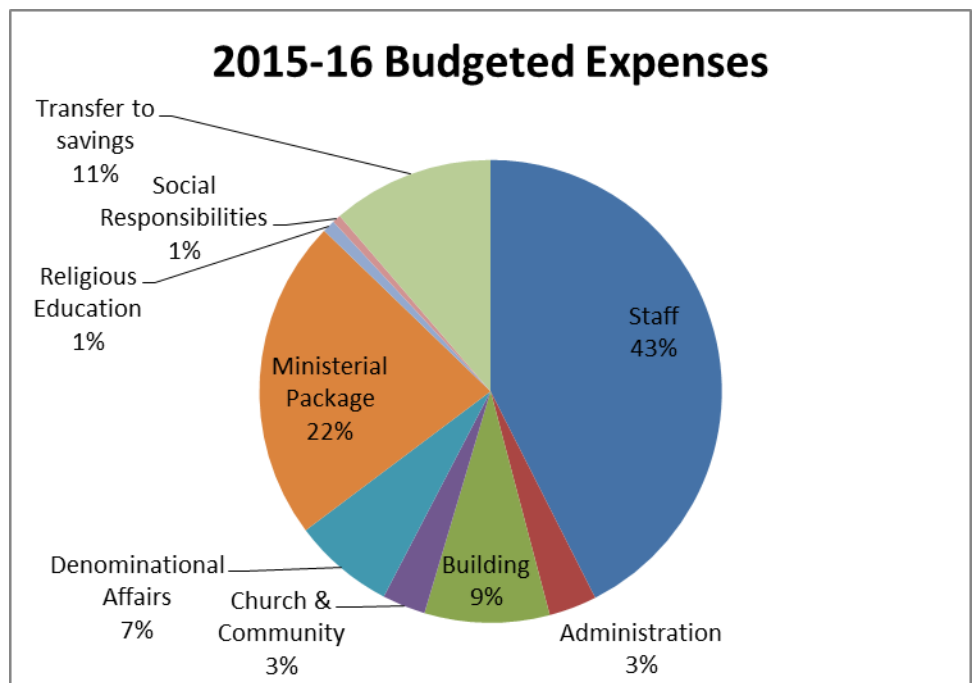
For FY2013-2014 we finished slightly under our planned budget; \$423 was transferred to the Building Fund as has been our practice. Net rental income had increased to \$30,000 and Fun/draiders added \$35,658 to our income, generating 13.3% of our income. The Income & Expense summary follows.

2014-2015 Summary

With income contributions from pledges, gifts, rentals & fundraisers, we should meet or exceed our budgeted 4.3% increase in income over the previous year. Any surplus will be transferred to the Building Fund. During the year, many people have taken advantage of the electronic giving program, designed to make contributing to FUUSA easier. The program for on-line contributions is accessed through our website allowing regular automatic transfers from your bank account or using a credit card.

Proposed 2015-2016 Budget

In my third year as Treasurer, I continue to find everyone to be very conscious and respectful of their budget and expenses. I have participated in very thoughtful, responsible and detailed planning of our finances by the Finance Committee. The proposed budget for the



coming year is \$532,465, a 2.7% increase over the current year.

Building Mortgage for Emerson Hall

As of March 2015, we have a mortgage balance of \$923,128. Each year we budget an increase in the amount transferred from our Operating Budget to the Building Reserve Fund in lieu of the assuming the entire mortgage payment of ~\$80,000. This coming FY2015-2016 we are increasing the transferred amount to \$44,255, which is 55% of the actual yearly payment. Our mortgage must be renegotiated in March 2017; we are still hoping that interest rates remain low for another year.

Income & Expense Summary FY 2013-2014 ending 06/30/2014

Ordinary Income and Expense

Income

Total Contribution Income	\$ 413,008	83.8%
Total Other Income (rentals, interest)	\$ 41,512	8.4%
Total Program Income(FUN/D raisers, RE)	<u>\$ 38,568</u>	<u>7.8%</u>
Total Income	\$ 493,088	100.0%

Expense

Total Non-Ministerial Salary & Benefits	\$ 195,431	43.9%
Total Administration	\$ 26,602	6.0%
Total Building Maintenance	\$ 47,498	10.7%
Total Church & Community	\$ 16,930	3.8%
Total Denominational Affairs	\$ 36,964	8.3%
Total Ministerial Expenses	\$ 113,395	25.5%
Total Religious Education	\$ 4,800	1.1%
Total Social Responsibilities	<u>\$ 3,249</u>	<u>0.7%</u>
Total Expense	\$ 444,869	100.0%

Transfers

Capital Reserve Fund	\$ 14,907	
Building Reserve Fund	\$ 31,289	
Ministerial Intern Reserve Fund	\$ 1,000	
Sabbatical Fund	<u>\$ 600</u>	
Total Transfers	\$ 47,796	

Total Expense and Transfers	\$ 492,665	
Surplus transferred to Building Reserve account	\$ 423	

Designated Fund Balances

06/30/2014

<u>Designated Funds</u>	<u>Balance</u>		<u>Balance</u>
Adult Ed	\$ 378	Kitchen	\$ 36
Annual Dinner	\$ (500)	Minister's Discretionary	\$ 2,575
Art	\$ 365	Ministerial Intern Fund	\$ 4,286
Caring Network	\$ 105	New Congregation Two Rivers	\$ 9,833
Choir Fund	\$ 694	Ordination Fund	\$ 150
Contingency	\$ 1,896	Oriel Magazine	\$ 178
CRUUNY	\$ 6,449	Partner Church	\$ 3,367
Digital Projector Fund	\$ -	PR	\$ 337
Earth Spirits	\$ 151	Quilt	\$ 1,066
Economic Distress Fund	\$ 752	RE General	\$ 1,388
Electronics	\$ 526	RE Rite of Passage	\$ 4
Endowment Trust	\$ (1,329)	RE Senior High	\$ 1,896
Evensong	\$ 1,922	Receptions	\$ 1,393
Flower	\$ 1,901	Rummage Sale	\$ 932
Future Year Pledges	\$ 39,556	Sabbatical Fund	\$ 3,467
Garden Fund	\$ 1,933	Seder	\$ 14
Hymnals	\$ 110	SRC	\$ 3,321
		Designated Funds Total	\$ 54,909

Endowment Trust Annual Report for the Year 2014

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 potential 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 2014, the Trust had a value of \$864,725. During 2014, gifts to the Trust were made in the amount of \$350 and the Trust distributed \$1,750 in grants. Investment gains were \$13,420. At the end of 2014, the Trust had a value of 876,745.

The largest part of the Endowment investment is in FUUSA. The Endowment lent the congregation \$575,000 interest free in order to turn the dream of Emerson 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.

Disbursements

During 2014, the Trust funded FUUSA members to build Little Free libraries and also purchased the new projector for Emerson

Gifts Received

During 2014, a total of \$350 in gifts were added to the Trust. These gifts honored Matt Odell, Hallie Schroeder, Roland Hummel and Joe Norton.

The Trust Board takes this opportunity to publicly thank this year's contributors: Don Odell, Eva Gemmill, Philip Rickey and Donald Brister.

Your contributions to the Trust will be invested carefully to support the mission of FUUSA.

Our Impact

The Endowment Trust has an impact on our community in several ways. The trustees hold the sacred trust of those who contributed by learning about and applying investment practices that honor gifts. Members of FUUSA use the Trust to create a legacy, whereby their values can continue on into the future through their gifts to the Trust. And members of FUUSA who have an idea for supporting the mission of our society can look to the Trust for financial support – to help nourish the seed that they may plant.

As Trustees, we look forward to continuing to growing the Trust so that we can nourish more and larger seeds.

Thank you for your continued support, Todd Thomas, Endowment (Trust Chair;) Chris Jensen (Secretary,) Betsey Miller, Jan McCracken, Sharon Babala, Sue Berzinis, Treasurer (Ex officio)

Stewardship Donor Report

Chairperson: Chuck Manning

Our Stewardship Theme this year was “Pool Your Light With Mine, We’re Gonna Make It Shine”. Our congregation is a vital and vibrant organization that makes a difference in our lives and in the world:

- Helping children and adults explore and develop their beliefs,
- Working together to serve our neighbors,

- Raising a voice of liberal religion for justice in the Capital District community and beyond,
- Sharing and helping each other to build lives of meaning, and
- Welcoming all into our community.

This year we again used 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”. In keeping with our democratic principles, we at FUUSA have modified the guide to be more progressive. 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, 2015 to June 30, 2016). A listing of donors by category is provided below.

“We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.” Winston Churchill

Visionary

11 Anonymous

Bill Batt and Karen Donaldson

Albin Berzinis and Susan Berzinis

Dave Brandon and Ann Brandon

Peter Brown and Debbie Brown

Tim Burch and Patty Burch

Tom Chulak and Nicole Furnee

Dick Dana and Dawn Dana

Albert DeSalvo and Susan Thompson

Arden Dockter and Marilyn Dockter

RoseAnne Fogarty

Lois Griffin

Katharine Harris

Cindee Herrick

Kathy Hodges

Eileen Hoffman and David Munro

Sally Knapp and Arnold Patashnick

Chuck Manning and Barbara Manning

Mary Alice Maynes

Peter Meixner and Donna Meixner

David Metz and Barbara Metz

Steven Moskowitz and Paula Moskowitz

Jon Newell and Sigrin Newell

Don Odell

Michaela Pochily

Jean Poppei

Phil Rich

Darnell Rohrbaugh

John Sherman and Margaret Sherman

Sue Stierer

Robert Thomson and Lois Thomson

Sam Trumbore and Philomena Moriarty

Nancy Wagner

Lois Webb

Sustainer

9 Anonymous
Julie Lomoe and Robb Smith
Elizabeth Berberian
Lorraine Blanchfield and Jeffrey English
Richard Brewer and Paula Brewer
John Cooley
Nancy Croce
Cathy DeMille
Don Eberle and Ann Eberle

Supporter

11 Anonymous
Kayla Autery
Beth Babb
Eric Beeche and Randee Hartz
Elizabeth Dana
Peter Gerdine and Thelma Gerdine
Arlene Gilbert
Janet Hunter
Marshall Miller and Dorian Solot

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

33 Anonymous
George Allen and Jane Allen
Stephen Andersen
Therese Archer
Cassie Artale and Vic Artale
Muriel Asbornsen
Leonard Bergquist
Jon Bick
Dolores Bierman
Donald Birn and Sara Birn
Loren Broc
Chris Bystroff and Maria Bystroff
Brian Carr

Ben English and Linda English
Bob Guerrin
Amy Jesaitis
Karen Kaufmann
Patsy Patrick
Jill Peckenpaugh
Astrid Pettersen and Neil Rice
Annika Pfluger
Mike Babala and Sharon Babala
Todd Thomas and Jennifer Thomas

Terry Murphy and Holli Rossi
Michael Myers and Anne Savage
Mary Phillips
Tina Raggio and Joe Raggio
Eric Randall
Kathy Schermer
Christine Vanderlan
Deborah Vogel
Cathy Perkins

Beth Carpinello
Barbara Cooley
Toni Daniel
Mark Daniels and Molly Daniels
Frederick Eames
Seth Edelman and Aosta Edelman
Rodger Fink
Hugh Fisher and Susan Fisher
Michael Marimpietri and Janice Fontanella
Marion Harwick
Suzanne Hicks
Jaye Holly and Judy Yeckley
Rudy Johnson
Elissa Kane and Lynne Lekakis
Joanne Keers
Ann Lapinski

Amy Lent
Lawrie Lierheimer
Zach and Annie Metzger
Hanns Meissner and Linda Munro
Lee Newberg and Heidi Newberg
Marjorie Nieh
Dominick Panetta and Renee Panetta
Meg Parascondola and Al Parascondola
William Pittman and Meme Pittman
Sterling Post and Amy Souzis
Kevin Purcell and Leah Purcell
Jennifer Quail
Lou Rehder and Sharon Rehder
Reese Satin and Jan Satin
James Schlembach and Kay Schlembach
Julie Shaw
John Simon and Susan Simon
Peggy Slocum
Sandra Smith
Susan Standfast and Ted Wright

Abby Sugarman
John Walko
Barbara Warner
Arlen Westbrook
Lucy Wrightington
Patricia Bailey
Malcolm Bell and Nancy Bell
Laura Cayford
Findlay Cockrell and Marcia Cockrell
Thayer Heath
Frank Woods and Nancy Woods
Jody Zimmerman and Earl Zimmerman
Lisa Barron
Jack Bellick and Dorothy Bellick
Mike D'Attilio and Ann D'Attilio
Cindy Dean
Joseph Herwick and Joseph Poutre
James Southgate and Maryanne Southgate
Melissa Ramirez
Robert and Patricia Zima

Church Administrator's Report

Staff

Minister: Rev. Sam Trumbore
Director of Religious Education: Leah Purcell
Church Administrator: Amy Lent
Music Director: Matt Edwards
Office Administrator: Alyssa Yeager
Custodians: Hadiya Wilborn, Cameron Holloway
Nursery Caregiver: Mary Ellen Millett, Anna Carbone

With thanks to the dedicated volunteers of this congregation, I can say we've had a good year. I bring especially to your attention the Building and Grounds folks—while Dave Metz's report lists it all so matter-of-factly, it was a LOT of work they did. Please read their report and thank them!

We hired another Nursery Caregiver this year, but the other staff positions have been stable. Our staff team works together well. Our building rental program has been beautifully organized and run by Alyssa Yeager—you can read the impressive numbers of public and private rental events in the Building Use Committee report.

Once again I have suggested you read a specific report, but I hope you will also read ALL the reports, as they demonstrate clearly how well we work together. And this is a good time to ask HOW you are reading the annual report this year. Are you reading it online, or are you reading it on paper? In our ongoing effort to present AlbanyUU information to congregants in the manner most useful to them, and being conscious of resources (like staff time and paper!) we are creating an online version and offering printed copies only to those who request them. Be sure to tell me how this works for you!

Earlier this year I did a casual survey of the congregation asking “how YOU want to get news and information from FUUSA...Which methods work for you?...Which methods would work better for you with some changes? What changes?” I received about 30 responses, and found out that, according to that fairly small sample, we are doing pretty well in getting the information out in multiple ways and that different people appreciate the different ways. There was one big surprise: several people made the case for how important it is to have the newsletter on paper so they can circle items to remember, and, most importantly, go back and pick it up again to read more. (And, no, they weren’t all in my generation!) Online readers seem to come in two categories—those who do it happily, and those who do it because they feel guilty about using paper so read it online even though they state they are missing things.

I was also pleased to hear how important the order of service is to people. Also paper. Even though it is almost exactly the same information that is in the Preview email sent on Thursday, there are folks who like to circle items and make notes. The Preview email is very popular. Some folks mentioned reading one or more of the blogs. One or two mentioned Facebook, and one said Facebook was not where they would look for information. We have greatly increased our presence on Facebook this year (a project of Alyssa’s) so we should ask again soon how that is working for folks, and what kind of information they seek there.

Website work is underway—which you will read about in the Public Relations committee report. Alyssa and I have been working with the small group that is planning the new ‘internal’ website—tools and information for current members and friends. More on that in the near future!

I continue to staff the Welcome Table in the lobby on Sundays, and I continue to love it. I do wonder, however, how all those non-visitor questions would get answered if the Church

Administrator was not present! I worked with three members of the Membership Committee this year to restructure our Sunday morning hospitality process, and look forward to implementing some of the changes this coming year.

And, just getting implemented this month is the new, improved composting/recycling/trash plan that was first conceived a year ago. Once all the new containers and signage are in place, the real fun begins. Educating FUUSAns should be a breeze. Training our renters may be more of a challenge!

I would like to say I am looking forward to another great year—but since I already know about one significant change I am not sure what adjective to use. Alyssa Yeager has just given notice that she is leaving her position as Office Administrator to take up her music career fulltime. We wish her the best and look forward to seeing her name in lights, but it surely will be a challenge to replace her here! And the year ahead will probably have more than one challenge for us—so bring it on.--Amy Lent

Wheel of Life

Joined

Paul Axel-Lute, Melanie Axel-Lute, Adrian Cattell, Vanessa Cayford, Nancy Croce, Becky Edvalson, John Edvalson, Betty Head, Cindee Herrick, Emily Ilowit, Micah Ilowit, Matthew Lesniak, Paul Reese, Jim Schlembach, Kay Schlembach, Tulin Ture, Joseph White

Died

Eva Gemmill, Susan Patti, Irene Saulsbery, Nigel Wright, Mark Yolles

COUNCILS

Program Coordinating Council

Chairperson: Dick Dana (Vice President)

Members: The Program Coordinating Council is made up of FUUSA's lay leaders and consists of all committee chairs, council chairs, leaders of affiliated groups, the Church Administrator Amy Lent, and the Director of Religious Education Leah Purcell. Our task is to oversee and coordinate the lay ministry of FUUSA.

What does this entail? PCC's main role is to coordinate activities that involve more than one committee or group, such as the Get Connected! Activity Fair, the Friday evening multigenerational potlucks once a month, and the Committee of the Week at every Sunday

service. PCC coordinates the dates of all major church events. PCC supports the Board of Trustees by making sure that the policies they set are carried out, including the necessary coordination and recruitment.

Building Community at FUUSA

PCC organized a successful Homecoming Sunday lunch after the first service in September, the third year of this event. A great variety of sandwiches and finger food provided the needed excuse for FUUSAns to linger and catch up with each other after a summer of relaxation for some, adventures for others.

At the sixth annual Get Connected! Activity Fair in March, representatives of FUUSA's committees and activities staffed tables in Emerson Hall, and adults and children toured about, learning of opportunities for participation and service. Barb Manning and Paula Moskowitz organized the event again this year.

Supporting Committees and their Missions

During their regular meetings, PCC invites office staff to give training to committee chairs on new guidance and procedures, and to provide help navigating our website with its many helpful items designed to make committee chairs' jobs easier.

Each February, the PCC maps out FUUSA's major events for the following church year, to make sure they are spread out evenly over the course of the church year and to assure that no conflicts occur.

PCC coordinates the designation of committees for special focus for each Sunday service. Each "Committee of the Week" takes responsibility for reading announcements and also has an opportunity to describe the committee's purpose, goals, and to highlight any upcoming committee special events.

This year, after much discussion revolving around solicitations by committees in the Sunday service, the PCC instituted a schedule, maintained by the office, of planned solicitations in the Sunday service for money and goods. The purpose of the list is to avoid the situation which occurred in the past where multiple solicitations are being made on a given Sunday, and the committees doing the soliciting are unaware that others are soliciting in the same service. This schedule allows committees to reschedule their solicitations well in advance in order to avoid conflicts if they see a need to.

Supporting Volunteers

PCC's Unsung Hero Award, begun in 2005, is awarded to persons who have made significant contributions to the life of the congregation, contributions that have up to that point be unheralded and unappreciated by the congregation. Recipients are recognized at a Sunday service with a citation and a token of the congregation's appreciation. This year the task of choosing the recipients was made less catch-as-catch-can (The PCC couldn't discuss and choose recipients when the potential choices were in the room) by establishing an Unsung Hero Committee to make the selections. The committee's first act was choosing Don Odell as this year's recipient. Don was recognized for the many, many hours he has devoted behind the scenes to helping maintain FUUSA so all of us can enjoy this great institution, and for the energy and enthusiasm which he has devoted to serving on more than a dozen different committees, just in the last ten years. Thanks, Don, for all you do!

Religious Education Council

Religious Education Program for Children and Youth

Leah Purcell, Director of Religious Education; Tracie Tilgner, Religious Education Council Chair

Religious Education Volunteers (not elected)

Teaching team members: Amy Jesaitis, Marshall Miller, Jessica Rae, Laurel Herendeen, Sharon Babala, Patti Jo Newell, Bruce Rodgers, Sarah Stanwicks, Elisa Grimm, Tulin Ture, Jon Bick, Terry Way, Ann Von Linden, Elizabeth Baldes, Mary Fellows, Christine Vanderlan, Deirdre Harwick; Mike Myers, Darnell Rohrbaugh, Liz Halversen, Laurie Beberwyck, Alan Beberwyck, Marietta Angelotti, Mike DeVolder, Winston Hagborg, Britany Orlebeke, Jill Peckenpaugh, Cari Abatamarco, Lee Newberg, Kevin Purcell, Lynne Lekakis, Laura Churchill, Tracie Tilgner, Brian Carr, Lauren Tobias, Meredith Andrews, Molly Daniels, Tyler Kessel, Joanna Heinsohn, John Scaringe, Kathy Macri

Children's Chapel Accompanist: Karen Greene

Workshop Rotation Leaders and volunteers: Terry Way, Jessica Rae, Anne Marie Haber, Carol Young, Adrian Cattell, Chuck Manning, Linda Hunt, Pam Clements

Rite of Passage Mentors: Mary Myers, Barbara Metz, Elissa Kane, Kate Nuding, Sheila Gray

RE Council Members (Elected) Tracie Tilgner (chair), Sarah Martin, Brian Frank, Mary Myers, Dee Van Riper, Cari Abatamarco, Owen Devine, Annika Pfluger, Jennifer Quail, Sandy

Stone, Jan Satin, Dave Quist, John Scaringe; Brian Frank resigned this year, but the REC did not seek to have the Nominating Committee fill his slot; the REC may have as few as 9 members and Brian continued to support the work of the REC and volunteer on Sunday mornings.

There were 144 children and youth enrolled in Sunday school.

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 defined their mission and vision in 2009 to be a Unitarian Universalist Lifespan Community of Learners, dedicated to creating a safe, nurturing and welcoming enviroing for individuals and families to learn and grow. The four objectives identified are:

- To instill Unitarian Universalist values by internalizing and practicing our seven principles
- To promote stewardship through participation in and caring for our congregation, our denomination, our world community and institutions that promote Unitarian Universalist values
- To offer opportunities to formulate and celebrate one's Unitarian Universalist identity and beliefs
- To provide opportunities for spiritual, philosophical, ethical and faith development across the ages of life and stages of personal growth

The DRE and one member of the Council serve on the Safe Congregation Response Task Force. The DRE and one member of the Council serve on the Lifespan Learning Committee.

Accomplishments in 2014-15

The REC members serve as Sunday morning RE Office Assistants to welcome newcomers and address contingencies with Sunday school both when Leah is present and when she's on vacation or attending conferences.

The REC planned five multigenerational events: Pasta Potluck and RE Open House in October; Holiday Crafts Workshop in December; Halloween Party and Trick or Treat for the FOCUS Food Panty in October; HUUGGs (Huge UU Greetings and Goodies) packages sent to our recently graduated youth in February; Sundae Sunday in June.

The Council uses these lenses in evaluating and planning their work: FUUSA's Mission Statement and Strategic Plan: the REC Covenant and Mission; Multicultural/Anti-oppression/Anti-racism. Examples of initiatives in these areas include:

Adoption of a new REC covenant that has explicit expectations.

Sponsoring 2 more volunteers to be facilitators of Our Whole Lives at the Jr/Senior High level and offering Our Whole Lives for the 4th/5th grade group in the spring.

REC sponsorship of youth and an advisor to attend a weekend training on the Fundamentals of Healthy Youth Group Ministry; Leah meets regularly with youth group advisors and helped with facilitate a re-visioning process with youth and advisors.

Discussion of responses to events in Ferguson and Black Lives Matter: the Council sought guidance on best ways to talk with children; Leah promoted resources geared to be age appropriate and offered to facilitate a parent support group on talking to children about racism. Plans for the group are still in progress at the time of writing this report.

Discussion of the book *Toxic Charity* and consideration of how to best help children and youth learn compassionate and respectful ways to partner with communities for service projects

Tailoring the *Neighboring Faiths* curricula for middle school students to be respectful, curious and non-evaluative when visiting other houses of worship; assessing the goals of the curriculum; looking at how to better help children learn to abide with people of other faiths and appreciate the wisdom of their faiths

Researching models for Sunday school that are less volunteer intensive. While RE registration has remained about the same for the past 4 years, attendance has dropped. About 80% of families attend about once a month, some less, some more. Using the traditional module that we have had in place for many years has made recruiting enough volunteers to teach Sunday school from among the parents and other adults in the congregation extremely difficult for Leah. Currently, 73% of Sunday school teachers are parents.

Researching different ways to offer meaningful worship to children, youth and families: examples of innovations in recent years have been Family Chapel and Workshop Rotation; a committee of the REC that included Leah met with Board member, Dick Dana several times and also with Rev. Sam and Joan Van Becelaere, our Regional Contact Person, to consider new possibilities.

Keeping the needs of families and the resources available in mind, the REC decided not to host the Mitten Tree this year because there was no solid connection to it and other RE programming; the REC will not host the Holiday Crafts Workshop next year because of low attendance the past 2 years; instead the Council will consider having a daytime multigenerational New Year's Celebration. The Service-to-Service event, held last year during the Annual Meeting is being modified so that any service projects chosen will be compassionate and respectful and so that volunteers who are members of the Society can attend the meeting.

As well as supporting the goals of the REC, Leah initiated several Full Week Faith events to enable families and others to connect with Albany UU and practice UUism in ways other than Sunday school: Blessing of the Backpacks at Albany UU in Sept; Evensong--a series of Small Group Ministry for families sessions--with a pot luck held on Wednesday evenings at Albany UU in the late fall; UU Advent and UU Countdown to spring on Face Book; and a series of spiritual spring nature walks at Five Rivers Environmental Center using the multigenerational *Circle of Trees* Tapestry of Faith curriculum. She also continued to hold monthly parent support group meetings on Sunday mornings using compassionate communication material.

Plans for next year

The REC plans to include the lens of multigenerational inclusivity along with the other lenses and goals of the Council and the congregation in evaluating the program and events, continue working on a less intensive volunteer model for Sunday school; and find ways to promote congregational support of the DRE to run an excellent RE program and to support children, youth and families in our congregation.

Social Responsibilities Council

Chairperson: Jean Poppei

Elected Members: Patty Burch, Ed Hancock, Jaye Holly, Karen Kaufmann, Martha Musser, and Jessica Rae

Appointed Members: Don Odell, Renee Panetta, Robb Smith, Jacqui Williams, and Betsy Wright.

Purpose:

According to the FUUSA 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:

Direct Service and Donations

- **FOCUS Food Pantry** (Patty Burch, Renee Panetta)

FUUSA has once again been a staunch supporter of **The FOCUS Interfaith Food Pantry**. The total collections for our 4th Sundays between September 2014 through March 2015: \$3577. As in the past, FUUSAns assembled soup bags for the pantry as well. This year’s bag total was 120. A total of 6 FUUSAns also continued volunteering at the Food pantry as well as several others volunteering at FOCUS hot breakfast program, cooking and serving the underserved in Albany. Funding for the FUUSAn-provided meals and soup bags comes from the SRC budget. The pantry feeds an average of 325 households, 300 elderly shut-ins and 300 children on a monthly basis. The breakfast program between November and February provided over 9900 meals (hot breakfasts and bag lunches). *Of note, if any member of FUUSA is in need of pantry services, as an affiliate congregation we are welcomed as guests to the pantry even if not within the FOCUS service area. Please feel free to contact the pantry manager Lorraine Houk or ask Patty Burch or Renee Panetta for details regarding participation as a guest of or a volunteer for the pantry*

Our second annual 'Undie Sunday' resulted in a total collection of 157 pieces for men, women and children.

We had both volunteers and attendees from FUUSA at the 2nd Annual (Albany) *Empty Bowls* Fund-raising program, which served over 175 guests! Three representatives from SRC (Patty Burch, Jean Poppei, Robb Smith) as well as our FUUSAn CROP organizer, Dawn Dana, attended the *Hunger Summit* hosted by the Sisters of St. Joseph at Carondelet Hospitality Center.

- **Give-Away-The-Plate** (Patty Burch)

SRC is authorized by the BOT to donate FUUSA’s Sunday collection (offering) to worthy organizations or causes a number of times across the church year. This includes cash donations as well as checks made out specifically to the designated not-for-profit organization. The following organizations were selected, upon application: Refugees and Immigrant Support Services, Trinity Alliance; Capital Roots; Non Violent Communication Camp; Unirondack for camp scholarships. A little over \$3000 was collected for the first three beneficiaries. The others are happening after the compilation

of this report.

Room Donations (Martha Musser)

SRC has been authorized by the BOT to make up to thirteen facilities donations for the 2014-15 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. The following organizations have benefitted: Interfaith Story Circle; League of Women Voters; PAUSE; Capital Roots; SUNY School of Criminal Justice; New Yorkers for Responsible Lending; WOW Company; Solarize Albany; Presbyterian Rainbow, In Our Own Voices.

- **Funding support**

SRC has made several donations to individuals across the church year to enable them to attend workshops, conferences, and award ceremonies in the social justice arena. In return, we at FUUSA have benefitted from their experiences as they shared them with us in forums, workshops, or less formal communication settings.

- **Sheridan Preparatory Academy (Lois Griffin and Martha Musser)**

In addition to the direct service provided at food pantries and homeless shelters, FUUSAns also volunteer at Sheridan Prep, which is a public elementary school located not far from FUUSA. There, volunteers work with classroom teachers to provide whatever assistance they may be looking for. An area of need that has come to our attention is the lack of a viable playground at Sheridan Prep; what they have now is considered one of the worst of all the Albany schools. There has been conversation across the year with the principal and with teachers to explore how FUUSA might be able to partner with them in the planning, funding, and construction of a new playground. Stay tuned!

Education

Across the year, SRC, along with the Green Sanctuary Committee, presented a number of forums. Forums presented by SRC included the following: *League of Women Voters on Re-districting in Albany; (Not) Talking about Suicide; When Did You Learn Black Lives Matter?; Giving Laws the Shape of Justice: and Learning to Advocate.*

SRC Table

On Sundays, immediately following the service, SRC maintains a table in Channing Hall where fair-trade items (coffee, chocolate, etc.) can be purchased as well as textile items from Central America. Monies from these sales go into the SRC designated fund over which the GSC and SRC share oversight. Around the winter holiday season, holiday cards from UUSC

are available for sale. The table is also used to distribute social justice information, collect signatures for petitions, and so forth.

Social Justice Actions

Many of our actions this church year have been bookended by the tragic events in Ferguson, MO and more recently, in Baltimore, MD, where evidence accumulated to suggest that Black lives do not matter. While recognizing that African-Americans are not the only group to be significantly marginalized in our society, members of SRC could not ignore the immediacy of the events occurring nationally and locally. Representatives of SRC participated in local vigils, rallies, anti-racism events to support the idea that Black lives *do* matter. In April, SRC created the Black Lives Matter Task Force with the following mission: *Recognizing the effects of systemic and long-lasting racism on people of color and striving to build on anti-oppression, justice-seeking work in our community, the Black Lives Matter Task Force was created by FUUSA's Social Responsibilities Council to identify specific areas of action, along with plans for education and implementation, to engage the congregation in counteractions to racial terrorism and oppression. Our Unitarian Universalist principles call us to this work in witness of practices such as racial profiling, targeted police violence, mass incarceration, economic and educational inequities, and judicial and environmental injustice.* The Task Force, open to all, has been meeting to develop specific actions to share with the larger FUUSA community.

Other areas of social action that members of SRC have participated in include Moral Mondays at the NYS capitol—an interfaith event—that has focused on issues such as pervasive hunger and poverty, raising the minimum wage, addressing educational inequities in NYS, and the criminal justice system (mass incarceration, removing juveniles from the adult system), the Climate March in NYC as well as more local events focused on renewable energy, neighborhood empowerment projects, and advocacy for justice at local, state and national levels.

Plans for next year: Several elected members of SRC are leaving the committee and so some reorganization will be necessary to take care of the roles they had assumed during their tenure. While we are sad to see them go, we hope they will continue to be involved as their time and energy permit. We look forward to welcoming new members.

One area in particular that we want to strengthen next year is the educational component of our mission and will devote time this summer to re-thinking this area. And, finally, we hope to do a better job of informing, and involving, the larger FUUSA community in our mission and social justice work.

Women for a Better World (Elizabeth Berberian, Convener)

Members of the group: Members are fluid as all women in the congregation are welcome to participate in the breakfasts.

Purpose of group: Our purpose is to build a social giving community, which empowers impoverished people through supporting existing health, educational or economic programs. We learn about development programs and contribute what is personally affordable to local, national or global causes.

Accomplishments in 2014-15: One breakfast was held in January 2015. Twenty women attended and donated \$850 to Grassroots Givers.

Plans for next year: Two breakfasts are scheduled: October 3, 2015 and January 9, 2016.

Green Sanctuary Committee

The Green Sanctuary Committee (GSC) at the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany was accredited in 2009 and has been active under the seventh principle, which is “respect for the interdependent web of human existence of which we are a part.” The goal of GSC is to focus our efforts in four areas -- environmental justice, worship and celebration, religious education, sustainable living-- while recognizing, as UUA President Peter Morales has stated, “Climate change is the gravest danger facing humanity today.”

Environmental Justice

Last year, FUUSA, in an effort to safeguard the health of all and to prevent environmental harm, passed a resolution that sought to ban fracking and support renewable energy sources:

Be it further RESOLVED that the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany, New York calls for legislation requiring substantial energy conservation and accelerating the development of renewable energy resources, to reduce dependence on fossil fuels (and the need for fracking) and avoid the disastrous effects of global warming.

This year, GSC followed up on the resolution by speaking to the Assistant Secretary for the Environment and by communicating with the UU Ministry of Earth. In addition, members of the GSC participated in the Climate Change March in New York City. Our attendees contributed to the Standing on the Side of Love crowd and carried banners and signs. GSC prepared a summary of the march from two people’s perspectives for publication in Windows.

Worship and Celebration/Religious education

Since climate issues can be overwhelming, GSC has changed its meeting agenda slightly to start with reflection. This moment of reflection allows us to renew our commitment, review successes and failures, to restate our purpose, to increase our resolve, and to provide encouragement and congratulations for work well done. A large part of GSC actions comprise education. Thus, members Anne Marie Haber and Jessica Rae collaborated with religious education in teaching about vermiculture and hands-on composting. There are now 5 worm bins in the RE rooms.

Sustainable Living

In 2013, FUUSA installed a solar array, which annually produces about 30 percent of the Society's electrical power while reducing our electricity bill. In addition, \$1,000 of the designated fund is being used to purchase some of the remaining electricity from wind rather than fossil fuel sources.

GSC has arranged or sponsored a total of 4 forums--all dealing with sustainable living and mankind's effect on climate change and the environment, and advertised these events to the community. The first forum, deftly moderated by Dave Musser, was a review of Society and individually-owned solar arrays with the attendant pros and cons. The second forum, the first-ever skyped forum, arranged and moderated by Carol Butt and presented by Dr. Gay Canough of Binghamton, discussed newer technologies to reduce carbon footprint. Both of these forums were summarized for publication in Windows. The third forum, arranged and moderated by Chris Bystroff and presented by Harry Moran, discussed sustainable investing. The last forum, which will be in May, will be given by master gardener Tim Burch, and will discuss vegetable gardens.

GSC presented a potluck in April, and assisted Rev. Lynn Ashley on Earth Day with her sermon. GSC is currently hoping to have the City of Albany plant serviceberry trees on Washington Avenue in a location outside of Emerson as an Earth Day venture. GSC will either donate the trees or use money from the designated fund.

GSC members are available at the SRC table with important information about the environment. There is an "Ask GSC" box for questions at the table and a box soliciting suggestions. GSC continues with a magazine exchange and a book borrowing program; and continues to support the mantra of Reduce Reuse Recycle and Rethink by collecting cell phones and some batteries, personal care products, Brita filters, coats and blankets, cardboard egg crates -- all from the new recycle center, and Christmas tree lights and seed pots at the table. GSC has posted information on environmental issues on the bulletin board, and has tried to energize the congregation with a "Commit an Act of Environmental Kindness" campaign. GSC has prepared brief environmental

reminders for publication in the Sunday program, Thursday e-mail, and Windows, and has prepared a list of items for individual commitment by Society members.

GSC members are also acting in many individual capacities on environmental issues outside GSC. Some advocate for solar power (Solarize Albany), some work to stop potentially explosive oil train shipments in the area (PAUSE), and some are working on mounting a photo of our solar array outside the building so passers-by can see what we have done.

GSC has had meetings on August 24, October 23, November 16, January 18, February 15 and March 15. It will have three more meetings before the end of the church year, and hopes that one of these meetings will be with fellow “greenies” from CRUUNY congregations. Attendance at GSC meetings varies from 5 to 12, but 48 people are on the e-mail list and many respond with information and suggestions. Attendance at meetings depends on how many other activities have been scheduled at the same time. And visiting at the SRC table has decreased since the bagels were discontinued.

Elected officials are Betsy Wright, chair, and Carol Butt, vice-chair. GSC has very active and thoughtful participants. In addition, Chris Bystroff has performed numerous functions, including taking minutes at meetings, acting as coordinator and announcer.

STANDING COMMITTEES

Finance Committee

Chair: Katharine Harris

Members: Sue Berzinis, Chuck Manning, Steven Moskowitz, Dick Brewer, Becky Myer, Reese Satin, Dave Metz, Sheila Gray, Kathy Harris

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

Accomplishments in 2014-15: 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 Hall. Successfully monitored ongoing financial activities so that fiscal year 2014-15 achieved at least a zero balance, if not a modest amount of unspent funds. 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.

Plans for next year: As preached and practiced over many past years, continue the accomplishments of 2014-15. Continue to make sure that the mortgage on Emerson Hall is planned for and fully paid until the debt is retired. Notably, the mortgage will be refinanced early in 2017, so the Finance Committee will work with the Board of Directors and its other governing bodies to ensure that appropriate steps are taken early in the process to ensure that this process happens responsibly. Future items for consideration may include evaluating the potential financial impacts of new social justice projects.

Membership Committee

Chair: Peter Brown

Members: Mary Applegate, Elizabeth Berberian, Barbara Manning, Kathy Hodges, Barbara Metz, Don Odell, John Sherman and Sam Trumbore

Most of the members of the congregation have been called this year in an unprecedented effort to connect with the congregation--outside the Stewardship campaign--to strengthen ties and discover issues. Many members have expressed pleasure at being called and a database of responses has been created. This data can provide information for further efforts at strengthening our Society. If the Growth Through Service initiative is developed it will supersede this effort in future years.

The Committee has met regularly, and been especially benefited by service from the two sub-committees reporting below:

Newcomer Welcoming Team, Kathy Hodges

The Newcomer Welcoming Team offers periodic orientations during the year which give prospective members of FUUSA an opportunity to get acquainted with others in a small group setting, gain some basic Unitarian Universalist history, beliefs and values. It is also a time to learn about FUUSA's membership process. At these "Getting to Know UU" opportunities, participants have an opportunity to share their own and others' spiritual and religious journey which is always interesting and informative. We like to say that "Faith is a Journey--not a Guilt Trip." It is always a great opportunity to explore and share our life journey together.

We also like to invite and remind ALL members and friends of the congregation that each of us is essential to the process of creating an open, friendly society that welcomes our new friends and visitors. Each of us is essential to the work of welcoming friends, new ones and old ones...."welcoming all free seekers of truth and meaning."

New Member Integration Team, Barbara Manning

We have continued to revise and improve our process for integrating new members into the FUUSA community. On each Sunday where we recognized new members, a reception was held for new members, their families, Membership committee members, and Board members. This is a relatively small setting where new members are honored for their commitment to join FUUSA and have the opportunity to meet some more people in the congregation. Photos and bios of each new member are printed in “Windows” and posted on the Membership News bulletin board in Channing Hall. We are continuing to explore other ways to help new members be part of the FUUSA community.

In our efforts to make our work more effective, we have begun a transition to combine the Newcomer Welcoming Team and the Sunday Hospitality Team into one team called the “Welcoming Team”. Kathy Hodges deserves a huge “thank you” for her many years as chair of the Membership Committee and her more recent role as leader of the Newcomer Welcoming Team. Kathy will continue to lead organization of our Getting to Know Unitarian Universalism or “GTKUU” sessions. These will be part of the Welcoming Team. We will be continuing to make improvements in our membership process and will be working with the Board’s emphasis on “service”.

This year’s numbers:

- We offered **four** newcomer orientations “Getting to Know UU” on Saturday mornings
- We introduced **17** new members to the congregation on **two** New Member Sundays this church year
- We certified (with the UUA) **387** members on January 1, 2014, and **380** members on January 1, 2015, a net loss of seven.

Nominating Committee

Chairperson: Paula Moskowitz

Members: Laura Churchill; Molly Daniels, Dave Metz; Donna Meixner; Sandy Stone

In accordance with Articles VIII and IX of FUUSA’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)

The elections are held as part of the Annual Meeting in May. According to our Bylaws, elections for positions on the Board of Trustees, Nominating Committee and Endowment Trust must be contested, and balloting conducted by the ranking of choice method. 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 accord 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.

In recruiting candidates for elective offices, the committee reaches out to the congregation in a variety of ways. It is a regular contributor to Windows both to inform the congregation of the “mechanics” of the election process, such as nominating petitions and absentee ballots, and to promote the visibility of the leadership selection process and FUUSA governance. The committee strives to achieve a 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 completed last year by the Nominating Committee. 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 a 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 position nominated for. We also post the names and pictures of the candidates in the church lobby, and hold two Candidate Sundays prior to the Annual Meeting. On these Sundays candidates are introduced to the congregation and wear colorful, identifying buttons during coffee hour.

The Nominating Committee wishes to thank all of those members who are continuing in office for next year, and all those who have stepped up to run for leadership roles. The time and talent of these folks benefit us all and help keep our congregation a vital and thriving community. Thank you.

Personnel Committee

Chairperson: Bob Guerrin

Members: Sue Berzinis, Tim Burch, Molly Daniels (partial year), Margie Eddy (partial year), Linda Hunt

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

Accomplishments: A major task of the committee each year is to propose staff salaries to the Finance Committee. UUA guidelines, based on regional, demographic, and other characteristics, provide goals for our salary structures. We were able to accomplish this for most staff but we are always constrained by anticipated budget income.

We were able to apply, for the first full church year, the significant changes in our contribution to health care coverage.

We clarified reporting channels, for example directing requests of travel and professional development funds through the minister.

We began the much-needed review and revision of the Personnel Manual.

Plans for next year: The committee will continue to monitor personnel policy issues and employee benefits with the goal of bringing all staff well within the UUA salary guidelines. We will also continue to review duties assigned to staff to assure efficient functioning.

SPECIAL COMMITTEES

No special committees were in existence at the beginning of the year. Two new special committees were formed at the end of the year: the Growth Through Service Leadership Team and the Organizational Effectiveness Working Group.

VOLUNTEER POSITIONS

Childcare Coordinator: Paula Brewer

Purpose: Provide childcare for FUUSA congregational events employing FUUSA Youth aged 13+ as childcare providers,

Accomplishments:--Childcare provided for social and community building events such as the Annual Dinner, Stewardship Gatherings, Auction and Wine and Cheese Tasting.--Childcare provided for SRC sponsored congregational potluck.--Childcare provided to Lifespan Learning's Non-Violent communication workshop.--Childcare provided for Getting to Know UU sessions.-- To assist in fundraising, the youth going on the service trip to Guatemala were given first choice as childcare providers.

Plans for next year:--Continue to provide for FUUSA congregational events --Expand childcare to all Lifespan Learning events.

Denominational Affairs Liaison: Don Odell

Members: Don Odell has been the FUUSA liaison for several years, and would welcome and is seeking additional participants in this effort.

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

Accomplishments:

- **Capital Region Unitarian Universalists of New York (CRUUNY).** The congregations of the Capital Region (FUUSA, Unitarian Universalists Society of Schenectady (UUSS), Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Glens Falls, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Saratoga Springs) meet periodically, usually represented by the ministers and congregational presidents, to plan activities that can better provide a regional face of Unitarian Universalism. One should note the underwriting announcements on WAMC, and the annual joint service. The most recent one was held on March 1, 2015 at Doane Stuart School in Rensselaer featuring Rev. Dr. Mark Morrison-Reed on “Crossing the Bridge to Selma.”
- **St. Lawrence District (SLD).**
The St. Lawrence District and the Ohio-Meadville District met jointly at Niagara Falls, NY on March 27-28, 2015. The keynote speaker was Rev. Scott Taylor speaking on “The Space Between: Building a new day by strengthening the ties that bind.” The Gould Lecturer was Rev. Tom Chulak, who addressed “The Sum of the Parts.”

FUUSA sent delegates to the CERG/SLD 2015 Annual Assembly. These included Dawn and Dick Dana.

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

FUUSAns are involved in district activities. Leah Purcell serves on the Nominating/Leadership Development Committee. The district and regional group also provides a number of other services including Congregational Growth and Development, Lifespan Religious Education, Youth Programs, Campus and Young Adult Programs to name a few. The district is a member of the Central East Regional Group (CERG).

- **Central East Regional Group (CERG).** The UUA has established regional entities, and the district is a member of the Central East Regional Group (CERG), which will serve the St. Lawrence, Ohio-Meadville, Joseph Priestley and Metro New York districts. UUA staff support will come from the region in the future.
- **New York State Convention of Universalists (NYSCU).** FUUSA sent delegates to the NYSCU Fall 2014 annual meeting in Watertown, including Julie Lomoe and Robb Smith. The keynote speaker was Rev. Christana Wille McKnight addressing Growing With the Universalist Message of Love. The annual meeting also included workshops, worship and the business meeting. FUUSAn Mark Butt was elected to the NYSCU Board.

- **Unitarian Universalist Association.** FUUSA sent several delegates to participate in the UUA 2014 (and 53rd) General Assembly in Providence, RI on June 25-29, 2014. A large number of FUUSAns attended this general assembly. Delegates were Dawn Dana, Dick Dana, Karen Kaufmann, Jan McCracken, Mary Myers, Jean Poppei, Peggy Sherman, and Jacqui Williams. Others included Mary Applegate, Sharon Babala, Anna Brewer, Chris Bystroff, Molly Daniels, Michael Hernandez, Amy Lent, David Musser, Martha Musser, Jon Newell, Sigrin Newell, Johanna Panetta, Michaela Pochily, Leah Purcell, Jan Smith, Tracie Tilgner, Rev. Sam Trumbore, and Linda Way.

This year's General Assembly is being held in Portland, OR June 24-28, 2015 with the theme of "Building a New Way."

The Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations (UUA), for 2014 is composed of 1,047 congregations in North America (Canada, U.S. & Mexico) with a total of 158,186 members. The Association acts as a national and international voice for Unitarian Universalism, with the final power residing at the congregational level. Organizationally, it provides support for Unitarian Universalism at the regional and congregational level, for which the member congregations pays annual dues.

- FUUSA participated in the Congregational Poll on whether to recommend that the Statement of Conscience (SOC): Reproductive Justice be submitted to the 2015 General Assembly. The FUUSA Board of Trustees and Social Responsibilities Council so voted and recommended this action. Through Windows, the congregation was notified of the opportunity to comment on this SOC

Plans for next year: The plan is to continue to inform the congregation of the activities, and programs of the respective district, regional, state, and national organizations of the UUA, and to encourage congregational participation in the respective organizations.

Interfaith Impact of New York State (IINYS) Liaison: Don Odell

FUUSA is a member of IINYS. FUUSA members, Robb Smith serves as executive director of IINYS, Don Odell is secretary of IINYS, and Board members of IINYS include Rev. Sam Trumbore, Larry Gambino, Rev. Bobbi Place (retired community minister).

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 is on May 5, 2015, with the four major thrusts on the Humane Alternatives to Long Term Solitary Confinement, An Office of Special Investigation for police-involved killing of civilians, Gender Equality Non Discrimination Act (GENDA), and the Reproductive Services Act. We partner with others in areas of interest.. We hope to have significant participation by FUUSAns.

Conscience in Public Life forums continue in Rochester. In addition to the four 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. We do have a success with an imperfect increase in the minimum wage.

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 the Social Responsibilities bulletin board in Channing Hall, and our web site at www.interfaithimpactnys.org.

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

The IINYS Board has 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 and/or pick up a brochure at FUUSA.

Reception Coordinator: Jan Satin

This group provides receptions for members and families to celebrate rites of passage.

Receptions this year were held for Ruth Kaufmann, Mark Yolles, Irene Saulsbery and Nigel Wright, as well as the usual reception between the Christmas Eve services.

We wish to thank all those volunteers who help with donations of food as well as the usual kitchen work. My thanks to Barb Manning, Sandy Stone and many others who are always willing workers. We know our FUUSA families appreciate us.

Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) Liaison: Don Odell

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

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

The UUSC relies on our members and supporters to fund its programs. Anyone wishing to support human rights and social justice is welcome and encouraged to join the UUSC. Over 60% of the UUSC budget comes from individual donations, which includes individual memberships by a number of FUUSAns, and from the sale of UUSC holiday cards and Guest at Your Table.

Accomplishments: In the 2014-15 year, FUUSAns contributed \$949.91 in the 2014 Guest at Your Table campaign. All contributed at levels to be members of the UUSC, and five of the contributions will be matched by the Veatch Fund to enable the UUSC to continue its social justice work worldwide and in the United States. The Religious Education Council and our Director of Religious Education, Leah Purcell, coordinated and conducted this activity

Forty four packs of UUSC holiday cards were purchased at FUUSA during November and December 2013. Thank you to Ann Kearny and members of the Social Responsibilities Council for assisting it this effort on Sunday mornings.

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

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

Plans for next year: The plan for 2015-16 is to continue to cooperate with the UUSC in promoting its mission of advancing human rights and social justice in the United States and around the world.

This will be done through continued handling of the UUSC holiday cards and Guest at Your Table. It will also include periodic and timely reports to the congregation and appropriate Boards, Councils and committees on the efforts of the UUSC and the congregation's participation in those efforts.

COMMITTEES

Annual Fellowship Dinner Committee

Chair: Bob Franklin

Members: Ann D'Attilio, Amy Lent, Meredith Mercer, Charlie Poltenson, Linda Way

The Annual Fellowship Dinner was held on April 17, 2015 at the Century House in Latham, NY. One hundred and forty-seven FUUSAns and guests were in attendance. A social hour was held, followed by dinner. Music during this was provided by The Musicians of Ma'alwyck. A Stewardship update was given by the Stewardship Chair, Chuck Manning. The traditional recognition of members was provided by Meredith Andrews, extending the line of Weissbard family members to perform this tradition. A musical skit entitled "Frozen Assets" was performed, followed by dancing to Matt Edwards' band, The Big Easy Revue.

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:

- Restoration of flood damage in the basement of RE and Emerson.
- Remodeling of B3-B4, including new drop ceiling, new lighting, carpet tiles, paint, etc.
- Installation of air conditioning in Channing Hall and Sanctuary.
- Replacement of many ballasts in fluorescent light fixtures.
- Refinishing the floor in Emerson Community Hall and Channing Hall.
- Developing plans to improve the efficiency of lighting in the RE building.
- Routine maintenance tasks, some of which were formerly done by staff.
- Many minor repairs as needed.

Plans:

- As funds permit, improve RE lighting efficiency.
- Basically more of the same that we have been doing on an on-going basis for years.

Building Use Committee

Chairperson: Reese Satin

Members: Dave Metz, Lynne Lekakis, Terry Way, Alyssa Yeager, Amy Lent, Jean Poppei

Purpose: We ensure that our building promotes FUUSA's mission by making policy and procedures, and developing plans that create welcoming, functional and affordable facilities that:

- Preserve our building for future use;
- Provide spaces that meet the needs of our members and renters and that support deserving community organizations;
- Provide income that significantly contributes to the stewardship of our community.

Accomplishments:

Worked with Board representative to revise and consistently implement insurance requirements for rentals.

--Created and implemented new training for building hosts and revised building host information binder.

--Used rental fees to have new audio jacks installed in Channing and the Sanctuary allowing mp3 players, CD players, etc. to play directly through the sound system.

-- Offered a wide variety of public and private rental events including: 6 Weddings, 7 Memorials, 43 Cultural Events, 320 Worship Services and spiritual gatherings of other religious organizations, 5 Musical performances, 9 Parties, 37 Dances, 25 Conferences/presentations/training days, 63 Classes/workshops, 116 Substance recovery meetings, 73 Other Meetings

--Had a table at get connected event.

--Worked with SRC to smoothly implement donated building use rentals to facilitate worthy groups who cannot afford even the reduced rate. Donated over \$10,000 worth of building use to sponsored and reduced rate rentals including the following organizations: Children at the Well Interfaith Storytelling Circle, League of Women Voters , PAUSE, UAlbany, Capital Roots Community Gardens, Grassroots Tour (WOW International), Narcotics Anonymous, Alcoholics Anonymous, Presbyterian Rainbow, Solarize Albany, Refugee Round Table, New Yorkers for Responsible Lending

Plans for next year:

--Continue to work with SRC on effective implementation of donated building rentals.

--Develop consistent guidelines for use of building hosts for donated events.

--Work with PR committee to develop a wedding/rentals specific website, and to produce and disseminate marketing materials for rentals. --Submitted by Alyssa Yeager

Caring Network

Chairperson: Eileen Hoffman

Members: Alyssa Yeager, Amy Lent, Ann Lapinski, Barbara Manning, Betsey Kuzia, Betsy Wright, Bobbi Place, Deb Grier, Eileen Hoffman, Jan Satin, Judy Hanson, Kathy Hodges, Leah Purcell, Linda Way, Mary Ann Randall, Michaela Pochily, Pam Crane, Sam Trumbore, Sandy Stone, Sharon Babala, Trish Zima

Purpose: To provide support and encouragement to FUUSA 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. Another member also assumes the responsibility of sending cards for various occasions in behalf of the Caring Network.

Accomplishments: Approximately 39 people 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). An important role of the committee is to refer people to the Pastoral Care Associates when the needs of the individual or family fall into their purview. This has worked quite well for both groups. The annual Valentine flower delivery was coordinated again by Judy Hanson and was well received. In addition, a December holiday cookie delivery was added which was also very welcomed by the members who live in congregate care facilities and private homes.

Sadly, two of our long term members passed away this year – Irene Saulsbery and Mark Yolles. Their contributions to this committee over the years were greatly appreciated.

After some publicity we have welcomed 4 new members to our group who have already jumped in to help on various occasions.

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 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.

Flower Committee

Chairperson: Sandy Stone

Flower arrangers: Dorry Campano, Lorraine English, Barb Manning, Barb Metz, Lois Webb, Sandy Stone

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

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

If you have an interest in flower arranging, or just love flowers, we welcome any new members to this committee.

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

Fun(d)raising Committee

Chair: Chris Jensen

Members: The Fun(d)raising committee consists of the chair, plus the chairs/co-chairs of all the events under the Fun(d)raising “umbrella”. Currently, this is the Holiday Craft Bazaar and Café, Goods and Services Auction, Wine and Cheese Tasting, and Beer Tasting.

Purpose of group: As denoted by the name, the purpose of the various events is to help supplement the FUUSA budget and have some fun providing a wide variety of food, services, entertainment and most importantly, community building through shared work toward common goals.

Accomplishments: Each event committee will report its event below

Plans for next year: The Fun(d)raising committee of the whole is meeting this month to consider alternatives and potential additions, and other ways to build community, raise some money, and have Fun!

--FUUSA Goods and Services Auction 2015

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

In addition, Frank Woods, Dave MacLeod, Mike Babala, and Deb Vogel assisted the evening of the auction.

Purpose: Food sampling, socializing, raffles, a best hat contest, sharing events and services among our community, and FUNdraising for FUUSA were the mission.

Accomplishments:The annual **FUUSA Goods and Services Auction** was held on the evening of March 14, 2015 with a theme of the “Mad Hatter’s Tea Party”. There were 107 totals items up for bid as both live and fixed price auction. These were donated by 53 members and friends (not

counting participating spouses!). Over 110 people attended the live auction, and others participated by putting their slip in the fixed price envelopes beforehand. Winning bids were made by 80 bidders and ranged from \$5 to \$210, with a total of over \$22,000 raised. Over the course of a year, the auction committee planned for this event through a series of committee and subcommittee meetings.

Plans for next year: The next auction will be held in early March next year. Offers to join the committee and assist can be made to one of the committee members or the upcoming co-chairs, Randy Rosette 783-2637 or Linda Hunt 432-3212.

--Beer Tasting Fun(d)raiser

Convener: Sue Berzinis

Members: Don Odell, Sue & Al Berzinis, Bill Newman, John Sherman, Chris Jensen, Randy Rosette, Kathy Harris, Patty Burch

Purpose: The Beer Tasting event was an offshoot of the Wine & Cheese Fundraiser group. We wanted to offer another fun, educational opportunity as a Fun(d)raiser program.

Accomplishments A Loca-Brew Dinner was held on Nov.1, 2014. A small group of beer lovers selected the best of local beers and served a multi-course dinner with 2 beer pairings per course. FUUSAn Bill Newman, a former local brewer, offered insights to understanding beer styles and food pairings. We raised ~\$600 with rave reviews by many of the 48 attendees.

Plans for next year: A core group is planning a simpler event for next fall. If you are interested in tasting beers and pairing foods, we'll be working hard this summer on someone's back deck!

--Wine & Cheese Fun(d)raiser

Convener: Alifair Skebe

Members: Eric Paul, Al DeSalvo, Rick Whitebread, Don Odell, John Sherman, Peter Meixner, Sue & Al Berzinis

Purpose of group: To offer an educational and social event while raising additional funds for the FUUSA general operating budget. The group is open to all who have an interest in wine and cheese, to use their creative talents to find pairings to share with others.

Accomplishments : The 10th annual event on Feb. 28, 2015 presented wines and cheeses in an anniversary program entitled “Simple Pleasures.” We offered tasty, affordable, and available wines paired with delectable, award-winning cheese and condiments from the U.S. and abroad. Some of the highlights were a domestic sparkling wine from New Mexico, truffle honey, Corsican walnut / fig jam, and a domestic triple crème from Eastern New York. We raised over \$1,300 with exceptional reviews from the 60 attendees. Many said it was the best year yet!

Plans for next year: The group is planning another event for next February. If you are interested in helping to plan this event, start making notes of the good pairings that you have discovered and share them with this group. The process is lots of fun!

--Holiday Craft Bazaar and Café

Co-chairs: Barb Manning, Jan Satin,

Members: Paula Moskowitz, Arlene Gilbert, Linda English, Patty Burch, Jo Keers, Mary Semon Heinsohn, Meredith Mercer, Eileen Hoffman, Linda Way, Donna Meixner , Sandy Stone, Randy Rosette

Purpose of group: This is a fun event that brought many FUUSAns together as well as made a significant amount of money.

Accomplishments: This is a fun event that brought many FUUSAns together as well as made a significant amount of money. Many members and friends of the congregation helped set up, contributed baked goods and/or hand-crafted items to sell, peeled and cut up apples, made baking mix or soup mix gift bags, worked as sales people on Saturday and Sunday, made soup, worked in the kitchen, served food, cleaned up, contributed books, organized books, came and shopped and ate lunch, bought pies, and donated items for Granny’s Attic. Most of these activities were done in groups, creating more connections and interactions amongst FUUSAns – creating stronger community. We had more people come shop than last year, we had an interesting array of outside vendors and we netted about 4% more than last year, raising over \$7,716 for the FUUSA General Fund.

Plans for next year: Although the Holiday Bazaar & Craft Fair has been a successful event – both in terms of connecting people and creating community while raising a significant amount of money for FUUSA , the co-chairs have decided that after leading this event for nine years, it is time to step down. At this point in time, there are no volunteers who are interested in filling these roles. The Fun(d)raising Committee will be exploring other potential ways of raising money.

Gardening

Chair: Paula Moskowitz

Members: Numerous Volunteers that help out once or multiple times over the growing season. You will recognize them by their dirty fingernails!

Purpose: The Gardening Committee, affectionately known as the "dirty fingernail" group, works to maintain the welcoming appearance of FUUSA by maintaining the gardens surrounding our facility. We offer a combination of "one shot" and ongoing volunteer opportunities, allowing all ages and experience levels to participate and work alongside other FUUSANs with similar interests. Volunteering is easy as we use technology - Volunteer Spot on the FUUSA web site, to facilitate the process. Gardening is not just about pulling weeds and deadheading plants, in fact it builds community as we work together in the spring and fall on major cleanup projects and in small groups during the season. We collaborate via debates whether a "new" plant is a weed or if it is something to be nurtured, helping each other drag a heavy bag of branches to the city pick up point, and figuring out how to get the hoses to reach a particularly parched garden. Along the way we catch up on key happenings in our lives, sharing our pride in helping to enhance the neighborhood where FUUSA "lives". Plantings in our gardens also memorialize past members, keeping their history and contributions to our FUUSA community alive.

Accomplishments: We maintained and enhanced our five garden areas - the Heron Garden which sits between the wheelchair ramp and the Washington Ave side of the building; The Peace Pole Garden which surrounds the Peace Pole on Washington Ave. and extends to the area in front of the Channing Hall bay window; The Jones Memorial Garden which is in front of the sanctuary; the West Street Garden which is behind Emerson Hall; and, for lack of a better name, the "bike rack" garden which occupies the space behind the bike rack.

Plans for Next Year: Continue to monitor the gardens to ensure plants are performing the function of enhancing our property and maintaining a welcoming appearance for our members, the neighborhood and anyone who walks by.

History & Archives

Chair: Patricia Bailey

Members: Eva Gemmill, Cindy Dean

Goals: Organizing, systematizing and updating the archives and continuing to keep good order to preserve our history and to make records accessible to all FUUSA members. We continue to work on identifying the boxes and articles stored in the Archives and to maintain only one copy of those materials. We hope to create an alpha list of the files along with a diagram of the location of items of interest and value. We continue to explore the cost and value of putting all cassette tapes (over 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 to 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 2014-2015 we have increased the amount of 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

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: The highlight of the year for us was the acquisition of an additional bookcase for the Library to hold our growing collection, many as-yet-uncataloged books in the lower cabinets and in boxes and non-print materials and pamphlets. For this we are very grateful to DAVE METZ who made the arrangements to make this happen and to DAVE VADNEY, the master cabinet maker, who created our beautiful new shelves. Now in April, we have just begun to re-shelve the cataloged collection, leaving space for many new books for which there had been no room on the shelves. We will catalog a number of books and non-print materials now stashed in boxes and cabinets. And we will be able to continue acquiring new books to fulfill our library's mission.

Relating to goals and objectives: Just a few highlights include the following books added this year related to the goals below:

"... spiritual, philosophical, and theological beliefs and practices": *The Quest for a Moral Compass: A Global History of Ethics* by Kenan Malik;

"Celebrate the diversity of beliefs..." Among other relevant books, we bought: *Reclaiming Prophetic Witness: Liberal Religion in the Public Square* by Paul Rasor..

"Lead in sustainable environmental practices": We added *This changes everything : capitalism vs. the climate* by Naomi Klein; *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History* by Elizabeth Kolbert

"...develop deep knowledge of the history and values of Unitarian Universalism..." We added: *For faith and freedom : a short history of Unitarianism in Europe* by Charles A. Howe.

"Integrate anti-racism, anti-oppression, and multicultural work..." We added: *Death of a King : the real story of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s final year* by Tavis Smiley; *The Selma Awakening* Mark D. Morrison-Reed; *Undocumented: How Immigration Became Illegal* by Aviva Chomsky.

Books: Total holdings = 1,409 books as of April 13, 2015, an increase of 37 over 1372 this time last year.

Circulation: 88 books borrowed in 2014; 78 of them had been returned as of April 14, 2015.

Budget: As of Feb 28, 2015 Joy Library had spent \$ 287 (71.8%) of our total budget of \$ 400. We have \$ 113 remaining, which, as of April 13, 2015 we have spent but have not yet submitted.

Joy Library notes appeared in columns in Feb, Mar, Apr, Sept, Oct, Nov.,Dec. issues of *Windows*.

Plans for next year: With the addition of the new double bookcase, we need to address the problem of how we want to manage non-print materials, pamphlets and the historical collection.

We still want 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. I hope to find such a picture this year.

Lifespan Learning Committee

Chairperson: Jan McCracken

Members: Paula Brewer, Toni Daniel, Don Odell, Karen Greene, Tom Mercer, Leah Purcell, Rev. Sam Trumbore

Purpose

The Lifespan Learning program provides opportunities for members and friends at FUUSA to learn, grow, and develop in faith, spirit, and action. The function of the committee is to create and support learning events for adults in our congregation and also assist the Director of Religious Education and the Religious Education Council in creating multi-generational learning opportunities. UU faith formation can come in many shapes and sizes. Classes on UU history and heritage, UU identity, world religions, spiritual practices, compassionate communication, anti-oppression, end-of-life issues, and leadership are among the topics and areas of the committee's focus.

Lifespan Learning programs will continue to incorporate community building strategies in their design, provide forums for small group learning and ministry, offer diversity, anti-bias, and nonviolent communication training opportunities, and support theological and philosophical diversity.

Friends and members are encouraged to participate as learners, or as teachers and facilitators. The LL committee invites proposals for learning events whose content falls within the intended program areas and they are ready and willing to support and assist in carrying out such activities. Also encouraged are people who would like to donate time and energy to helping organize and run learning events. There are a number of ways that volunteers can contribute to Lifespan Learning beyond attending committee meetings!

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

Wellspring:

- **Wellspring I:** full year program of spiritual deepening and connection facilitated by Sharon Babala and Karen Kaufmann, with six participants.
- **Wellspring Faithful Action:** full year program for participants who took Wellspring I and want to continue their spiritual deepening, facilitated by Dave Munro. This was a pilot program which included eight people who made the commitment to explore their spiritual lives together, in the hope of creating safe space for examining how each puts their own faith into action, without guilt, without obligation, with love, and with the spiritual grounding that gives meaning and energy to the work they do in the world.

Meaning Matters: monthly growth and development program using small group format, led by Rev. Sam. This year there were two groups, one new and the other a continuation from last year.

Beloved Conversations: nine week program using a small group format to facilitate conversations about race and ethnicity as a vehicle for faith formation and spiritual awakening, led by Michael Hornsby and Patti Jo Newell.

Nonviolent Communication:

- Two eight hour trainings that provided an introduction to the model and practice of nonviolent communication, conducted by Jan McCracken and Philomena Moriarty.
- An eight session (16 hours) practice group facilitated by Jan McCracken and Philomena Moriarty and attended by seven participants.

Evensong for Families

- Eight sessions with pot luck dinner on Wednesday evenings in the fall conducted by Leah Purcell to help families identify and articulate their values to their children and to build UU community among families.

Circle of Trees

- A series of workshops organized by Leah Purcell and offered in the spring that nurture deep connection with trees, nature, and all of earth's living creatures in conjunction with walks at Five Rivers Environmental Education Center.

Long Strange Trip Video Series and Discussion Group - Led by Tom Mercer and Rev. Sam, this group met once/week for six sessions. They explored the history of Unitarian and Universalist thought and practice from the early, liberal strands in faith at the beginning of the Christian era to what we know today as Unitarian Universalism.

End-of-Life Issues - Community potluck hosted by the Lifespan Learning Committee, followed by a presentation by Eleanor Aronstein, and attended by more than 40 people.

All Sides Considered - a springtime current events discussion group offered twice each month, led by Jim Schlembach. 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.

Multiculturalism and Faith Formation - presentation by Michael Hornsby attended on a Sunday after service by close to 50 people. Michael provided room for exploring and embracing our UU identity, in spite of our various worship styles, and approaches to religion and spirituality.

Partner Church Committee

Chairperson: Dave Metz

Members: Sharon Babala, Pat Bailey, Debbie Brown, Peter Brown, Dawn Dana, Dick Dana, Ben English, Judy Hanson, Barb Manning, Chuck Manning, Barb Metz, Dave Metz, Betsey Miller, Russ Myer, Don Odell, Darnell Rohrbaugh, Diana Shear, George Shear, Sam Trumbore

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

Accomplishments: Our relationship with our partner church in Szökefalva, Transylvania, has hit a low point. In recent years our contact person there was the Minister, Sándor Kiss . Sam visited the village in May, 2014, and discussed preliminary plans for a visit of some members of FUUSA during the summer of 2015. In August, 2014, Rev. Kiss and his wife, also a minister, were re-assigned to different congregations a couple of hours away. Unfortunately, our contact with the congregation essentially stopped when Rev. Kiss left. The trip for this summer has been cancelled with the hope of moving it to the summer of 2016.

Fortunately, as of April 20 we have re-established contact with the congregation. Our new contact person is Sarolta Besenyei, who sends her best regards to FUUSA. Sarolta is from Szokefalva, although she now lives in Marosvasarhely. Her parents are active very active with our partner church. While they do not speak English, Sarolta is fluent so communications will not be a problem. She has offered to do whatever she can to support the partner church relationship.

Plans: Now that communications have been re-established, we plan to renew our involvement with the partner church, and to organize a visit there during the summer of 2016. Stay tuned for further developments.

Public Relations Committee

Chairperson: Patti Jo Newell

Members: Cate Bohn, Bob Franklin, Amy Lent, Patti Jo Newell, Josh Shea

Purpose of group: The Public Relations Committee manages event- and issue-specific communications between FUUSA and the community at large. These include:

- Work with FUUSA committees to promote events and prepare media communications; ensure committees work within established protocols for media and policymaker contact
- Publicize FUUSA events and issues to community at large
- Conduct media outreach, including development/distribution of media advisories and releases
- Act as spokesperson for FUUSA as needed/appropriate
- Manage and promote social media

Accomplishments: The Public Relations Committee (PRC) focused primarily on website development in this church year.

Specific activities included:

- **Social media:** The PRC 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 FUUSA events was initiated.
- **Get-Connected Sunday:** The PRC provided opportunities to explore a more minimalist approach to volunteering for publicity. We provided information about specific task that could be undertaken on an ad hoc basis and which do not require attendance at meetings or formally joining the committee.
- **Media:** The PRC created and distributed media advisories and media releases as requested by others, typically the SRC.

- **Website:** The PRC determined that FUUSA needs to develop a new website to better attract individuals/families looking for deeper meaning in their lives. While we plan to update and keep our current website for congregational use, its overemphasis on details about events and documents renders it insufficiently inviting to those who have never walked through our doors or heard of Unitarian Universalism and unable to comply with evolving search engine requirements.
 - The PRC submitted and was awarded a Chalice Lighter grant to support the development of the new website.

 - We will use Chalice Lighter funds to promote the growth of our congregation and support a vibrant UU presence – a beacon of liberal religion – in the Capital Region and to benefit other congregations in our region and district via the development of a unique and innovative new website for a more robust and visitor-friendly web presence.
 - Our new website will emphasize UU identify and congregational mission, presenting photos and imagery, and testimonials and narrative, in a dramatic fashion to better enable online visitors to envision themselves and their loved ones thriving within our congregation.
 - Utilizing these production values, and modern web standards, we will create a web presence that is easily found, readily engaged and representational of whom we are as a congregation and our congregational life in the context of our broader community.

- Albany UU will share our template materials and design principles with other UU congregations in our region and district to support similar enhancements to their online presence, via webinars and podcasts.
- **Advertising:** The PRC engaged in limited traditional advertising because of costs associated with print advertising. Funds were allocated for advertising within Metroland and Capital Pride Center programs/journals. We made heavy use of free online calendar postings, including the Times Union, The Spotlight, and myriad other community calendars. These focused on holidays and special services, Evensong services, unique events, and forums.
- **Rentals at FUUSA:** The PRC worked with FUUSA staff to develop new brochures and mailers advertising FUUSA's unique rental space. We also developed a companion set of materials specifically focused on weddings at FUUSA.

Plans for next year:

- **Website:** The PRC will continue in the redesign and construction of the new website. We are also revising the existing website, which will continue as a source of information and tools for members and friends, but without the outreach elements to be incorporated in the new website.
- **Policies and Protocols:** The PRC will complete its revision of protocols for media releases to smooth the process for other committees and to promote timely and accurate communications.
- **Media:** In addition to continuing with current activities, the PRC will work directly with committees to review amended policies and procedures for media releases and representing the congregation.
- **Advertising:** The PRC 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: Cate Bohn, Peter Meixner, Sue Stierer, Rev. Sam Trumbore, Carol Lynn Youtz

The Religious Services Committee (RSC) helps plan Sunday services with pulpit guests, arranges for our annual This I Believe services, and coordinates services during the summer. We

manage and orient the Service Associate (formerly known as Service Leader) 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 FUUSA 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. This year, we addressed concerns with Joys and Sorrows and Community Greeting. We publicized concerns and sought congregational input. We got substantial feedback from the congregation on our proposal to eliminate the spoken component of Joys and Sorrows, with strong support for retaining this part of the ritual. Respecting congregational sentiment, we made modifications to the way that Joys and Sorrows and the Community Greeting are introduced, with the goal of upholding the dignity and emotional tone of our services. We also promoted the use of the yellow cards as an alternative way to share joys and sorrows, and provided an easier way to submit the cards.

Our pulpit guests this year included Philomena Moriarty, Vee Abbitt, Rev. Tom Chulak, Rev. David Weissbard, Matt Meyer, and Dan Berggren. An exchange of pulpits among CRUUNY ministers brought Rev. Joe Cleveland and Rev. Lynn Ashley to our pulpit in April, while Rev. Sam served in their pulpits. Leah Purcell, Adrian Cattell, and Anna Brewer presented the service on March 22. A service presented by Rite of Passage participants is planned for May 10, and the Senior High group will present the service on June 7, during which Leah will also recognize RE volunteers.

A perennial and well received service at FUUSA is “This I Believe.” We decided to again schedule two TIB services, with the first in early February and the second in late May. February presenters included Al Berzini, Jan McCracken, and John Sherman. Scheduled for May are Jaye Holly, Paula Brewer, and Bruce Rodgers. The committee greatly appreciates the willingness of members of the congregation to participate in these services.

RSC promoted, and monitored our Sunday Service Comments Logbook for a second year. Members and friends can record criticism, praise, or suggestions about the service. RSC regularly reviews comments, and responds as appropriate. The Logbook has been displayed on the credenza in the rear of Emerson, but RSC is now considering relocating the logbook to a location in Channing, hoping to stimulate greater use of this resource.

RSC instituted the practice of reserving two rows in Emerson on Family Chapel days, to ensure that parents entering after the Chapel are able to be welcomed and seated easily. We worked with FUUSA staff to obtain pew clips and signage for this purpose.

RSC has been working since early in 2015 to plan a full schedule of summer services, running from June 21 through September 6. Vee Abbitt, a seminarian at Meadville-Lombard, will be our Summer Services Coordinator for 2015, managing service planning and communications and being present each Sunday to facilitate smooth operations. RSC continues its effort to fill summer service musician and Service Associate slots. A summer service description sheet will be prepared in time for inclusion in the June Windows. Summer pulpit guests will include Rev. Chris Antal, Rev. Amanda Poppei, Rev. Tom Chulak, Vee Abbitt, the FUUSA Humanist group, and Wellspring Foundation participants, as well as Rev Sam with the FUUSA choir in mid-August. We are pleased to have such an interesting and diverse summer program taking shape.

RSC has tentative plans to offer an orientation session for current and new Service Associates, with the objective of refreshing and strengthening the corps of those prepared to serve in this role. We need Service Associates at every summer service, and also at “regular year” services in which Rev. Sam is not in the pulpit.

Safe Congregation Response Team (SCRT)

Convener: Jean E. Poppei

Members: Owen Devine (Member at Large); Mary Myers (Religious Education Council-REC), Jean Poppei (Board of Trustees-BOT), Leah Purcell (Director of Religious Education), Sam Trumbore (Minister of FUUSA)

Purpose: Ensure that any violations of the FUUSA 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 FUUSA Safe Congregation Policy.

Accomplishments: The primary focus of SCRT this year has been to fine tune our Limited Access Agreement which seeks to recognize the inherent worth of all, but sets limitations on participation at FUUSA of those who have done harm to others, in order to keep the congregation safe.

PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

Channing Circle

Convener: Thayer Heath

The purpose of Channing Circle is to involve members of FUUSA who are either over 70 or have retired to meet monthly for lunch at FUUSA. It provides an opportunity for older members who have contributed to FUUSA over the years in many ways to meet as a social group as well as one interested in sharing interesting programs created by its members such as poetry reading, places of travel, political issues, life stories, etc.

Choir

Chairpersons: Matt Edwards and Kathy Harris

Members: Lea Ali-Napo, Kayla Autery, Mike Babala, Pat Bailey, Ann Brandon, Peter Brown, Chris Bystroff, Dorry Campano, Barb Cooley, Dick Dana, Cindy Dean, Cathy DeMille, Michelle Desrosiers, RoseAnne Fogarty, Peter Gerdine, Kathy Harris, Linda Hunt, Chris Jensen, Julie Lomoe, Dave MacLeod, Barb Metz, Dave Metz, Russ Myer, Jon Newell, Sigrin Newell, Debbie Reep-Meskin, Lou Rehder, Debbie Rodriguez, Terry Rooney, Randy Rosette, Ruth Russell, Sue Stierer, Nancy Wagner, Terry Way

Purpose: To provide music for services and to enhance congregational life through musical experiences

Accomplishments: Varied FUUSA musical support for services including FUUSA Ensembles: Adult Choir, Children's Choir, Select Choir, Drop-In Choir, Rock Band, Instrumental Ensembles

Outside musicians for services: Helderberg Madrigal Singers, Jay Sager, Mike Lawrence, and Dan Berggren.

Congregational music including Sing-a-long and Dessert, Open Mic – Musicians and Poets, Unity Thanksgiving Service, Caroling, and Mardi Gras Dance.

Guest musicians from within and external to the congregation

Weekly participation in staff meetings

Plans for next year: Planning for next year is done over the summer. The Choir welcomes all suggestions for ways to continue to support the missions of FUUSA.

Circle Dinners

Chairperson: Martha Musser

Purpose of group: Circle dinners provide FUUSAns and visitors the opportunity to socialize over a potluck dinner in a private home and get better acquainted with fellow FUUSAns. As well as giving members the opportunity to strengthen their connections with FUUSA and contribute to a vital, nurturing religious community, the dinners provide an extraordinary opportunity for newcomers to learn about FUUSA. With these goals in mind, we have committed to examining new options for young adults and families with young children.

Accomplishments: We scheduled dinners on seven weekends during the 2014-15 church year. On two weekends, we provided the option of attending on either of two weekend nights. With May dinners still to come, 21 dinners, hosted in 13 different homes, have been held and 86 adults have attended at least one dinner. About 40 percent of attendees have attended more than one dinner. The last dinner of the church year is scheduled for Saturday, May 23.

Plans for next year: We have planned seven dinners for the coming year, beginning in September.

FUUSA 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 FUUSA are welcome to participate. Attendance at monthly meetings has ranged from nine to nineteen. Twenty eight individuals are currently on the FUUSA Humanist group list.

Purpose: The purpose of the FUUSA Humanists is to give an identity to humanists at FUUSA. 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 had six meetings during the current FUUSA year, with each one resulting in a lively exchange of views.

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. We are making our first foray into the public FUUSA life by conducting a service during the summer months.

Pastoral Care Associates

Reporter: Philip G. Rich

Members: Sharon Babala, Dave Munro, Chuck Manning, Phil Rich, Bruce Rodgers, Randy Rosette, Jan Satin, Sandy Stone

In 2010, it was Rev. Sam's wish that a caring and compassionate group of FUUSAns 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.

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

Reporter: Jan Satin

Members : Fran Berg, Priscilla Crago, Joan Ekengren, Virginia Hammer, Janet Hunter, Anita Patka, Michaela Pochily, Barb Manning, Abby Sugarman plus assorted visitors. All are welcome.

We are working on a quilt that will be completed in the next year for a raffle. Proceeds will go to FUUSA improvements. Members or attendees need not be quilters, some knit, some just visit-- but all Enjoy.

UU Christians

Convener : Sue Stierer

Members: John Sherman, Phil Rich, others on occasion

Purpose: To offer the opportunity to share and explore/reflect on beliefs, questions, and practices related to our Christian roots, and heritage around particular Biblical passages, and other writings about Christian doctrine, in order to clarify their place in our personal faith journeys, and relevance to Unitarian Universalist theology. We welcome skepticism, interpretation, and personal experience as foundations for belief, and reference several Biblical translations, online commentaries, sermons, and other writings.

Accomplishments: We continued to examine teachings attributed to Jesus and other early Christian leaders; discussed several New Testament parables, the concepts of sin and forgiveness, and the meaning and practice of the traditional Christian holidays Christmas and Easter.

Plans: To continue in our current study and discussion mode, consulting additional resources including denominational UU Christian writings, and other studies related to UU roots, such as those relating to the historical Jesus, and hopefully add to our numbers. We hope for more lively discussions around Christian theology and our beliefs.

Walker Book Club

Reporter: Linda Hunt

The Walker Book Club meets at FUUSA on the second Sunday of each month at 5:30 PM from September through June, beginning with a potluck supper, followed by a lively discussion of the book of the month chosen by agreement by participants. This informal group offers participants the opportunity to search for UU truth and meaning by reading and discussing a wide-range of literary works of fiction and nonfiction. Newcomers are always welcome and the group is open to all FUUSA friends and members.

The group read and discussed one non-fiction book and six novels. Attendance averaged 12 persons. Our annual traditions include reading a book considered to be a classic in May, short stories in June that focus on a particular theme or author, and a longer book over the summer for discussion in September.

Dates and books discussed in 2014-15:

Sept. 13, 2014: *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay: A Novel* by Michael Chabon. Two cousins build an empire in comics while exploring art, love, dreams, longing and hope during World War II.

Oct. 12, 2014: *And the Mountains Echoed: A Novel* by Khaled Hosseini. As described by amazon.com, this third novel by this award-winning author from Afghanistan explores the many ways in which families nurture, wound, betray, honor and sacrifice for one another; and how often we are surprised by the actions of those closest to us, at the times that matter most.

Nov. 9, 2014: *Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichi. This story about love and belonging examines the paradox of race and identity in Nigerian and American life.

Dec. 14, 2014: *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien. This book presents the fictional account of a platoon of American soldiers in the Vietnam War.

Jan. 11, 2015: *TransAtlantic*: by Irish author Colum McCann. This novel Explores 150 years of American and Irish history through a fictional setting based on three real-life stories.

Mar. 8, 2015: *Life after Life*: by Kate Atkinson. The heroine repeatedly dies and is resurrected again, and each time Atkinson sets her on one of the many alternate courses that her destiny might have taken.

Apr. 12, 2015: *The Selma Awakening: How the Civil Rights Movement Tested and Changed Unitarian Universalism* by Mark D. Morrison Reed. The group chose this non-fiction book as a result of the author's address at the March multi-congregational service of the Capital Region Unitarian Universalists of New York (CRUUNY).

May 10, 2015: The classic, *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, published on July 11, 1960.

June 14, 2015: Three short stories: *What We Talk About When We Talk About Anne Frank* by Nathan Englander, and Raymond Carver's *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love* and *Cathedral*.

The book to be read during the summer of 2015 is a novel, *All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr.