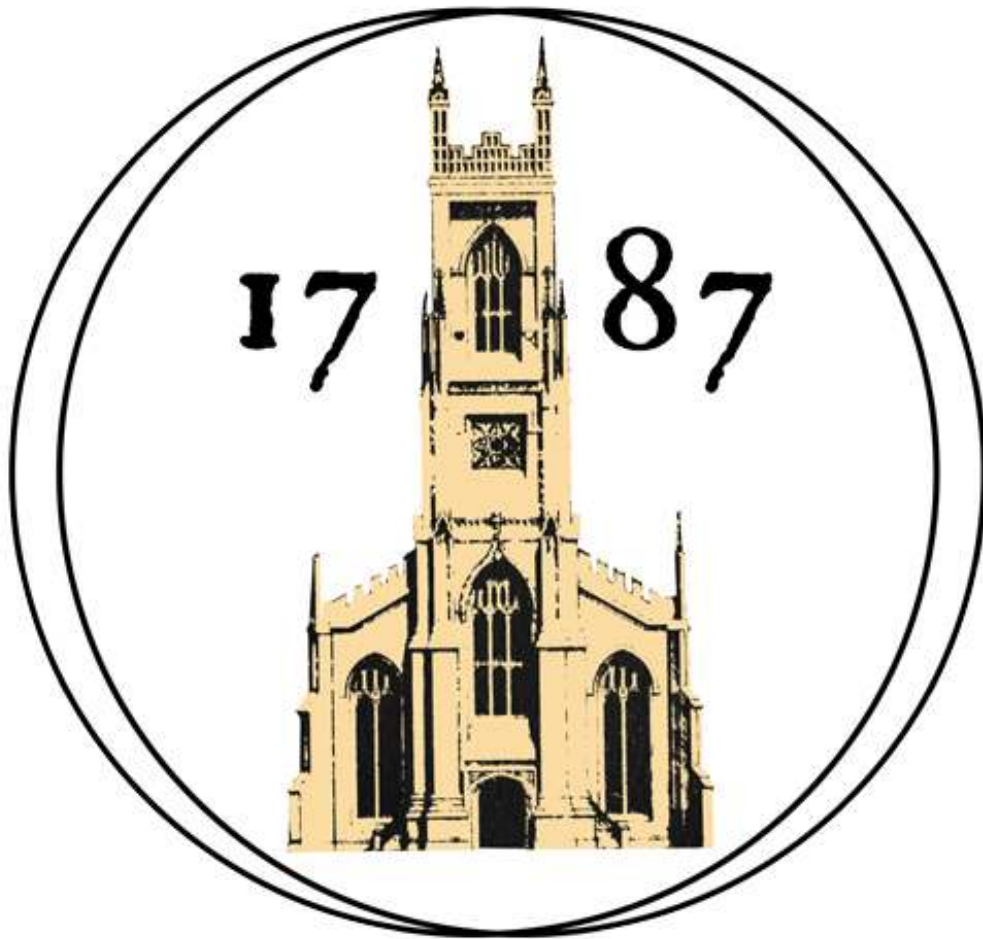


THE UNITARIAN CHURCH IN CHARLESTON  
SOUTH CAROLINA

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE CONGREGATION  
2012-2013



MAY 19, 2013

A MEMBER OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION

## Minister

When this document reaches your hands, there will be only three Sundays left in the church year—but who’s counting? I’m counting the days and I hope you are too, for every Sunday we gather is a special event worth noting. Every Sunday we assemble as the congregation of the Unitarian Church in Charleston perpetuates a legacy of worship and community that reaches back into our nation’s history and also into our own lives. So I’m feeling grateful as I write this, my fourth Annual Report in your service, because our church perseveres as a place of fellowship, inspiration, and service.

Since last June’s Corporate Meeting, we have formally joined the Charleston Area Justice Ministry (CAJM, formerly The Charleston Area Inter-Faith Steering Committee) and this relationship has been a significant aspect of church life this year. I’ve lost count of the many, many volunteers who have dedicated hours of discernment and organization toward the advocacy and action of CAJM. I do know, however, that over two-hundred-fifty members and friends of the church turned out for CAJM’s Nehemiah Assembly in late April. I was raised not to boast but I cannot help but note that our congregation was the Nehemiah attendance leader by nearly one hundred participants. Our role with CAJM helps us unite ourselves within our congregation, invites us into deeper relationship and solidarity with other area congregations, and ultimately helps bring renewed and just solutions to lingering problems in the Charleston area. This work goes forward and I trust our commitment will not waver, but only grow.

We took up the matter of adopting the “Charter for Compassion” at our June 2012 meeting and the motion did not pass due to an expressed call for more information. An education and engagement campaign was launched and the option to support the charter as a congregation is again before us. The Charter, if undertaken seriously and as companion to our existing outreach projects, could be another avenue of enrichment and witness for us.

Janet Watts, our (full-time) Director of Religious Education, oversees our educational offerings for children and adults. Janet is an expert task juggler and is fiercely dedicated to the success of our church. I would like us to strengthen committee support for our essential Religious Education program and also hope we can raise the funds to introduce compensated assistance for Janet, especially on Sunday mornings.

Hannah Piazza continues to grow in her role as (full-time) Office Administrator. She has a big job and her commitment is crucial to effective office operations. Hannah’s involvement with our financial procedures is evolving, as is her relationship with our many committees and loyal volunteer leaders.

This is a bittersweet year as we say goodbye to our talented Music Director, Lin Raymond. Lin’s expertise at the piano and organ, and his leadership of our choirs have enhanced our worship and blessed us each week. I will miss his music and quick humor, but wish him only the best as he heads to the Southwest he so loves.

The bittersweet is compounded as we also bid farewell to Elaine Aron Tenbrink who joined us three years ago as Community Minister. Elaine has graced our pulpit many times and led memorable Adult Religious Education courses. Elaine leaves us to join the First Universalist Church of Minneapolis as their new Minister of Membership and Adult Ministries. Elaine, Jason and Sarah will be missed here but we send her forth thankful for the quality and warmth she brought us.

We find ourselves in search of a Sexton as Jacob Montgomery is leaving for new pursuits in June.

My report would be incomplete with a few words on church size. We've enjoyed consistently good worship attendance this year and the possibility of adding a second service has been explored. Can we manage two Sunday services and thrive? I'm sure of it. Is it time to add an additional service? No, not yet, but it behooves us to be thinking about our future and how many individuals and families we can comfortably accommodate and effectively serve.

Likewise, we need to be assessing our communication and the ways we make institutional needs known. The fulfillment of goals we've expressed requires faithful contributions of talent, time, and treasure. I believe all three are abundantly present but I also believe we could do a better job of educating existing and potential members about the realities of our finances and other necessary resources.

As I must each year, again I acknowledge the limitations of such an annual accounting. I've surely overlooked other worthy accomplishments and should have extended more deserved accolades to many who added to the reaching in and the reaching out of our congregation this year. Hopefully, my lapses are addressed in other submissions.

Our church, historic but ever relevant, stands as a beacon of hope and light in Charleston. We are poised to share a message of compassion, justice and reason that is still sought amidst the superficiality and sham of popular culture, and which offers a needed alternative to the restrictive and condemning ethic that still reigns in contemporary religion. I know who you are and I have seen what you can do. Thus, it remains an honor to be your minister.

*Respectfully Submitted,*



### **Administrator**

As my first full year as Office Administrator comes to a close I am happy to reflect on the past year of efforts and achievements the staff and congregation have made.

At the start of the church year Michelle Perez was hired as Administrative Assistant. She was a tremendous help in completing weekly tasks, collecting and organizing membership information and assisting with financial duties. Her attention to detail was greatly appreciated and her reliable presence will be missed as she moves home after graduation.

Terry Walsh has done a wonderful job in her first year as treasurer. I continue to assist her in weekly duties and her overall dedication to financial transparency. With DAK Bookkeeping handling some of the monetary responsibilities, Terry and I continue to meet and plan details to transfer even more weekly duties to the office and bookkeeping service in the near future.

Staff credit cards were a new addition this past year. They proved to meet a great need, reaching the credit limit within the first week and eventually raising the limit from \$1,000 to \$2,500. Staff credit cards have expedited and simplified the financial process

and allow for more timely delivery of needed materials. Thanks to Richard Hayes and Terry Walsh for making this amenity available to the staff.

The many other accomplishments of the past year would not be possible without the support of our dedicated volunteers. Maureen Porter and Sally Newell worked fervently on this year's stewardship campaign. Rev. Danny Reed and Myrtle Staples tended to a call to revive the caring committee. This means that assistance to members in need is now being organized and managed by chairs and co-chairs that are in place throughout the Charleston-area. Paul Garbarini did excellent work in establishing the new monument which honors the enslaved workers who helped build our church. Diane and Stan Boyer were also instrumental in getting the monument work started. Diane Narkunas, Suzanne Hardie and many others tirelessly rallied to build the CAJM initiative and lead the way for other churches involved.

The summer will provide more time for further developments within the church office. Ron Updike has assisted in getting estimates to make cosmetic improvements to upstairs Gage Hall. Using research I've gathered over the past several months, I will select a new lease for the copier and replace the worn machine with a more efficient one. This will cut down on maintenance costs and time spent printing publications.

I look forward to further supporting the staff's and congregation's initiatives in the coming years.

#### Administrative Notes:

- Our church submitted 326 certified members to the UUA in January 2013. The spike in certified membership from last year (up from 275) reflects the UUA changes in how dues will be collected. No longer charging per member, but by percentage of expenditures, we now submit total number of members instead of corporate members.
- This year 29 people have joined the church as members.
- We hosted 13 weddings in the Sanctuary this year.
- Gage Hall has been rented 31 times, not including our on-going rentals with the Secular Humanists of the Lowcountry and Charleston Jung Society.
- We continue our second year of renting Gage Hall to the O'Connor Music Camp for one week in July, which continues to be a great boost for rental income.
- Our symbiotic relationship with Charleston Day School remains. This year we began using their classrooms for Religious Education and their cafeteria for Pathways to Membership class. The Silent Auction (a tremendous success) was also held at Charleston Day School.

*Respectfully submitted by Hannah Piazza, Office Administrator*

## **Music Director**

Mission: The mission of the music program is to enhance worship through music.

We strived to meet this goal in the following ways:

Music for the Church Services:

Musicians from our congregation and guest musicians provided music on piano, flute, guitar, violin, clarinet, viola, whistle, bass, recorder, voice, and percussion.

Amy Ball generously continued as a volunteer accompanist for the choir.

We increased the choral library with several new anthems.

Hymnals were purchased for the sanctuary, both *Singing the Living Tradition* (8) and *Singing the Journey* (15).

The choir members gave generously of their time, especially for the Christmas Cantata and the two Easter services.

The Chalice Choir continued with monthly performances in the services from October through April with a small but dedicated group. The choir was lead in weekly rehearsals by Carol Oates and Amy Ball with accompaniment by Max Hutton.

Community Outreach:

Auditions were held for the sixth annual Martha Welch Music Scholarship.

This year's winner was Lily Lassiter, pianist.

The Chancel Choir provided music for Crisis Ministries National Memorial Service for the Homeless on December 13, 2012 at Marion Square.

The Music Committee in conjunction with the Fine Arts Committee launched our fourth series of Candlelight Concerts, a concert series of classical music in the sanctuary, with Art Openings in Gage Hall. The concerts were held on the first Friday of the months of November, February, and April. These concerts benefit the music program at James Simons Elementary School, helping children of low-income families expand their education. Our total donation to the music program this church year was \$2,064.00, which has helped to purchase musical instruments and teaching supplies.

*Respectfully submitted by Lin Raymond, Music Director*

## Religious Education Director

Every Sunday (Sept.- June) our RE program offered a morning meditation and Eastern Philosophy class, a nursery, four classes for preschool through elementary aged children, a middle school Our Whole Lives class, and a class for high school teens. The primary focus of RE is organizing a safe, quality program where volunteers, instructors, children and teens feel supported, encouraged and accepted in their learning environment. Over 33 volunteer teachers and 6 paid Sunday staff worked throughout the year. Sunday attendance ranged from a high of 89 children to a low of 30.

**Social Justice events included:** Book Worm Angel's book drive, building and selling gingerbread houses for Crisis Ministries Shelter in our "Home Sweet Home" fundraiser, Thanksgiving food drive, Guest at Your Table collections, Mitten Tree collections for Crisis Ministries, teen volunteers for Backpack buddies program at Lowcountry Food Bank, and serving dinner at Crisis Ministries.

**Social events included:** The Halloween party, Youth Conferences in NC for high school and two for middle school classes, Mountain retreat trip for families in April, Rev. Danny's monthly movies, Winter Holidays party and children's pageant, Holiday decorating of building and grounds, RE Scholarships Oyster Roast, Earth Day fair (crafts and demonstration tables), Church wide day at the ball park, Easter egg hunt, crafts and petting zoo, children's art shows in Gage Hall, organizing large graduating class recognition in church, children's Chalice Choir, and Dinners for Fun especially designed for families with young children.

**Our Whole Lives:** Three new instructors were trained in OWL 7-9<sup>th</sup> grade sex ed. The class of 18 students was the largest to date. We had 26 classes, one sleepover, an evening guest panel of LGBT representatives and dinner, a fielded trip to Planned Parenthood with dinner, and a graduation celebration party for the students and their families.

**Adult RE events of note included:** Weekly meditation classes, Don Hearth's book group on compassion literature, Rev. Tenbrink's class *What Moves Us: Unitarian Universalist Theology* and the spin off support group (Spiritual Theology Readings) that meets monthly, Rev. Danny's special holiday group on grief and loss, JoAnne Simpson's Body Wisdom class, two eight-week sessions of Tai Chi on Wednesday afternoons with Kaye Finch, and a Voluntary Simplicity class. An extensive Adult RE survey was completed and the results were given to key leaders within the church. Plans for upcoming activities, based on the results of the survey, will start in the fall.

**Training:** I attended two training in NC focusing on special needs students. Special attention was given to teaching sex ed to special needs teens and new methods for incorporating mentors into the classroom for children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) in the church. I also attended the Lowcountry Autism Forum to learn about local organizations. Working with a family in the church we had an ASD specialist attend Sunday school classes with a young student who has considerable problems with verbal communication. This individual was paid for by the State. I created two training sessions

for incoming teachers (September and January) to ensure that everyone was up to date and comfortable with RE program expectations.

The newly created **College Group** is led by Noah Smith and Julia Moss. The group meets monthly in Gage Hall for dinner, conversation and planning. They are financed and supported by the RE program.

**Religious Education Committee:** The RE committee has not existed for this church term. It is my hope that a committed group can be assembled next year.

*Respectfully submitted by Janet S. Watts, Director of Religious Education*

## Vestry

The primary responsibilities of the Vestry are to develop and implement policy and to oversee the financial affairs of the church. The Vestry began this church year with a retreat at which we developed our major goals for the year. Following are those goals and an evaluation of their accomplishment:

1. *Complete the revision of Four Bold Steps and Strategic Plan and present it to the congregation for approval.*  
With input from all committees and an opportunity for questions by the congregation, the revised document will be on the agenda for consideration at our May 19 Corporate Meeting.
2. *Revise and update the Constitution.*  
A draft of the revised Constitution has been prepared. However, we decided we need a period of education and input from the congregation about the changes before presenting it for a vote. We will have a forum and other opportunities during the coming year to discuss the proposed revisions.
3. *Complete the revisions of the Vestry Policies.*  
The Constitution provides general principles and policies for the operation of our church. Other policies not set forth in the Constitution are developed by the Vestry in the form of Vestry Policies. So far 18 policies have been reviewed and updated as necessary. Probably the most significant of these was Vestry Policy #3 Guidance for Committees of the Church. Anyone who is on a committee should review this revised policy. All the Vestry Policies are available on the church website --  
<http://www.charlestonuu.org/WhoWeAre/Vestry/VestryPolicies/tabid/137/Default.aspx> .
4. *Develop a job description for a paid Membership Coordinator.*  
The job description has been developed. The plan was to start this as a 25% position. However, the outcome of the Stewardship campaign makes it unlikely that we can fund the position this year. The matter is still under discussion as this report is being written.
5. *Complete the plan and implement a mechanism for distance participation in corporate meetings.*

- A temporary system will be piloted at the Corporate Meeting on May 19. A more permanent system will involve burying a cable from Gage Hall across the churchyard to the Sanctuary. This has been delayed in order to coordinate with the Churchyard Committee which is planning to add lighting, which will also involve laying electrical conduits. So far four members have indicated that they want to participate via distance technology.
6. *Support the Compassionate Church effort.*  
The Vestry 1st Vice-Chair, Hillary Hutchinson, has been the primary liaison to the Compassionate Church effort. A resolution to adopt the Charter on Compassion will be on the agenda for the May 19, 2013, meeting.
  7. *Continue to support Congregation-Based Community Organizing (now Charleston Area Justice Ministry—CAJM)*  
The Vestry supported the Social Justice Committee's decision to have the spring "pink envelope" community outreach fundraising go to CAJM. They are also committed to continuing to include \$3000 in next year's operating budget for CAJM dues. Individual Vestry members have also been active in CAJM.
  8. *Work with the Finance Committee to develop the "dream" or "growth" budget.*  
The Vestry, as did church committees, brainstormed about items for our "dream" budget. These ideas were sent to the Finance Committee to be incorporated with the committees' "dream" budget items. We should have \$16,500 from the Endowment to fund some of these one-time projects, and are currently determining which items should have priority.

Other important business:

1. Myrtle Staples from the Vestry has been leading the effort to revitalize the Caring Committee, and her group has made good progress in identifying leaders and members willing to provide services in several geographic localities. You will be hearing more about this project.
2. Currently we pay dues to the Unitarian Universalist Association and to the Southern District based on the number of Corporate Members we have. The UUA has developed a new funding program based, not on the number of members, but on the certified expenditures of the church each year, and the Southern Region is the first to be asked to implement the Generously Investing for Tomorrow (GIFT) funding plan. The goal is to have dues equal to 7% of a church's expenditures, which would be for both UUA and regional dues. This would be a substantial increase for us, and the Vestry has decided to increase our UUA dues only in an amount each year equal to the percentage that we increase staff salaries. After the initial presentation of the 7% goal by the UUA, lower goals of 5% and 6% were proposed until congregations could increase their dues to the 7% goal. The sum we are proposing for next year's budget would be between 5% and 6%.
3. In spite of the hard work by the Stewardship Campaign co-chairs, Sally Newell and Maureen Porter, the pledges fell far short of the goal, and the budget is in the process of being revised to accommodate this lower amount. The Vestry is trying to determine the reason for this disappointing result, and has decided that we need



a year-round Stewardship Committee. You will be hearing more about this in the months to come.

*Respectfully submitted by Diane Boyer, Vestry Chair*

## **Treasurer**

The Church's fiscal year runs from July 1<sup>st</sup> through June 30th of the following year. We ended the last fiscal year on June 30, 2012 in a very strong financial position. The Operating Budget income was approximately \$19,000 over expenses. Approximately \$7,000 of this overage was used as income in the 2012/2013 fiscal year and the rest was used to increase our reserves.

At the start of the 2012/2013 fiscal year, the balances of the Endowment, Churchyard and Landmark Funds were approximately \$703,000, \$106,000 and \$32,000 respectively. Our reserves totaled about \$46,000.

As of March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2013:

- The Endowment has increased to \$860,000. This is partly due to the addition of \$65,000 from the Churchyard to establish a Churchyard Restricted Endowment Account.
- The Churchyard Fund is currently approximately \$42,000. The decrease is primarily due to the \$65,000 that was used to create the Churchyard Restricted Endowment.
- The Landmark Fund is currently approximately \$35,500.
- There is approximately \$49,000 in our Reserve accounts. Our reserves are divided into three different categories. The Operating Reserve, the Maintenance Reserve, and the Emergency Reserve. The Operating Reserve (\$17,000) is to insure the balance of the Operating Fund stays positive during the year; the Maintenance Reserve (\$15,500) is used for major deferred maintenance projects; and the Emergency Reserve (\$16,000) is set aside for circumstances that could not have been foreseen that do not fall into the categories of major maintenance or regular operations.

The current fiscal year has again been strong through the first 9 months. The Operating Budget looks good largely because of the very successful service auction, increased Apartment Rental income, on-time payment of pledges by Members and Friends, as well as some budgeted expense items that were not incurred. This strong position will allow us to add \$20,000 from the 2012/2013 fiscal year as income to the 2013/2014 fiscal year. Any further income over expenses that we realize in this fiscal year will be used to increase our reserves.

Thanks to Hannah Piazza, Don Hearth, and Debbie Kirby (bookkeeper) for all their help throughout the year.

*Submitted by Terry Walsh*

## Community Minister

Since joining the Unitarian Church in Charleston in September 2010 as your Community Minister, I have had the pleasure of discovering what a caring, committed community you are. You embraced my ministry with trust and openness, we learned and grew together, you welcomed my family, and even joined us in celebrating the birth of our child. While our move to Minneapolis in July is a good thing for our family and for my career, I am sad to leave you. The Unitarian Church in Charleston will always have a special place in our heart.

During the course of our three years together, I have preached a few times, led services together with Rev. Danny, and taught three adult religious education classes.

This has certainly been rewarding for me and I hope that it has also been valuable in the life of the congregation. During my first year with you, I worked full-time as a hospital chaplain and these experiences informed my sermons and ministry with the congregation.

I also met monthly with a Committee on Ministry that offered support and helped me to receive approval for a year of preliminary fellowship from the UUA. For these things, and for the myriad kindnesses and connections along the way, I am very grateful. You will be missed.

*Submitted by Rev. Elaine Aron Tenbrink, Community Minister*

## Alliance

In the calendar year 2013 the Alliance has 27 members.

Fund-raising activities: As of Sept. 17, 2012, Alliance balance: \$8646.60

June Rummage Sale: 575.40; October Rummage Sale: 330.40; March Rummage Sale: 494; Holiday Bazaar: 1911.40; dues: 460; cookbook sales: 200; Sunday Book sales: 250. A Rummage Sale is planned for June 7; anticipated income: 500.

Expenses: Pancake Breakfast: 150; Thanksgiving dinner: 120; reception: 30; candles: 108.45; Post and Courier ads: 117.35.

Disbursements: \$1000 for the Slave Memorial. On May 12 the Alliance will present to the church a check for \$1000 for the Charleston Area Justice Ministry and a check for \$5000 for the church's operating budget. In addition, checks for \$100 each will be sent to People Against Rape, My Sister's House and Pet Helpers.

Social Activities: The Alliance has hosted the Pancake Breakfast in Sept., Thanksgiving dinner, Christmas Cantata reception, the Pledge Kickoff reception in Feb. and Easter Breakfast. The Alliance has co-hosted 3 concert receptions.

Officers for 2013-2014: Co-chairs: Susan Robinson, Sue Prazak; Vice-chair: Susan Garrison; Secretary: Claudia Updike; Treasurer: Toni Johnson

*Submitted by Sue Prazak*

## **Archives**

The mission of the Archives Committee includes collecting and cataloging materials pertaining to the church, maintaining the files and objects entrusted to its care, making such materials available to the congregation, and assisting members of the congregation in using the files. The result of these activities is the fostering of the institutional memory of the Unitarian Church in Charleston.

The Archives Committee has been working on transferring our collection of audio tapes to CDs as well as filing written materials in the archives. We are looking forward to extending the audio collection with further interviews in the coming year.

Members: Gail Schiffer (chair), Mary Ann Hughston, and Claudia Updike. Billie Hall and Rosemary Hutto are honorary members.

*Submitted by Gail Schiffer*

## **Churchyard**

Mission: The mission of the Churchyard Committee is to be good stewards of the gravesites, plantings, pathways and grounds of the church. The committee pledges to maintain the beauty, character and safety of the churchyard while holding the utmost respect for those who rest therein.

Activities:

- 1) Monthly work parties, whose members are called Eden Keepers, are held on mornings of the first Saturday of each month. Participation has been steady throughout this past year with numbers on any given Saturday ranging from nine to seventeen workers. Following the morning's work session, a covered-dish lunch is shared by the group.
- 2) No previously gardening experience is required to participate in the care of the churchyard – all are welcome work as Eden Keepers. We weed, groom, and mow as is deemed necessary to maintain our lush and verdant urban oasis. Some Eden Keepers attend work sessions on a regular basis while others participate as their schedules permit.
- 3) The Churchyard Committee regularly meets at 5:30 P.M. on the second Monday of each month
- 4) In consultation with the Endowment Investment Board and the Finance Committee, a resolution was submitted to the Church Vestry for consideration at the May 2012 annual corporate meeting of the church. “Resolved: \$65,000 from the Churchyard fund be used to establish a Restricted Churchyard Endowment within the Endowment of the Unitarian Church in Charleston.” The resolution passed.
- 5) A Policy for Expenditure of Churchyard Funds was formulated by the committee.

The Vestry, in consultation with the Finance Committee, subsequently revised and approved the policy.

6) Several planning sessions were held during the winter months. We discuss plans to be completed in one-year, two-year and three-year time frames.

8) Arborists removed three trees from the churchyard. One tree was creating problems with Saint John's Lutheran church's fellowship hall, while the other two had sustained extensive damage from previous hurricanes and were in danger of toppling over onto gravestones. The Lutheran church shared the removal cost of the tree that was straddling the lot-line between the properties of the two churches.

9) The *ad hoc* Slave Memorial Committee consulted Churchyard Committee members regarding placement of the memorial. Various options for placement of the memorial were considered.

10) In keeping with our policy to systematically restore monuments, several were repaired during this past year.

11) Quotations at the Wayside Pulpit on King Street continue to be updated on a monthly basis. The Wayside Pulpit is a bulletin board that is located on King Street at the beginning of the Gateway Walk that leads into our churchyard. (The bulletin board as well the Gateway Walk that leads from the churchyard to King Street are part of the church's property.)

12) An additional handicapped accessible brick pathway for the churchyard is being considered. It would extend from Gage Hall to the front entryway of the church. A proposal for the pathway has been submitted to the Vestry for consideration at the May 2013 corporate meeting.

The following is a list of committee members and Eden Keepers who worked in the churchyard during this past year (*with apologies to anyone whose name may have been omitted*): Marilyn Birkhimer, Stan Boyer\*, Mary Cote', Sarah Cothran\*, Ruby Cooper, Karen Del Porto\*, Krystina Deren\*, Susan Elliott, Suzi DeMerrel, Harry DeMerrel, Elliott DeMerrell, Fran Ennis\*, Mary Farabow, Robbie Furtwangler\*, Maguerite Gregory, Ann Hammond, , Tom Hartry, Tommy Hughston\*, Stan Hunton\*, Steph Holdridge, Sean Jesinky, John Klintworth, Paula Knecht, Bob Jontos\*, Pat Jontos, Janice May\*, John Meffert\*, Laura Moses\*, Richard Moss, Liese Nichols, Maria Niel, Sally Preston, Ali Soleimani, Ed Stephens, Cris Sumpter\*, Shea Winterberger

Members of the Churchyard Committee are denoted by \*

*Submitted by Stan Boyer*

## **Committee on Shared Ministry**

The COSM continued its role as an advisory body to the Vestry and as a communication channel between the minister and our congregation.

The committee continued assessing the “temperature” of our congregation through weather reports. Randomly chosen members of our congregation were asked to respond to four questions.

1. How do you feel about our church?
2. Do you have any issues?
3. Is there anything our church leadership should know?
4. What do you see for the future of our church?

The responses are anonymously provided to the Vestry.

We attempted to contact 41 members, and most of them responded. The vast majority of the responses were positive. Our congregants are happy in our church and like our minister very much.

The few areas of concern that the committee dealt with were:

1. Our church tends to solve their own problems and they “hunker down” when they have illnesses or other difficulties. We need a mechanism for keeping track of people so that if they need help, we are aware.
2. There is a need for much better communication to the congregation about the finances of our church. Most people have no idea of the costs involved in operating our church. We believe that the short-fall in our stewardship campaign can in part be attributed to this lack of information.
3. There were a number of other areas of concern gleaned from the weather reports. Handicapped people have difficulty finding accessible parking.
4. Some people do not want our church to grow.....they want it to stay the way it was.
5. A number of people expressed concern regarding adopting two services.
6. A concern was raised regarding renting the apartment in the Annex.
7. People want The Caring Committee to be re-vitalized.

8. Members have expressed their desire for air/conditioning.

Overall, our congregation is very satisfied and delighted with our minister, and approve the direction in which our church is headed.

Members of C O S M include: Nancy Groh, Alex Hild, Prudence Finn, Nelson Ohl, Stanton Goldberg, Chair, Hilary Nelson, Co-Chair, ex-officio: Carol Tempel (Vestry Liaison), Rev. Danny Reed

*Submitted by Stan Goldberg*

### **Connecting Circles**

Steering committee: Maureen Porter (chair), Mary Ann Terry (co-chair), Sally Smith, Terry Walsh

The mission of Connecting Circles is to provide small group ministry to our congregation. Connecting Circles meet monthly in the homes of members to discuss spiritual topics, share life experiences and get to know one another in a meaningful way. The steering committee is responsible for monitoring the overall functioning of the program by training group leaders and promoting the program to the congregation.

This is the eleventh year for the Connecting Circles program in our church. During this time, the program has grown to include about 100 people. This spring, one group elected to dissolve rather than add new members, bringing the number of groups to twelve. Several of the existing groups were able to add new members. The steering committee has promoted the program in a number of ways this year. The Connecting Circles program is described to new members during the Path to Membership Class held in the fall and spring. An article about Connecting Circles was published in the Gateway newsletter each quarter and there has been a signup sheet at the Welcome Table in Gage Hall which is monitored by the steering committee chair. A campaign to promote the program was not held this year. The steering committee plans to meet with Rev. Danny in late summer to plan ways we can generate new interest in the program. There has been some discussion about including the Connecting Circles program in the Adult Religious Education program offerings.

*Submitted by Maureen Porter*

### **Denominational Affairs**

Unitarian Church in Charleston's Denominational Affairs Committee (DAC) seeks to enrich congregational life at our church and promote the strength of Unitarian Universalism by:

- Promoting awareness of the larger UU faith community by communicating to the Congregation the programs sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Association

(UUA), the Southern Region, Southeast District (SED) and the Southern Cluster of SED UU Churches.

- Encouraging and promoting our financial and member support to the UUA and District -- UCC continues to be a Fair Share Congregation, paying full dues to both the District and the UUA.
- Encouraging support of and participation in denominational activities
- Staying connected with the larger UU faith community.

Your Denominational Affairs Committee in 2012/2013 has concentrated on two goals:

- Support to the Southern Cluster of UU Churches within the Southeast District, and
- Keeping the congregation up to date on the activities of the UUA, Southern Region, Southeast District, and Southern Cluster.

Our Congregation supported the Race Relations Conference of the Southeast Region of UU Churches in March, 2013. It was an extremely successful conference. The Committee keeps the UCC informed and up to date on UUA, Southern Region, and Southeast District activities, programs, and support through a strong presence on the church website, and continuing articles in the Gateway.

*Submitted by Richard Hayes*

## **Dinners for Fun**

Dinners For Fun! has two co-chairs and one terrific wordsmith:

Barbara Goldberg

Judy Manning

Carol Furtwangler – our generous & talented writer!

Party attendance has increased during this church year, from 14 in the fall, to 69 in the spring.

We have tried to encourage new members to attend in order to help them become involved and get to know long-time members.

We have planned parties 7 months of the church year, for the fourth Saturday night most months, so that everyone can enjoy our Gage Hall Coffeehouse events. Our final gathering will be held May 25<sup>th</sup>.

Next year, we will add a holiday season party in December!

Especially noteworthy.....many folks have so generously opened their homes and welcomed new members, helping them find friends and get to know our church family!

Hosts and hostesses have included:

Diane and Stan Boyer  
Cathy Currin

Judy & Ron Bruce  
Judy Ford

Barbara & Stan Goldberg

Sue & Tom Hartry

Marilyn Henderson & Alan Moore

Nancy & Alex Hild

Abby & Fred Himmelein

Anne & Cisco Lindsey

Judy & Ren Manning  
Laura & Bill Morris

Joanne & John Milkereit  
Trudy & Glen Muegel

Diane & John Narkunas  
Shawn Phillips & Bob Wilson

Sue & Paul Nelson  
Sally & John Preston

Downing Child & Steve Simon

We have had a terrific year! We have no expenses!

*“AROUND A TABLE, FRIENDS SHARE BEST THE WARMTH OF BEING TOGETHER!”*

*Submitted by Barbara Goldberg*

## **Docents**

The Docents offer visitor tours from 10am to 1pm on Saturdays and 2nd Sundays from 1 to 3pm. Since September Docents have welcomed 2133 visitors as of April 27th. All donations received are contributed the Landmark Fund. Docents sell postcards, note cards and copies of TOURING THE TOMBSTONES, a booklet of details of the church garden. Our primary purpose is to share the sanctuary and our church history with the congregation and those who visit here.

The Docent Committee continues to adjust to changes of Sexton support. After an instance when a single docent was left alone in the building, a cell phone was purchased to be sure docents can always contact him or 911 if needed.

The docent committee has purchased a digital picture frame which is used for visitor tours. It is currently loaded with photos taken during the sanctuary renovation and old pictures of the church and city.

Paul Garbarini gave a special tour a reporter from American Eagle Airline magazine. We



are looking forward to seeing the article on Charleston churches.

On October 21, 2012 the Docent Committee presented a Forum on church history. A copy has been provided to the Archives Committee.

To promote the church openings the committee distributed “rack cards” to hotels and other tourist information locations. For the first time this year these were printed in the office instead of having this done outside resulting in a great savings. John Preston and his wife Sally distributed the cards this year and developed a list of contacts and email addresses which has been shared with the office to notify concierges of special events.

More Docents would permit expansion of the opening schedule but recruitment has been very slow. Each Docent is scheduled to work one shift each month. There are currently 19 Docents (including subs) - see following list. The Steering Committee consists of: Fran Ennis, Maureen Kelly, Susan Robinson, Bill Thomas, Nancy Waters and Anna Stephens (chair).

2012-2013 Unitarian Church Docent Committee Members:

Beverly Birkhimer	Joanna Innes	John Preston	Nancy Waters
Shannon Denaux	Maureen Kelly	Susan Robinson	
Fran Ennis	Jackie McGee	Gail Schiffer	
Paul Garbarini	Joanne Milkereit	Joanne Simson	
Kay Haun	Cameron Mitchum	Anna Stephens	
Abby Himmelein	Maureen Porter	Bill Thomas	

*Submitted by Anna Stephens*

### **Endowment Investment Board**

The Endowment Investment Board (EIB) was established by the Church in 2009 to manage the Church’s Endowment Fund. Previously the Fund was managed by a church committee. The EIB consists of 5 members elected by the congregation for 3 year terms plus the Church Treasurer and a Church Member appointed each year by the Vestry. The current board members and the end of their terms on the board are: Ellie Sester (2015), Stan Greenberg (2014), Richard Hayes (2014), Don Hearth (2015), Warren Banner (Vestry appointee) and Terry Walsh (Treasurer). The one vacancy will be filled at the 2013 Annual Meeting.

During the past year the board formally adopted the following investment philosophy: *“Preserve the Endowment Principle, adjusted for inflation annually, and strive to have an annual return (above inflation) of 2% to 5%.”* This is consistent with the previous

practice of the EIB and the earlier Endowment Committee which had placed emphasis on conservative investments to protect principle while generating a modest return to either grow the real value of the fund and/or make funds available to the church.

Over the past 24 years for which detail records are available

- The value of the fund has grown from \$250,000 to \$821,000
- \$373,000 has been contributed to the fund
- \$495,000 has been withdrawn from the fund
- The average annual return, above inflation, has been 3.9%

As shown in the attached table, the past year was a good year, more than making up for a poor year in 2011. The two main performance measures for 2012 are

- Line 5: The Return, above inflation, during 2012 was 14.5%. (-7.5% in 2011)
- Line 8: The end of year Actual Value of the fund was \$52,000 above the Protected Principle. (-\$37,000 at end of 2011)

Also note the following in the table

- Lines 4 and 32: \$16,880 was withdrawn from the Unrestricted Account during 2012; \$6,000 for the Operating Budget, \$880 for interest on Promissory Notes and \$10,000 for the payout of one Promissory Note.
- Lines 3 and 23: \$65,000 was added to the fund by the Churchyard Committee to establish a Restricted Account in the fund for the Churchyard.
- Lines 19 and 27: The actual value of both restricted accounts are above the protected principle for each account.

It has been my pleasure to have served as EIB Chair during the past year.

*Submitted by Don Hearth*

## **Finance**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS:** Paige Wisotski, Stuart Terry, Richard Hayes (Chair), Terry Walsh (Treasurer)

The financial status of the congregation for the Budget Year 2012-2013 was strong. The Finance Committee meets monthly and reviews the status with the Treasurer and the minister. The Finance Committee reports regularly to the Vestry, and performs analysis as requested on the monthly Treasurer reports, and other specially requested financial analysis. We have maintained a two month cash reserve (minimum) throughout the year. The Church has a positive cash flow, and will be able to carry forward to the new budget year between \$20,000 and \$30,000. The proposed budget for 2013-2014 was submitted to the Vestry for consideration at the annual meeting. It includes 3% raises for the Minister, Religious Education Director, Music Director, Office Administrator and Sexton. However, due to the shortfall in the Pledge Drive the budget does not include monies for the planned quarter time Membership Coordinator and a much needed religious education assistant (8 hrs/week) as requested by the DRE. The carry forward of funds from the 2012-2013 budget will allow a balanced budget for 2013-2014. The Finance Committee applauds Sally Newell and Maureen Porter for their leadership and

efforts as Pledge Drive chairpersons. Thank you to both!

Stuart Terry continues to oversee the parking contract and Planned Giving. Stuart has done a great job renegotiating the parking contract this year – the income from renting the parking lot during the week is critical to our budget – and makes up shortfalls in our pledge giving. Stuart also has done an outstanding job chairing the Planned Giving Subcommittee – the results are a very healthy endowment for our church. The Planned Giving Committee consists of Stuart Terry, Chair, Bill Walsh, Co-Chair and members: Hillary Hutchinson, Kay Haun, John Milkereit, Myrtle Staples, and Steve Wilson. Meetings were held in October, December, February, and April. The annual emphasis this year was on congregation-wide awareness building. This effort, led by John Milkereit included a letter and an email to each home including a brochure and response card as well as information-tables in Gage Hall on four consecutive Sundays. Four new commitments to Planned Gifts were obtained during this campaign. Awareness was also built by monthly articles, written by Kay Haun, in the Gateway. The content of these articles often related to recent benefactors. The committee sought to learn what kind of recognition was appropriate for those who have committed to future gifts. This effort, led by Myrtle Staples, led to a questionnaire mailed to the homes of our future benefactors. Recognition of future benefactors will be a part of the annual program in the future. Over 13% of the congregation has now committed to planned gifts.

Finally we thank Terry Walsh as Treasurer and Don Hearth as Assistant Treasurer. Their continual efforts that require them to work many hours a month with the office administrator and the bookkeeper have led to strong accounting practices and excellent budget reports every month. The Finance Committee applauds their all-volunteer efforts, and thanks them both.

*Submitted by Richard Hayes*

## **Fine Arts**

Committee: Joanna Innes and Amy Ball, co-chairs; Jack Hurley, Cisco Lindsey, Myrtle Staples, Tobias Van Buren.

Mission Statement: The Fine Arts Committee displays the art work of UU members and friends as well as others via invitation, knowing that fine art is an important cultural product of any community, which deserves to be viewed and to be purchased.

Accomplishments:

1. Conducted seven art shows
  - Fall Show I: Annette Pate's solo show of her paintings
  - Fall Show II: Members and Friends show of paintings
  - Candlelight Concert/Art Show with guest artist Diane Tennyson's paintings
  - Winter Show: Paintings from Cisco Lindsey and Jim Innes
  - Candlelight Concert/Art Show: Photo-art by Trudy Muegel
  - Winter Show II: Works from Private Collections (members and friends)

- Candlelight Concert/Art Show: Solo Show “Potpourri” by Cisco Lindsey
  - Spring Show II: Guest Artist
  - Summer Show (TBD)
2. The back entrance of Gage Hall was turned into a Mini-Gallery with spots on a dimmer switch; the electrical work was done by Allan Moore. Jack Hurley opened the gallery with a show of his photography. We need to work toward finding shows for this space. Some artists are hesitant to show there because they question the security of the hallway.
  3. Worked cooperatively with the Music Committee to present three benefit concerts/art shows that brought in \$2060 for the James Simons Elementary School’s music program.
  4. Cisco Lindsey prepared a group tour at the Gibbes’ Museum of Art in March. Jonathan Green conducted a tour for 20 participants, a highly successful venture. Tickets were sold at the church’s Fall Auction.
  5. Joanna Innes will continue to chair, and Amy Ball will co-chair for the next year.

Review of the year’s work:

All of the art shows were successful. Of special interest was the show featuring works from members and friends’ private collections. It increased the opportunity for more participation. The gallery tour conducted by Jonathan Green at the Gibbes was of particular interest.

Plans for the new year include continuing some of the same kinds of shows:

1. Continue to show the work of guest artists (mostly Cisco Lindsey’s contacts).
2. One show for the work of our own members.
3. Private Collection Show
4. Invitational Shows that include C of C students. Cisco will contact Mark Sloan.
5. Solo Shows (including some in the mini-gallery in the back entrance)
6. Crafts Show (if we can find a satisfactory way for safe display)
7. Conduct a gallery tour or another Gibbes Tour as part of the Annual Auction.
8. Children’s Show if there is interest.

*Submitted by Joanna Innes*

## **Forum**

Chair: Simon Lewis

Committee: Laura Moses, Don Hearth, Paul Nelson, Bill Morris, Trip Banner, Dan Schiffer

By June 2nd we will have had 32 Forum sessions this church year, covering a wide range of topics from astronomy to zombies. Almost all of our presenters are locals, with the largest source, unsurprisingly, being the College of Charleston (17). Our own congregation provided seven of the speakers, four of whom presented sessions on church-related topics. Although I have not been keeping scrupulous records of attendance, sessions have generally attracted good audiences of 20 or more, with one or two topping 50. The sessions have generally been enthusiastically received. If you have suggestions

for speakers, please do not hesitate to get in touch with a member of the committee, since we are always on the look-out for good, new presenters.

*Submitted by Simon Lewis*

## **Hospitality**

For the Coffee Hour this year the expenses for coffee were approximately \$400 and for incidentals (creamer, sugar, sodas, punches, ice when needed, etc.) \$200. Hospitality also washes Coffee Hour linens and dish towels and helps in weekly clean-up. The sweet and healthy snacks are provided pro bono. Barbara Goldberg and Ruthie Sumpter have encouraged members of the congregation to contribute snacks. This effort will continue.

Hospitality Committee for 2013-2014: Will Moredock, Sue Prazak

*Submitted by Sue Prazak*

## **Landmark/Buildings & Grounds**

1. Mission – To maintain the Sanctuary, Gage Hall, Annex and grounds of THE UNITARIAN CHURCH IN CHARLESTON, and keep them in a good state of repair; To supervise any renovations, repairs and restorations; To care for furnishings and equipment. The Chairman of this Committee supervises, along with the Minister, the Sexton.
2. Goals – Goals for the past year were to install a memorial to the enslaved workers that helped to build our church. The Planned Giving Committee asked Building & Grounds to head up a project to make an attractive area along the north wall outside the sanctuary.
3. Goal Achievements – Thanks to Paul Garbarini's hard work, the memorial to the enslaved builders is complete. The Gage Hall front doors have also been refinished.
4. Projects underway – Much work has been done in the Sanctuary tower, including new wiring for the tower light and old wiring removed. Many parts of the old organ have been removed. Repair and painting the back metal staircase of Gage Hall has been started.
5. Concerns/Goals for next year – Continuing upgrades for Gage Hall such as sound dampening; repair damaged plaster in Danny's office, downstairs on the north wall and the upstairs hallway; developing plans for further improvements to the Sanctuary (tower and chancel window lighting; new sound system). We would also like to provide a plan for the north wall outside the sanctuary.
6. Recommendations – We will continue to initiate plans for air conditioning the Sanctuary, although currently funding is not available.

*Submitted by Ron Updike*

## **Membership**

The mission of the Membership Committee is to welcome visitors and to facilitate their integration into the life of the congregation.

Committee Members: Claudia Updike, Chair; Susan Hartry and Ren Manning, Co-Chairs; Leslie Madden, Maureen Porter, Gail Schiffer, Will Moredock, Carol Conklin, Kris Rife, George Castano, Marcia Castano, Judy Ford, Ruby Cooper, Marjorie Beecher.

Activities, Accomplishments, and Transitions:

- Two New Member Sunday Ceremonies were held; George Castano took the photos of New Members to display in Gage Hall. George and Marcia Castano also continue to arrange for the Greeters and Ushers at each service.
- We held one reception in Gage Hall for new members and had one potluck at Reverend Reed's home to welcome new members and their families.
- We held 3 meetings to plan our Pathways Classes and other activities: 9/16/12; 11/11/12; and 4/7/13.
- We reinstated the “Red Mug” program to offer visitors a welcome to Gage Hall and to recognize them and approach them at Coffee Hour.
- We offered Pathways Classes in September 2012 and January 2013; the classes were held on 3 successive Sundays after Service in the Charleston Day School. This facility has made it easier for us to meet, especially as it is on ground level, and we can avoid the Gage Hall stairs. It is also easier for us to serve lunch here, and we have the Library and the Cafeteria to convene and meet in.
- Mentors for the past 2 classes are Stan Boyer, Cathie Currin, JoAnne Simson, Will Moredock, Nancy Groh, and Tony Brown.
- Cris and Ruthie Sumpter, after having run the Membership Committee for 6 years and leading the New Member Service, have decided to redirect their energies to other UU projects; we thank them for their past hard work.
- Susan Hartry and Ren Manning have volunteered to be Co-Chairs for the Membership Committee.
- The main goal of the Membership Committee this coming year is to take a closer look at the Pathways Classes and determine how we can better prepare prospective new members to be actively involved in the Church.

*Respectfully submitted by Claudia Updike*

## **Music**

Members: Joanna Innes and Richard Nelson, co-chairs; Lin Raymond, Music Director; Amy Ball, Dee Boggan, Cathie Currin, Susan Findlay, Frank Hardie, Marc Kruzda, Myrtle Staples.

Mission Statement: The Music Committee supports the Music Director and attends the business of the Music Program, including the budget, care of the musical instruments and hymnals, and encouragement of all musicians, especially RE youth through the Martha Welch Music Scholarship. The committee also channels communication from the congregation to the Music Director.

Accomplishments for the 2012-13 year:

1. Conducted three Candlelight Concerts (combined with Art Openings)
  - Pro Musica concert November 2, 2012
  - Scott Turkington organ recital February 1, 2013
  - Guest Guitarist James Manuele concert April 5, 2013These concerts raised \$2064 for the James Simons Elementary School's music program. Lauren Parr, teacher in the program, attended a concert and reported how she used the money and stated how much she appreciated our help.
2. Conducted in cooperation with the Social Justice Committee's Coffee House the Susan Conant and Lin Raymond CD Release Concert April 20, 2013. Proceeds benefitted the Mitchell Elementary School for enrichment projects.
3. Conducted the \$500 Martha Welch Music Scholarship
  - The committee hired an outside judge, Andrea Kemper, for the competition.
  - Winner, Lily Lassiter (piano), will perform for the congregation sometime during the year.
  - Letters with helpful criticism were sent to all participants.
  - **NOTE:** A new policy was formed regarding the scholarship.
    - (1) The competition will be conducted even if there is only one applicant.
    - (2) It does not matter if the applicant is the child of a staff member.
    - (3) If a tie occurs, the scholarship money (\$500) may be split, as long as both applicants are well-qualified.
4. Amy Ball's proposal to the Vestry for use of the Pig Cards is on file.
5. Attended the Program Council Meetings.
6. Provided snacks for the receptions/art openings in Gage Hall.
7. A Search Committee was formed for the hiring of a new music director because our current director, Lin Raymond, is resigning. Carol Oates chaired the committee composed of Amy Ball, Joanna Innes, Richard Nelson, and Myrtle Staples. Lin Raymond and Mary Root served as consultants.
8. Richard Nelson will serve as chair and \_\_\_?\_\_\_ as co-chair for the 2013-14 year.

*Submitted by Joanna Innes*

## **Personnel**

A talented, committed, and hardworking professional staff is critical to success in a Program Church. With excellent staff and volunteer leadership, it is a pleasure for me to serve this committee! Transitions in staff this year have been few and smooth.

As expected, Mike Garbarini left his position as Sexton to pursue a position that uses more of his skills. Jacob Montgomery joined the staff in late summer and has performed the varied duties well. Recently, he decided to take on more catering work and that means leaving us early this summer. We wish Jacob success and our search begins anew.

We learned this year that July is our time to bid Lin Raymond a very fond farewell. The Search Committee, led by Carol Oates, worked effectively identifying excellent candidates for Music Director. Our Vestry enthusiastically endorsed and confirmed the top candidate, Johanna Evenson, as our new Music Director. We look forward to getting to know and enjoy Johanna and her work beginning in July.

Our Administrator, Hannah Piazza, has continued to grow in her position and is a great asset to the staff. As anticipated, Hannah recruited and hired an assistant this year. Michelle Perez serves as our part-time Office Assistant supporting the administration of our church.

Janet Watts is a “rock” in our staff. We appreciate her consistent (or constant?) work with staff and volunteers to create and coordinate enriching programs. This year she took on programming for adults, working with Linda Maxwell Allen to conduct a survey on Adult RE, and using the data to guide programs.

As a first-year Chair of the Personnel Committee, I sincerely appreciate the time, insights, and work of the other committee members: Tony Brown, Nancy Waters, and Bill Finn (as our expert consultant). Danny is our valued advisor and Hannah provides great support. The committee and the church as a whole are very fortunate in the area of Personnel.

*Submitted by Betsy Grund*

## **Service Auction**

Committee: Co-Chairs Lisa Hajjar and Nancy Simpson; Terry Walsh, Susan Garrison, Ellie Setser, Susan Conant, Fran Ennis, Gail Schiffer, Prudence Finn, Claudia Updike, Ron Updike, Jonathan Lamb, Anita Harrison.

Purpose: The function of the Service Auction Committee is to plan, organize, advertise, and run the church’s annual Service Auction to raise operating funds for the church. The success of the auction is highly dependent on the congregation’s participation in donating items and services to be offered at the auction and in attending the auction and bidding on these donated offerings. The auction is also viewed as a social event and a fun way to give back to the church by all who participate. Therefore, it is a critical function of the committee to make the auction an enjoyable evening, by providing good food, drinks, atmosphere, and a desirable number and variety of offerings for both the silent and the live auctions, and to meet the finance committee’s set goal for the operating budget.



Accomplishments:

- **Successful completion of two full auctions in the same calendar year.** Due to a request by church leaders, the auction was moved from being a spring event (March) to being a fall event (November). This was done, in part, to separate the auction from the annual canvass campaign.
- **Exceeding Finance Committee budget expectations.** Due to holding two auctions in one calendar year, expectations were somewhat lower than usual (unsure of exact budget figure). To everyone's surprise, the November 2012 auction broke a record for highest net earnings. This is significant in that March 2012 cash donations were \$2,050 and November 2012 cash donations were \$700. **The net income for the November 2012 auction was \$23,418.**
- **Splitting the auction into two events.** Although our original goal for this auction was to minimize volunteer burnout and congregation "auction fatigue" by lowering our expectations for financial success, we ended up making significant changes. These changes resulted in more work and more money, but the end result felt fresh and rewarding. Since having adequate space has always been an issue, we split the silent auction from the live auction. The silent auction was held after church, on the first Sunday in November, in the cafeteria of the Charleston Day School. This gave us more room and increased participation by church members who do not often attend the auction. We had some minor glitches which were to be expected with such a change, but everyone seemed to enjoy the new, sunny and roomy venue. The live auction was held on the second Saturday of November in Gage Hall as is customary.

For the first time the office assisted with data input for donated items and services and the committee is grateful for the help. We are always in need of more, especially those who would be willing to take on the jobs of co-chairs and data/auction program management. Any assistance from the vestry or office is appreciated.

*Submitted by Lisa Hajjar*

## **Social Justice**

**BOLD STEP II: BECOME LEADERS IN SOCIAL JUSTICE IN OUR LOCAL AND UU COMMUNITY**

**SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE** – The committee serves as an umbrella group that provides coordination and communication with the congregation, Social Justice Committee members and the greater Charleston community. Our main focus has been to address issues related to social justice and social responsibility at the local and state level. Most of the outreach and in reach activities are done by sub-committees/action groups who meet as necessary to meet their objectives. The Social Justice Committee meets three times a year: October, January and May. Minutes are available upon request.

### **Social Justice Committee Leadership:**

**Suane Ansari, Chair; Diane Narkunas, Outgoing Co-Chair; Dimitri Chernyshov, Incoming Co-Chair, Cathie Currin, Secretary; Richard Hayes, Webmaster; Myrtle Staples, Vestry Liaison.**

### **Committee Highlights:**

- Second Social Justice Sunday – September 2012.
- Please see the Subcommittee reports below; each has achieved goals worthy of highlighting.

**ADVOCACY**- The Social Justice Committee supports those who wish to improve their capacity to advocate for social justice issues locally and at state and federal levels. The Committee leadership continues to search for a leader as Donna Reyburn has stepped down. An announcement was made at the Social Justice meeting in January and published in the Gateway, and we will continue to reach out to the congregation until this important seat is filled. In the meantime, the subcommittees have actively advocated for social justice issues by:

- Participation in the Emancipation Day Parade January 1
- Participation in the Gay Pride Parade in the summer in North Charleston
- Active involvement in the CAJM activities, including the Rally on April 8, 2013 and the Assembly on April 29 attended by over 2,000 network members and invited guests, and public leaders and officials.

### **CHARLESTON AREA JUSTICE MINISTRY (CAJM) ANNUAL REPORT**

***Leadership Team: Danny Reed, CAJM Secretary & CAJM Education Research Steering Committee, Frank Hardie, Co-Chair, Crime and Violence Research Committee, Suzanne Hardie, special consultant to Education Committee, Diane Narkunas, CAJM Senate UU Rep. Team Leaders: Cathie Currin, Frank Hardie, Suzanne Hardie, Susan Hartry, Richard Hayes, Joanna Innes, Diane Narkunas and Gail Schiffer. We have over 80 who have signed up to be Network Members who support CAJM Action.***

During 2012 – 2013, several important actions took place to move our efforts to achieve an interfaith approach to justice in the Charleston area.

- Our first important achievement was the hiring June 2012, of a dynamic Charleston Area coordinator to facilitate and lead our success. Treva Williams, was trained by the Direct Action Research & Training Center (DART), which is headquartered in Florida.
- Treva guided congregations on our process of educating our congregations through education and engagement.
- Treva also educated all congregations about the importance of each group to financially support CAJM. (The 2013-2014 UCC budget again includes \$3,000 for CAJM. This item will be voted on as part of the May Annual Meeting).
- We organized our congregation to have 7 Team Members/ Leaders who were charged with pulling together interested members of the congregation to gain input re their ideas of justice and their importance in the Charleston area. These people are called Network Members. As of April 2013, we have 80 Network Members. The role of the

Team Member is to provide ongoing information and updates about the progress of the CAJM efforts and make sure their Network Members have the opportunity to attend important meetings that support justice.

- Sept. 23 – Oct. 14, there were eight small group meetings; 4 held in Team Member homes and 4 held at the Sept. 28 Potluck meeting, at which the other 4 groups were facilitated by Team Members.
- At a large group meeting in the fall, the group voted to call themselves Charleston Area Justice Ministry (CAJM). Up to this time, the group was called Charleston Area Interfaith Justice Committee (CAISC).
- The process over the past two years began with a number of local churches getting together with a common goal, to work on social justice issues in the Charleston area. Today there are 20 diverse congregations committed to making a difference in the lives of people in need. The (DART) process used for CAJM has been followed successfully in cities across the country, including UU several churches. The results have been positive!
- Using this process, CAJM identified two priority justice needs: 1. Education & 2. Crime & Violence. Two study groups were developed to research needs in each area. In the area of education the group decided to focus on early childhood education because evidence shows that providing early reading & literacy opportunities for children living in underprivileged home improves performance in schools and shows an important correlation with graduation rates. People in the group were also concerned about high crime rates in inner city neighborhoods. After several months of investigation, each study group settled on one relatively small practical and practicable action that address each of these problems systemically, and could be built upon in the future to effect true change.
- Over the past four months research committees have been meeting with experts in each field. By April the groups settled on two specific projects.
- The goal to improve early education was narrowed down to expanding the 4-year old pre-school program in Charleston County. Currently, there are 1800 slots for children who qualify for this program. There are approximately 425 children who qualified for the program, but have been placed on a waiting list. Early childhood education is known to improve reading readiness in children from disadvantaged homes—an important step in improving literacy, and ultimately, improving their likelihood of graduating from high school. We will also be asking that the program use research based curriculum that's been proven effective, and perform follow-up evaluation of student performance each year through Grade 3. Public officials attending the action assembly on April 29, will be presented with problems, hear testimonials and be provided with solutions. The first request
- The goal related to crime and violence will address the system of placing youthful offenders in detention whether their infraction is violent or not. The group is looking at a two pronged approach: 1. Requiring the use of an assessment tool/form after a youth is apprehended, such as the one developed by the Children's Law Center, to determine immediately if the youth (age 11-17) have committed a violent crime or not and/or has a criminal record or disability. (If a youngster is detained for minor crimes, s/he may be housed for up to two months in a detention center with those with a criminal past. Not only do these children miss school, but they are exposed to a

criminal culture); 2. If a youth is arrested for a non-violent crime, and a parent or guardian cannot be located, this research group is looking for alternative housing for these offenders. One resource being explored is re-opening the residential home at Carolina Youth Development Center in N. Charleston. This alternative approach would allow students/youth to attend school in a safe environment until their case is heard by a judge.

- The next part of the process is to invite those who have the power to take these requests and implement action. Two important events were scheduled.
- April 8 CAJM Rally where specific projects were presented to almost 600 diverse people from the 20 different churches. The clergy representing their churches each provided motivational talks to the group gathered at the St. James Presbyterian Church on James Island. Each person in attendance was asked to “bring 3” (people with them) to the Action Assembly. Expected attendance is 1,500.
- April 29 Nehemiah Action Assembly was held at St. Matthew’s Baptist Church in N. Charleston. Approximately 2,100 people from 18 congregations in the Charleston area attended the Assembly. In attendance were Mayor Riley from Charleston, Mayor Summey, N. Charleston and Mayor Swails, Mount Pleasant. Public officials heard the problems outlined above, heard testimonials and were asked to answer yes or no on suggested action solutions.
- Nancy McGinley, Superintendent of Charleston County Schools, was asked to provide leadership by presenting a request to the School Board to expand the child development program for 4-year olds in Title I schools using a research based literacy curriculum to be used in all CD classes and measure progress of every student through third grade. The request is to expand slots by 220 for the 2013-2014 school year and the rest the following year. Dr. McGinley said “yes!”
- A commitment was asked of Charleston County Sheriff Cannon, Solicitor Wilson, Charleston Police Chief Mullen, North Charleston Police Chief, Driggers and Mount Pleasant Police Chief Ritchie. They were asked to participate in a task force to implement a program to reduce juvenile detention by 65% in the next year. All said “yes,” except Mullen.

### **COFFEE HOUSE CONCERT FUNDRAISING/ MITCHELL SCHOOL PROGRAMS -**

Promotes educational equity for children living in poverty in the Charleston Tri-County area. Funds generated through monthly Gage Hall Coffee Houses are used for academic enrichment activities at Mitchell School. Enrichment activities include enhanced math and science as well as field trips for children in grades K-6.

**Coffee House leaders: Mark Farnham and Bill Morris; Mitchell School: John Narkunas**

***Accomplishments:*** Coffee House funds continue to support student enrichment activities at the Mitchell Math and Science Elementary School in Charleston.

- Funds earned from seven concerts September 2012 through April 2013- \$3,834 - (one more concert in May).

- Funds that went out to Mitchell School for enrichment activities - \$5,305 through April 22, 2013 – (a total of \$6,000 was allocated for the school year.).
- Current net amount in revolving account - \$2,749 as of April 22, 2013.
- A total of 855 students participated in the program this year in grades K through 6.
- Students were involved in science-based field trips to such places as the Children’s Museum, Cypress Gardens, See Wee, Legare Farms, Charlestown Landing, Aquarium, Middleton Place, Patriots Point, Channel 2, Boeing and the College of Charleston Laboratories.
- The field trips supplemented school curriculum efforts in earth sciences, weather, physical sciences, life sciences chemistry, and other scientific areas.
- After school science programs were conducted in the study areas of electricity and magnetism using the Mad Science curriculum at the Mitchell School.
- Funds were used to pay for fees and transportation costs associated with the program.
- Members of the congregation participated in this program as chaperones on field trips.
- Ms. Ellen Mintz and Kimberly Wickstrom, Lead teachers at the Mitchell School, sent a letter to the Post and Courier in January 2013 recognizing the support of the Social Justice Committee of the Unitarian Church and the importance of the after-school enrichment programs in the lives of the students.

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH GIVING –**

**Sub-committee Members: Diane Narkunas, Chair, Members: Suzanne Hardie, Kay Haun, JoAnn Simson & Myrtle Staples**

Since 2007, ten organizations nominated by members of the church community have received donations to support underserved populations. The UUC has awarded over \$60,000 to organizations in the Charleston Tri-County Area. These groups include: Alston Wilkes Society, Sea Island Habitat for Humanity – Women Build, The Clemente Course, Carolina Youth Development Center, Florence Crittenton Programs of South Carolina, Lowcountry Food Bank: BackPack Buddies, Our Lady of Mercy Literacy Program, South Carolina Strong, BEGIN WITH BOOKS Pre-School Literacy Program, Darkness to Light, My Sister’s House, and the Metanoia After School Enrichment Program.

***Accomplishments:***

- Metanoia, the 2012 fall project, was awarded \$5,000, December 9, 2012. Rev. Bill Stanfield, Metanoia CEO, accepted the donations. These funds support the after-school enrichment program for elementary school children living in the Chicora Cherokee area of N. Charleston. This organization was nominated by Nelson Ohl.
- Donations at the two Christmas Eve collections (approximately \$2,500) went to Danny Reed to award to the group of his choice. The group Rev. Reed selected was Charleston County School District “Children in Crisis Fund.” Rev. Reed was

told by the district that our donation was the largest gift ever received by the district!

- The Vestry Chair and Social Justice Vestry liaison suggested that we collect donations for the Charleston Area Justice Ministry (CAJM) for spring 2013. These funds support the operating expenses for the CAJM Action Coordinator and other start-up costs. The first week of April, we awarded Treva Williams \$1,500. We will continue collecting Sunday service donations in our 'pink envelopes' through June 2013 and award funds the first week of July, 2013.
- We are seeking nominations through May 10, for a new charitable giving project for fall 2013.

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH VOLUNTEERING COMMITTEE,**  
**Cathie Currin, Subcommittee Chair.**

Our primary project continues to be the Backpack Buddy Program at the Low Country Food Bank. This year, our volunteers have packed 4500 bags of food for low-income children who usually get their lunches at school. The bags are put in the children's backpacks on Friday so that they will have food for the weekend. Approximately one hundred and eighty hours of volunteer time have been spent in this worthy cause. We are investigating opportunities for volunteering with other agencies that our congregation has supported through Community Outreach Giving. We bring requests from agencies needing volunteer help to the attention of members of the Social Justice Committee through e-mails and the Gateway.

**CRISIS MINISTRY-** Approximately 31 volunteered during this church year to prepare and serve dinner at the Charleston Men's Shelter on the first Wednesday of every other month, and to prepare and serve breakfast at the Family Shelter the following morning. Lee Westbrook purchased and delivered food for these meals. **Contact: Catherine Townsend.**

***Accomplishments:***

- 6 dinners were prepared and served at the Crisis Ministry Men's Shelter by members of the congregation.
- 6 breakfasts were prepared and served at the Crisis Ministry Family Shelter.
- 31 volunteers served

**GREEN SANCTUARY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT -**  
**Subcommittee leaders and contacts: Nina Fair and Laura Moses**

**Purpose**

To lead the church's effort to become more environmentally sustainable through capital improvements, education, and worship. Much of these efforts will be accomplished through collaboration with other church committees. The Green Sanctuary subcommittee's mission falls under the seventh UUA principle: "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part."

### Objectives

- Continue to support environmental education and worship via green-themed Sunday forums and worship services. At a minimum, we will sponsor the Earth Day service each year.
- Continually work to reduce the church's environmental footprint.
- Ensure that everyone who uses Gage Hall is aware of the waste-reduction policies now in place with regard to reusable eating utensils, recycling, and composting.
- Contribute a column to the Gateway in support of environmental education.
- Provide expertise to other church committees, especially those involved with capital improvements, to encourage the church to make sustainable decisions.
- Continue to work toward a church that is accessible to alternative transportation. For example, we have installed bike racks near Gage Hall.
- Encourage members to participate in area clean-ups and other activities to green our communities.
- Work with Religious Education program to support sustainability awareness and activities.

### Accomplishments During 2012-13 Church Year

- Earth Day service (2008 – Present)
- Green forums (2007 – Present)
- Promotion of recycling of e-waste, printer cartridges, plastics and other recyclables (2007 – present)
- Replacement of incandescent light bulbs with CFL's (2008 - present)
- Participation in Beach and City Sweeps (2008 – present)
- Support of Vestry Policy #22 – Policy for Green Sanctuary Considerations (2010)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Green Film Series in collaboration with Circular Church Sustainability Committee (2013)
- Sponsorship of “Low & Local” Coffee Hour on Earth Day Sunday to promote UUA’s Ethical Eating Initiative (2013)
- Activities with RE program on Earth Day Sunday to promote sustainability for kids (2013)
- Coordination with City of Charleston for placement of new bike rack at front of Gage Hall (2013)
- Sponsorship of Voluntary Simplicity Class (2013)
- Investigation of feasibility of installing solar panels on Gage Hall (2013)

### **MEDIA REFORM SUBCOMMITTEE (Media Reform SC)**

**Media Reform SC** – We seek to educate the public about the need to make news media more democratic and more inclusive, so as to foster a community in which people are

well informed about all issues that affect them, not just issues that are deemed acceptable by large media corporations. **Contact: Faye Steuer.**

***Accomplishments:***

- We met ten times in the past year and welcomed three new members into our group.
- Much of our work centered on gearing up to apply to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for a Low Power FM (LPFM) radio license. If granted, such a license would bring alternative, locally-produced news, information, and entertainment to the Lowcountry. To this end we
  - o held a meeting of possible community participants in such a venture,
  - o commented to the FCC regarding the need for published minimum standards for locally-originated programming on LPFM stations,
  - o participated in a webinar given by Prometheus Radio (a nonprofit that supports the creation of community radio stations),
  - o attended a session given by Prometheus at the Southern Human Rights conference (held locally) in December, 2012,
  - o met with Prometheus staff members at the National Conference for Media Reform in Denver in April, 2013,
  - o applied to Prometheus for possible acceptance into their Station Torchbearer Program, which would give us \$2000 worth of help in applying for an FCC license, at a cost to us of only \$200.
  - o explored various means of getting nonprofit status and ultimately applied for such status with the state of SC ourselves, and
  - o celebrated the formation of a nonprofit corporation, Media Reform SC Inc., and granting of nonprofit status to our group by the state on February 7, 2013.
- We showed the movie “OutFoxed” (about Fox News) at Gage Hall in May, 2012 and also sold (at no profit) copies of the 2012 book, The Fox Effect, by Brock and Rabin-Havt. In June we held a discussion of that book, again in Gage Hall.
- We thoroughly updated the “Who owns Charleston’ media?” section of our web site (mediareformsc.org).
- One of our members published an article about media reform in the local press.
- We screened the movie “Shadows of Liberty” for our own group with an eye to showing it publicly in the future.
- We wrote FCC Commissioner Mignon Clyburn to thank her and the Commission for their decision to make broadcasters’ public files available on line (a decision we had advocated last year).
- We filed a complaint with the FCC regarding covert consolidation between local TV stations WMMP and WTAT.
- Two of our members attended the National Conference for Media Reform in Denver, April 5 – 7, 2013.



## **WELCOMING CONGREGATION COMMITTEE**

**Richard Hayes, leader and contact**

### ACTIVITIES-

Our Welcoming Congregation activities are well integrated with our Church Life. Although I serve as the focal point for Welcoming Activities in the Social Justice Committee, we no longer have any formal meetings or members. We all watch to ensure we continue to welcome our LGBTQQI brothers and sisters in the church, and concentrate on supporting community activities through strong community organizations like Alliance for Full Acceptance (AFFA) and SCEquality (South Carolina Equality Coalition is a statewide non-partisan coalition of local and state social, religious and political GLBT organizations and allies with a mission to secure civil and human rights for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender South Carolinians). The highlights of our year include: Increasing number of LGBTQQI members, LGBT discussion in the curriculum of the *Our Whole Life* (OWL) teen religious education program, the Demonstration in March 2013 for Marriage Equality with 500 Charlestonians on the steps of the Custom House, Over 50 Church members marching and riding on a float in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Charleston Gay Pride Parade.

*Submitted by Suanne Ansari*

## **Worship**

The Worship Services Committee is now co-chaired by Sharon Strong and Priscilla Shumway. Sharon will be stepping down as chair at the end of the summer, but Priscilla will continue to chair.

### **Contact information:**

Priscilla Shumway

[priscilla.shumway@gmail.com](mailto:priscilla.shumway@gmail.com)

Home: 886-8689

Cell: 425-1850

Sharon Strong

[sharonstrong2000@yahoo.com](mailto:sharonstrong2000@yahoo.com)

Home: 853-3976

Cell: 276-1716

**Mission:** The Worship Committee enhances the Sunday services throughout the year, in the spirit of enlightenment, to nurture the body, mind, soul and spirit of our congregation. The Worship Committee partners with both the congregation and the minister to provide the best possible services, to get feedback on the services, and to act as a sounding board for the minister's own services. Each week, a Worship Associate helps coordinate the service with the minister or an outside speaker.

**Members:** As of May 2013, the members are: Cecil Bennett, Katie Giacalone, Ralph Haller, Richard Hayes, Tommy Hughston, Hillary Hutchinson, Marc Kruza, Alison

Piepmeier, Jerry Prazak, and Tobias Van Buren (with Rev. Danny Reed and Rev. Elaine Aron Tenbrink).

**Activities:** The committee continues to arrange at least one service each month not conducted by the minister. Summer services were conducted to large audiences. A church picnic in June and pancake breakfast in September provided a fun social beginning and end to the summer season. What we have accomplished:

- We have a Worship Associate available to support the minister for all of his services.
- We have brought in outside speakers for services on variety of topics, with more variety and a looser service structure during the summer.
- We have continued to hold summer services, so that we are still a year round church. Summer services are very popular and lead to new members.
- We have started exploring holding two services each Sunday by helping collect data on how other churches are handling this and by holding two services this past Easter.
- We have gotten younger church members involved in church activities: we had a Story for All Ages every Sunday during the regular church year, and we held a service coordinated by young adults in February.
- We have assisted with exploring other elements that affect the worship experience, such as whether to discourage applause, coordinating coffee hour snacks during the summer services, and encouraging the improvement of the sound system.
- We have coordinated with other church initiatives to incorporate themes into services (such as compassion, social justice, and stewardship).
- We supported additional events related to services, such as a house concert with guest speaker/musician Andrew McKnight.

The Worship Committee usually meets on the third Sunday of the month.

*Submitted by Sharon Strong*