



UNITARIAN CHURCH IN CHARLESTON
ANNUAL REPORT
2014-2015



Minister

We are winding down (another) busy program year and this, my sixth Annual Report, finds the church strong and spirits generally high on Archdale Street. Highlights and commentary follows.

Our Vestry was particularly busy this year, but often behind the scenes and largely unbeknownst to most church members. The church Constitution was successfully amended in the fall and many Vestry policies were reorganized, revised, and brought up to date. A band of tenacious termites attracted our attention and required a timely remedy. The Vestry took this extra expense to the congregation also. A new Safety and Security Committee was convened and is working with the Vestry and appropriate committees to review our practices, property, and equipment. There will be more to share as this important project continues.

We welcomed Sandra Selvitelli to the church staff this year and as Administrator she has made great strides. Formerly our Religious Education Assistant, Sandra took up her new role easily and continues to improve the work flow in the office, respond to membership and public queries with good cheer and professionalism, produce many weekly publications—electronic and paper, and much more. She possess the warmth to keep the office approachable but also the toughness to keep the forgetful and procrastinating Minister in line. Sometimes.

Music Director, Johanna Evenson evinces beautiful sound from all our voices—our dedicated and talented choir, voices of all ages in the pews, and the sweet contributions of our children’s choir. Unflappable and grounded, she is a joy to work with.

Joe McCormack, with skilled hands and a heart to serve, oversees our buildings and manages our very busy event schedule. His performance is the epitome of multi-tasking and his blend of talent and friendliness is an asset to church life.

Membership Coordinator, Carol Oates has, in rather short order, successfully established a valuable, newer staff role. Carol reaches out to newcomers, introducing what we offer and learning what new interests and talent new friends bring. In addition, Carol is a helpful resource to longer-term members wishing to depend their relationship with the church.

Janet Watts, Director of Religious Education, is responsible for our Sunday educational programming, and for occasional weekly offerings. Having been with the church for some time, Janet has known many of our older children since birth and has ensured them a safe and welcoming place among us. The balance of children’s programs and opportunities for adults remains an ongoing experiment. Accordingly, the frequency and nature of courses and events are being evaluated. We are indebted to the many volunteer teachers, helpers, and Religious Education Committee members who devote themselves to the spiritual nurturance of our children and community.

Rev. Nancy Pellegrini, Affiliated Community Minister, has become a familiar and positive presence in our worship and pastoral care. As Chaplain, Rev. Nancy’s primary ministry is to the patients and staff of the Hollings Cancer Center of the Medical University of South Carolina. On site with us, she participates in Sunday services and leads our support group for those living with serious illness. She is supported by a fine committee whose members provide reflection and representation as needed.

I am grateful for the staff members who offer degrees of attention and service that make parts of my work easier, and that also call me to higher performance. Likewise, I am grateful for the many volunteers—Caring Committee, Committee on Shared Ministry, Finance Committee, Personnel Committee, Vestry, and others, who lead with integrity and vision. These individuals steward our resources that we might maximize our service to the world and be an ever more vital spiritual and social home for our membership, brand new, and longtime.

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Personally, this has been a full year marked by increased community involvement on my part, and also one of poignant loss within the church family. I hope I'm doing some good by bringing our values to the Charleston Area Justice Ministry, and other similar projects. I appreciate the congregation's counsel and trust in these endeavors. Yet, the loss of beloved ones this year, young and old, has reminded me of our greater purpose as a church and the tender value of an embracing religious hearth. May we continue to both reach in to care for ourselves and also reach out in advocacy and witness to Charleston, and beyond.

Reports such as this can never truly capture the news and nuances of any given span of time. I am sure I have overlooked important people and programs. Please pardon any inevitable lapses herein. In closing, I am moved by your faithful support of the institution that calls us together and inspired by your service here and in the larger world. I am humbled to stand in the formidable company of those ministers who have occupied this historic pulpit.

Thank you for honoring my gifts and, more important, forgiving my faults. Know that, like you, I love our church. It remains a blessing to be your minister and to share this historic congregation.

Respectfully submitted,



Administrator

This has been an exciting year for me, personally, having joined the staff fulltime just prior to the new church year. Everyone, from staff and vestry to members have been extremely welcoming and helpful in showing me the ropes. I feel extraordinarily lucky to work with a group of such dynamic people.

One of my initial goals was to learn and improve our internal database. We were considering looking at new software and I am happy to report that I believe what we have will fit our needs. I have worked diligently, especially with Carol Oates, on improving the setup, content and the reporting that is available. I plan to devote additional time to this effort over the summer with my primary focus being on the reporting features.

Additionally, I have worked to improve the communication from the office in the form of the email blast sent on Thursdays, the monthly Gateway and initial work on a new website. I look forward to continuing to streamline our communication efforts and to work on branding in the coming year.

Event management is another large part of what I do. Between committee meetings, weddings, concerts and other outside events our facilities stay quite busy. I have transitioned the office to an online calendar only system. Our staff calendar allows for us all to see everything that occurs and I have embedded a calendar on our current website that will show you and others events in real time. In short order I have had people call with interest in various events because they have seen it on the new calendar. Another portion of this is contract management. I have worked with the green sanctuary committee, staff and personnel to improve upon the language in our contracts and look forward to completing that before the next church year begins.

I have had assistance this year from a college senior, Leah Kutruff. She has been a pleasure to work with. Since my hours now include working on Sunday, Leah has been able to come and help on Fridays by answering the phones and printing/folding the orders of service as well as other tasks. The staff wishes Leah well as her new life begins after graduation this week.

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Debbie Kirby continues to do the bookkeeping and has been, along with Terry Walsh, a tremendous help to me in learning the financial side of the church. I am very grateful for Debbie's team as well as Terry.

Outside of goals listed above, I am looking in to streamlining items in the office itself. I plan to work with the Archives committee on record management as well as getting a new, more efficient copier for our growing needs.

Respectfully Submitted by Sandra Selvitelli, Administrator

Music Director

The mission of the church music program is to enhance the worship experience through music and to reach out to the church community and beyond through various music related events.

During the fall of 2014 and the spring of 2015 we have attempted to reach these goals in the following ways:

- Several instrumentalists and singers, both from the congregation and the local community, enhanced the musical experience during our Sunday services.
- Amy Ball, a paid staff member since the fall of 2014, provided the accompaniment for the Sundays that the choir was singing.
- The choirs, both the Chancel as well as the Chalice choir, learned and performed a mixture of familiar and new music during the past church year.
- An enlarged adult choir presented the annual Christmas Cantata in December and the adult choir, plus friends, performed the Hallelujah Chorus for this year's two Easter Services.
- The Children's Choir practiced the majority of Sunday mornings September through May and performed during the services approximately once a month.
- Auditions were held for the eight annual Martha Welch Music Award. This year's winner was cellist Aidan Ross.
- In December several choir members participated, together with a community choir from Mt. Pleasant, in the Crisis Ministries National Memorial Service for the Homeless.
- The Music Committee, together with the Fine Arts Committee, collaborated on two Candlelight Concerts in the spring of 2015. The proceeds from the Candlelight Concerts as well as the proceeds from a Harvard Glee Club Concert in March benefitted the music program in a school chosen by the Music Committee.

Respectfully submitted by Johanna Evenson, Music Director

Religious Education Director

The goals of Religious Education (RE) are the creation, implementation, and organization of safe, quality programs where volunteers, instructors, adults, children, and teens feel supported, encouraged, educated, and accepted.

As in the past, I have coordinated and managed provision of regular Sunday morning programs for the Nursery, and for all school-age classes from Pre-School through High-School during the school term. Out of the school year the RE program also managed childcare and supervision for summer services, and provided childcare for other church events. I have recruited, trained, scheduled, and supervised six paid staff members, and a total of 44 volunteer youth and adult instructors. RE communications, programming, and management are created and maintained by the cooperative work of the RE Committee (re-formed and more active this year, chaired by John Massey) and the RE Director.

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Adult RE offerings this year included regular weekly and monthly programs as well as a number of sporadic and one-time events. On a weekly basis we provided Meditation Classes, Tai Chi Instruction, and Sunday Forums. Monthly offerings included Red Tent—a women’s support group, Yoga, and a Unitarian-Universalist Parenting Class that meets monthly in group members’ homes to socialize and discuss parenting concerns. Classes also featured Comparative Religion field trips, including reception for our Baha’i neighbors, an Articulating Your Unitarian Universalist Faith class, a Charleston History class, and Seeing Systems: Peace, Justice and Sustainability—a class coordinated with the Green Sanctuary Committee. Response to offerings aimed at adults has been mixed. Thus, leadership and coordination of Adult Religious Education remains a work in progress. Ongoing evaluation and assessment will continue.

The RE program was also involved with a number of Social Justice events, including a We Are Family Spirit Day Rally (teen LGBT support) and after-party, a Take Back the Night March and “speak-out” with People Against Rape, a Book Worm Angel’s book drive, the construction and selling of gingerbread houses, “Mitten Tree” collections, Empty Bowls crafts and lunch fundraiser—(each of those three to benefit One80 Place), our annual Thanksgiving food drive and monthly teen volunteer sessions for the Backpack Buddies program—both benefitting the Lowcountry Food Bank, attendance at the city’s annual Homeless Memorial service, and a successful (\$1,200) fundraiser for LGBT scholarships to the Mountain (Unitarian Universalist conference center) established by our own teens.

Community can be created in ways other than socially conscious and academic activities, so as in previous years we have also put our time and energy into more purely social events. This year’s events have included a Family Play Group, Religious Education Family Picnics, Family Game Night, a Halloween party, Youth Conferences for high school and middle school students, a Christmas party, a Kids’ Art Workshop and Kids’ Art Shows, holiday decorating of buildings and grounds, a Valentine’s “Night-Out” for parents, the RE Scholarships Oyster Roast, Easter festivities—including our famous egg hunt, crafts sessions, and petting zoo, recognition of graduating High School students in church, and the children’s Chalice Choir.

Other successes this year included two levels of Our Whole Lives—sexuality education for middle and high schoolers, and doing so for the first time with several special needs teens in attendance. The seventh and ninth grade OWL class featured a sleepover at the church, an evening panel of LGBT representatives, a field trip to Planned Parenthood, and a graduation party for students and their families. Continued support for a Unitarian Universalist Student Group at the College of Charleston was another notable achievement.

All in all, it has been a typically busy, typically varied year, serving a large number of our congregation and collaborating with numerous like-minded individuals and organizations in the larger community.

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

Membership Coordinator

The Membership Coordinator will help to create a vibrant, dedicated membership in which everyone feels welcome and nurtured in our congregation.

Maintaining the Established Core Functions of the Position:

- Pathways Classes: This year I continued to facilitate three Classes (Fall, Winter, Spring), with the support of the Membership Committee. This model seems to work well, and while I make modifications along the way, the basic format will remain intact for the coming year.
- 63 New Members were welcomed into the congregation.
- Mentors for Pathways: Again, this process seems to work, and will continue for the coming year. I

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have received consistently positive feedback from them about the experience of Mentoring.

- Pathfinders: Facilitated five classes for newcomers (July, September, November, January, March. Plan to continue this schedule.
- Welcoming Sunday Mornings: I continue to work with the Ushers and Greeters and the Membership Committee to create a welcoming environment for all who attend worship services.
- Committees: In continue to collaborate directly with the Membership Committee and the Caring Committee.

New This Year:

- I have established a schedule to check in with New Members at regular intervals, and to encourage Mentors to do the same.
- This year I have enjoyed a more collaborative relationship with the Administrator. She has guided me in using the database more effectively, and I have taken on some responsibility of its maintenance, in the area of Membership.
- I helped to launch the Young Adult Group. It is having only limited success, but I will continue to provide support.
- With the Minister, I re-introduced and planned Membership Sunday, celebrating and honoring those with special membership anniversaries, and lengthy commitment to this congregation. I received much positive feedback from those honored. This will continue annually, the first Sunday in May.
- I have begun to take part in professional development opportunities presented by the Unitarian Universalist Association of Membership Professionals. I enjoy the connection with other membership professionals and the UUAMP is a great resource. I will attend the UUAMP Professional Day at this year's UUA GA.

Looking Ahead:

I continue to enjoy this work and feel I have established the position such that the congregation sees it as an integral part of the church staff. I look forward to continuing to refine the current programs and processes and to establish new ones. I appreciate the collaborative relationships I enjoy with the staff, Vestry, and lay leadership.

Respectfully Submitted by Carol Oates, Membership Coordinator

Vestry

The Unitarian Church in Charleston has had a very busy year. Thanks to the hard work of all our committee chairs and co-chairs, committee members, Vestry members, and our hard-working minister and staff, we have accomplished far more than we could ever have imagined just ten years ago. So much has been achieved that I can't list it all, but here are just a few highlights of what's been done this year:

- Installed new HVAC system in the Sanctuary
- Approved a new Constitution
- Continued major support for CAJM, with highest financial support of any congregation and in top three congregations in membership and attendance
- Installed new composting, recycling, and landfill bins in Gage Hall
- Maintained reinvigorated docent program
- Revised health insurance policies to assure quality health care for employees
- Registered over 120 children and youth in RE, with average attendance of 70
- Maintained the most beautiful church yard in Charleston

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- Welcomed 63 new members into the Church
- Received the largest number of pledges and the largest amount of pledges in the history of the Church
- Coffee House gave over \$2,000 to fund field trips for Mitchell students
- Candlelight Concerts gave over \$2,000 to music program at E.B. Ellington
- Treated Gage Hall for dry-wood termites
- Raised over \$30,000 with Church auction
- Established Safety and Security Committee to assure security in Sanctuary, Gage Hall and RE Annex
- Established Bicentennial Committee to plan for 2017 bicentennial
- Established escrow to fund Reverend Reed's sabbatical in 2017 or 2018
- Re-organized Vestry Policies for ease of use (coming soon)
- Created new website for Church (coming soon)
- Established new signage for parking area to make it clear who can park when (coming soon)

It has been my honor and my pleasure to serve as Vestry Chair for such a dynamic Unitarian-Universalist congregation and alongside such a dedicated group of Church leaders this year. Please read committee reports to see what else has happened!

Respectfully Submitted by John Newell, Vestry Chair

Treasurer

The Church's fiscal year runs from July 1st through June 30th of the following year. We ended the last fiscal year on June 30, 2014 in a very strong financial position. The Operating Budget income was approximately \$15,000 over expenses. This overage was used as income in the 2014/2015 fiscal year.

At the start of the 2014/2015 fiscal year (July 1, 2014), the balances of the Endowment, Churchyard, and Landmark Funds were approximately \$928,549, \$13,092, and \$36,015 respectively. Our reserves totaled about \$61,313. We also had a \$50,000 short term CD from the bequest from Bill and Avis Smart.

As of March 31st, 2015:

- The Endowment has increased to \$960,093. This includes the \$50,000 bequest from Don Hearth used to create the Music Endowment.
- The Churchyard Fund is currently \$11,107.
- The Landmark Fund is currently \$36,712.
- There is \$51,922 in our Reserve accounts. Our reserves are divided into four different categories. The Operating Reserve, the Maintenance Reserve, the Emergency Reserve, and the Auction Reserve. .
 - The Operating Reserve (\$16,461) is to insure the balance of the Operating Fund stays positive during the year;
 - the Maintenance Reserve (\$3,944) is used for major deferred maintenance projects. During this church year Maintenance Reserve funds were used for Termite Extermination in Gage Hall (\$5,355) and to repair the air conditioner in Gage Hall (\$2,709).;
 - the Emergency Reserve (\$26,517) 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 Auction Reserve (\$5,000) is to offset the risk of including the auction income in our budget before the Annual Service Auction has been held. Each year, we include income from the Annual Service Auction in the budget before the auction has been held. This puts the budget at risk if the

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Annual Service Auction does not meet its goal. The Auction Reserve will be used to offset any difference between the Auction budgeted amount and the Auction actual amount.

- The \$50,000 bequest from Bill and Avis Smart was used in the Fall of 2014 for the Sanctuary HVAC Project.

The big financial project of this church year was the installation of the new HVAC system in the Sanctuary. This project was financed through donations from the Congregation, \$75,000 from the Endowment Fund (this was transferred from the Endowment during the 13/14 church year), \$50,000 from the Smart Bequest, and a loan from South State Bank. This project was under budget which enabled us to make a substantial early payment on the loan. As of March 31st, the balance on the loan was \$13,725.

The current fiscal year has again been strong through the first 9 months. As long as we continue to have the timely payment of 2014/2015 church year annual pledges, I project that we will once again end the year with our income over our expenses.

This is my last year as Treasurer. I have appreciated the opportunity to serve as your treasurer and have enjoyed working with the Finance Committee, Vestry, Committee Chairs, and Congregation for the past 3 years. Many thanks to Sandra Selvitelli, Nolan Prestwood (Assistant Treasurer), Richard Hayes (Finance Committee Chair), and Debbie Kirby (bookkeeper) for all their help throughout the year.

Respectfully submitted by Terry Walsh, Treasurer

Community Affiliated Minister

Now in my second year as your Affiliated Community Minister I have appreciated the opportunity to continue my participation in the life of the church and to deepen my relationships with all of you.

I am continuing to serve as the chaplain at the Hollings Cancer Center at the Medical University of South Carolina. This year I am building on the programs that I put in place for patients and staff last year. In addition to providing pastoral care to patients during their chemotherapy treatments, I initiated the practice of periodically joining doctors in their clinics to offer patients support after an exam.

As part of my covenant with our church for voluntary work, I preached a sermon in November, assisted in worship services once a month, and facilitated a monthly “Dealing with Serious Illness Support Group” for church members. In addition, I gave a forum presentation in April entitled “Chaplaincy; Challenges and Rewards.” The Worship Committee has also contracted with me to preach twice more this year. I will be guest preaching at the UU Congregation of the Low Country in Bluffton in May.

One of my goals for this year was to better connect with other Unitarian Universalist ministers in the region. With a grant from the UUA, I went to the Southeast Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association retreat last fall at The Mountain where I met new colleagues, participated in worship, and attended workshops on preaching. I also have participated in monthly cluster meetings with ministers within a three-hour radius. I am planning to go to Ministry Days and General Assembly this year in Portland, Oregon and will serve as a delegate for our congregation.

I would especially like to thank Reverend Danny Reed and the members of my Committee on Community Ministry—Diane Aghapour (from Hollings), Bruce Evenson, Al and Kaye Finch, Sally Flynn, and John Massey—for their support and guidance. I am grateful to whatever Unitarian Universalist Gods there may or may not be for bringing me to The Unitarian Church in Charleston.

Respectfully Submitted by Nancy Pellegrini, Affiliated Community Minister

Committee Reports

Archives

The mission of the Archives Committee is to preserve the history of the church and educate the congregation and community about its heritage. To foster the institutional memory of the Unitarian Church in Charleston, the Archives Committee collects and catalogs materials pertaining to the church and maintains the files and objects entrusted to its care. The Archives Committee assists those who wish to access its files and materials for historical research.

In addition to the ever-present task of filing and preserving church documents, the Archives Committee has made progress on two projects and initiated three more. Last year we devised a Document Retention Policy outlining which documents are to be preserved, where, and for how long. Last fall it was adopted by the Vestry and this summer, we will assist with the reorganization of the current filing system, in accordance with the policy. We have also prioritized books to be repaired and preserved with the grant we received from the church last spring.

Our first new project is to collect, identify, and categorize photographs of church events. This will take time as well as help from the congregation. We also bought a digital scanner so that we can begin to scan and store documents in digital form. Finally, we are taking the first steps in an Oral History Project. We have been in touch with other such projects and are currently evaluating taped interviews made of congregation members in the 1980s and 1990s. As an adjunct to this, we encouraged Paul Garbarini and Mike Griffith to apply for a workshop on using multi-media to tell a story, and they produced an excellent short video on the making of our slave memorial.

Next year, we plan to transfer more of our existing archives to the South Carolina Historical Society and to provide help in adding them to the Lowcountry Digital Library. In addition, we will begin new interviews with some of our long-standing congregational members and continue to work on collecting and organizing photographs. At some point in the future, we would like to begin displaying some of our collection of important documents, books, and objects for the enjoyment and education of our church members.

Members: Gail Schiffer (Co-chair), Susan Robinson (Co-chair), Paul Garbarini, Rosemary Repeta, Nancy Waters, and Rose-Marie Williams. Billie Hall and Rosemary Hutto are honorary members.

Respectfully submitted by Gail Schiffer, Chair

Books & Coffee

The Books & Coffee group has been a long-term "extracurricular" church activity; it is open to anyone who wishes to participate. Books are suggested and chosen by those who attend, and the person who leads the discussion is usually the one who recommended the book. Most books chosen are nonfiction, but we read a book of fiction over the summer. We meet in one another's homes once a month, on the second Sunday of the month, 5:30 pm - 8:30 pm, to discuss the current book. We have snacks and coffee during a break in the discussion. We don't meet during the summer.

During the past church year, 2014 – 2015, we read and discussed the following books: "Cloud Atlas" by David Mitchell "Korea, Are You at Peace" by J.A.V. Simson; "13 Bankers: The Wall Street Takeover and the Next Financial Meltdown," by Simon Johnson and James Quack; "Noble

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Savages” by Napoleon Chagnon; “Mere Christianity” by C.S. Lewis; and “Lawrence in Arabia: Deceit, Imperial Folly and the Making of the Modern Middle East” by Scott Anderson.

Respectfully submitted by Jo Anne Simson

Caring

The mission of the Caring Committee is to support a culture of caring within the church community.

During this year the committee has supported and provided care for over 30 members in long term and short term situations of crisis, illness and hospitalizations. The homebound members (10) of our congregation have been remembered with cards and visits. The short term (17) situations that have arisen have been cared for with cards, visits, food and transportation. There have been five deaths that have affected the congregation and we have cared for these with cards, visits, food and even a reception or two.

The Caring Committee has five Area Chairmen representing the main geographic locales of our congregation:

Downtown Charleston – Mary Ann Hughston

Mt Pleasant /East Cooper – Beverly Birhimer, Rhoda Sterling, Myrtle Staples

West Ashley – Mela Khedouri

James Island/South – Marcia Castano

North Charleston/ North – Kay Haun

Over 50 members of the congregation serve as part of the team for these area leaders. New members are always welcome.

During the year the committee recognized the need for a Memorial / Funeral Coordinator. This co-ordinator would work with the grieving member family and the details of a service at the church: ushering, parking, caterers, etc. We hope the Vestry will see fit to provide funding for a member’s memorial service coordinations.

The committee meets once a month to coordinate with each other, the minister, the administrative assistant and the Membership Coordinator. Next year’s chair will be Kay Haun.

Respectfully Submitted by Mary Ann Terry, Chair and Emily Carey, Co-Chair

Churchyard

The mission of the churchyard committee is to be good stewards of gravesites, 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.

On-going Projects:

Open Space – New engraved granite stones for the open space stairs depicting the UU Chalice and an inscription recognizing the generous donation by Ms. Betty Fullarton were installed. The current open space landscape and seating design was updated and revised to reflect input from committee members and others. Bids for the new granite benches and a revised landscaping plan are being sent to the Vestry for review. Plantings have been donated by John Meffert. Additional plantings

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will be installed upon completion of construction. Funding for this work is from the donation by Ms. Fullarton.

Burning Bowl – The Burning bowl proposed by Steve Simon, on behalf of the RE and Worship committees, is under construction in the Open space. Materials include the repurposing of bricks, sandstone curbing and a crocket from the sanctuary as a base for the bowl. A new oval-shaped concrete bowl will top the pedestal. The Simon family has generously donated the funds to construct the Burning bowl.

Gateway Walk – A memorandum of understanding regarding the cooperative efforts of the Charleston Garden Club and the UU Churchyard Committee for maintenance of the walkway plants and hardscapes has been drafted and reviewed by the Vestry. The document will be sent to the Charleston Garden Club for their consideration. This is done in an effort to clearly delineate the responsibilities of each group regarding walkway maintenance and operation, which has been passed down verbally in the past.

Currently, the lighting system for the walkway is operational thanks to the efforts of our own Allan Moore. Low voltage lighting was considered for the walkway but rejected due to significant reductions in lighting intensity and cost. Improvements to the current lighting system are being considered to prevent unanticipated outages.

Gage Hall Doorway – A draft application and supporting documents were presented to the Charleston Board of Architectural Review (BAR) staff for the installation of a new doorway into Gage hall. This will provide direct handicapped access to the hall and bathrooms from the newly installed handicapped walkway. The BAR staff has indicated that the application will be reviewed and acted upon at the staff level. Architectural details requested by the BAR staff are being prepared by Glen Keyes, the church's architect. The architectural details are needed to complete the BAR application.

Churchyard Management Plan - Preparation of the plan has begun and the first edition is expected to be finished in late 2015. The plan will present the history of the garden and the philosophy that guides its care. The plan will also seek to educate Eden Keepers in botany and garden management using the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach.

Benches in the Churchyard – Two six (6) foot long wooden benches have been donated by John Meffert for installation in the first two alcoves between the garden and the southern church wall. These *benches are a suggestion from* the docents group which indicated that wedding parties, especially the more mature members as well as others, often need a place to sit during wedding photos, other events or just a place to sit and admire the wonderful garden and its changing seasonal faces.

Administration:

- The Churchyard Committee regularly meets at 5:30 P.M. on the second Monday of each month in Gage Hall. All are welcome.
- Members of the churchyard work parties are referred to as “Eden Keepers.” Churchyard Work Parties are held the first Saturday morning of each month from 9 AM-12 PM and 8 AM -11 AM during the summer. A Pot-luck lunch is shared by all in Gage Hall following the work party.

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- Fran Ennis, who has served so admirably as the recording committee's secretary for so long, is stepping down. Anyone wishing to act as recording secretary is urged to contact Laura Moses. Laura coordinates the committee's email correspondence. Cris Sumpter maintains the quotations on the church's "Wayside Pulpit" at the King Street entrance of the Gateway Walk. Former Chairman Stan Boyer and current Vice-Chair John Meffert continue to provide institutional history and knowledge about the churchyard as well as the generous donation of their time and energy.

All are welcome to join us regardless of gardening experience.

Respectfully Submitted by Bob Jontos, Chair

Communications

The mission of the Communications Team is to support our UUA principles and the Unitarian Church in Charleston's Mission and Vision by fostering effective, proactive communications systems within the church.

The Communications Committee guides in the selection and utilization of the church's communication tools. The primary responsibility of the Committee is to provide information of interest and value to our Congregational members and to provide vehicles of communication for the Congregation. The Committee supports our Church Administrator Sandra Selvitelli, who is responsible for all church communications. The Communications Committee strives to strengthen awareness of the Church's programs and activities and supports The Church's goals and objectives. The Communications Committee works on the many facets of communications in the Church:

- Web Page
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Pod Casts
- Weekly Emails
- Church Bulletin
- Gateway

In 2014-2015 the Communications Team has brought wireless to the Sanctuary, increased emphasis on the Web Page as outsiders introduction to Unitarian Universalism and the Unitarian Church in Charleston, broadened its use of "Facebook", revamp the weekly "Email Blast", increased emphasis on the electronic Gateway. The Communications Team is near completion of the upgrade of the Web Page, which will be the primary tool for communication to both the Congregation and visitors and prospective members of our church. Special thanks goes out to our Church Administrator, Sandra Selvitelli the Church Administrator, who has done an excellent job upgrading the Gateway and the weekly email blasts to the Congregation, and working with Amanda Byfield, who is heading the upgraded web page project.

Respectfully Submitted by Richard Hayes, Chair

Community Ministry Evaluation

The role of the Committee on Community Ministry Evaluation is to help the minister reflect on what it means to be a UUJ minister working in the wider community and what is needed to further growth as a minister. Emily Carey had to resign from the committee for personal reasons and Bruce Evenson, a retired minister and former Chaplin, joined our committee. In addition to representatives from the congregation, UU ministers working in the community setting are required to have representation from the community. Diane Aghapour from the Hollings Cancer Center has continued to serve as the community representative. During the past year, the committee has met on a monthly basis with Nancy Pellegrini who is the Community Minister. Ms. Pellegrini has served her community ministry as the Chaplin for the Hollings Cancer Center.

Our committee has continued to serve as a source of support and supervision for Ms. Pellegrini as she continues to develop the Chaplaincy Program at Hollings Cancer Center. In addition we have discussed her work within the church and her development of a support program within the church for members and their families with serious medical problems. Our committee continues to function well and has been well pleased with Ms. Pellegrini's work in all areas. She has done an excellent job and we have been attempting to increase her role and to move her toward a paid position within the Church. The committee will continue to work with Ms. Pellegrini for the next year in accordance with UU guidelines.

Members: John Massey, Sally Flynn, Bruce Evenson, Diane Aghapour, Kaye Finch, Al Finch

Respectfully Submitted by Al Finch, Chair

Connecting Circles

Activities: (Many concurrent)

- August- Sept: Capture information on existing groups by contacting known group leaders
- Create spreadsheets with pertinent participant and meeting info for each existing group.
- Place monthly invitations to congregants in the Fall Gateways and Bulletins about the purpose of Connecting Circles.
- Work with the Membership Coordinator to include info about CC during Pathways and to get contact information from new members interested in joining a Connecting Circle.
- Conduct a Forum and Open House about Connecting Circles engaging current members to relate their experience in a CC. (10-4-14)
- Create handouts that explain the CC concept and practice.
- Use spreadsheet information to contact and place new members into a CC or try to create new CC groups by geographic region or to make sure a group was still in existence.
- Support the establishment of new groups by participating in initial meetings as needed.

Results:

- The September count of existing CC groups equaled about 12.
- Because there is no "reporting" mechanism on groups once they start, numbers and status can be somewhat transient. We do know that a group disbanded (1), some that were added (3) and some that never jelled (2) and are works in progress. That total number for active groups that we know of now is 15, with one re-establishing itself with new members (New Mt Pleasant) and a James Island/Johns Island not getting off the ground with members and meeting time.
- Bottom Line: Increased Connecting Circles by 3 groups from 12 to 15.

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Future Plans:

- June Pot luck dinner for all CC group members.
- Re-evaluate how Connecting Circles is explained to people.
 - Stressing small group ministry aspect and less just socializing.
 - Suggesting a 9 month church year participation instead of non-ending commitment
- Plan again for a Fall re-introduction to the congregation.
- Possibly one midterm meeting (Jan –Feb inviting all CC participants to exchange ideas on their Connecting Circle groups, what works, what doesn't, what help if any they need.
- Needed: A new Co-chair by August. Another person interested in maintaining Connecting Circles is needed to support the maintenance and growth of our current small ministry efforts.

Respectfully submitted by Linda Maxwell Allen and Maureen Porter, Co-Chairs

Denominational Affairs

Unitarian Church in Charleston's Denominational Affairs Committee 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 2014/2015 has concentrated on three goals:

- Keeping the congregation up to date on the activities of the UUA, Southern Region, Southeast District, and Southern Cluster.
- Emphasized attending General Assembly, especially Vestry, Committee Chairs, and Professional staff.
- Support to our the Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council (UUPCC) to provide scholarships to TWO students from Küküllödombó that want to attend a Unitarian boarding high school in Cluj.

New Regional UUA Governance was inaugurated this year -- Congratulations to our new ***Southern Region!***

- Five years ago, the boards and staff of the MidSouth District, the Florida District, the Southeast District, and the Southwestern Conference came together in Orlando to address issues of structure and governance. These leaders raised a few very fundamental questions, including "How do we best serve Unitarian Universalism in the south?" and "How do we build relationships and walk together in this work?"
- On 18 April, 2015, delegates at all four districts of our Southern Region voted to give the District Boards the authority to dissolve District governance. We are building a new way forward, officially, as the ***Southern Region*** in relationship with one another and our UUA! All four districts voted to walk into new relationship with one another and form the ***Southern Region***.

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The Denominational Affairs 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.

Members: Judy Manning, Hillary Hutchinson, Nancy Pellegrini and Richard Hayes

Respectfully *Submitted by Richard Hayes, Chair*

Denominational Affairs – Romanian Partner Church

We work through the Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council (UUPCC) to provide scholarships to students from Küküllődombó that want to attend a Unitarian boarding high school in Cluj. Our first four-year student, Balázs Bényi (pronounced Baa lazh Ben yee), graduated in 2013.

The program costs \$600, plus another \$200 in administrative costs, for a total of \$800 a year to our church for a student to attend the boarding school, and we commit in four-year increments in order to sponsor a student through high school.

Our first student, Anna Andrea Kiss, starts high school in September 2014. She was born in 1999 in Berkeley, CA, and now lives in Marosvásárhely (Transylvania) with her mother, Matild, and her brother, Laszlo Attila. They moved there in 2006 when her father died. She is 14-years old, currently attending an art school in Marosvásárhely. She loves to draw and to paint, and her hobbies are dancing and photography. She likes people who are unique and unusual, and has two best friends. We received word of a second student, Márkos Andor, a 14-year old boy from Küküllődombó and already in 10th grade, who was funded from Endowment Projects

David Ruef joined the committee. This year, our community minister, Nancy Bird Pelligrini exchanged Christmas and Easter greetings from the pulpit with Rev. Peterfi Sandor in Küküllődombó. New ways to connect will be examined in 2015-16 church year.

Respectfully Submitted by Hillary Hutchinson, Chair

Dinners for Fun

Though not an official committee, Dinners for Fun has an important function in our church, allowing members to get to know each other outside committee meetings or coffee in Gage Hall after the service.

This year we held dinners every other month on the fourth Saturday of the month starting in September. Announcements and sign up normally begin three weeks before a scheduled DFF event. Members of the church will sign up at the Welcome Table in Gage Hall and indicate whether they can be a host or would like to be a guest. The group signed up is then broken into roughly parties of eight and assigned to a host's home. Hosts will set a time and ask for food contributions from their guests and a festive dinner party is arranged!

This year we ended the season with a Progressive Dinner in three homes downtown near the church. Fifty-three members participated in walking from house to house, enjoying appetizers at one home, main course at another and desserts at a final destination. Everyone reported having a grand time!

Look for announcements early in September and a first DFF the fourth Saturday of September 2015.

Respectfully submitted by Judy Manning

Docents

Co-chair Maureen Kelly reminded me that the Docent year began the first Saturday in October, due to the difficulties our contractors encountered while installing and de-bugging the new HVAC system.

Initially, we needed to find several replacements to the ‘regular’ docent team, the members who commit to being a docent for one Saturday each month, plus the Second Sunday afternoons team. Thankfully, newer members of the congregation stepped up to fill the open slots, and are now paired with experienced docents and doing a great job.

Once we were up and running, we enjoyed generally steady attendance. As of Saturday, April 25th, 1831 visitors have toured the sanctuary. They dropped \$935.13 into the donation box, and purchased \$62.61 in postcards and books. When one considers that people are made aware of docent hours through cards that we have professionally printed and place with concierges in hotels and drop off at B&Bs around town, or find us on our website, or simply happen upon us while strolling around the historic district and King Street, that’s a remarkable amount of revenue for a modest advertising effort.

I feel that we could increase the revenue stream to the church coffers by placing a sign on King Street, letting the tourists know that they are “steps away from the second-oldest church building on the peninsula”, that “Church is open”, and that “Docents are on hand”.

Signage that directs King Street folk to the Alliance Rummage Sale has proven effective in increasing foot traffic to those events. I would like to recommend a sign holder that would be affixed to the existing “Wayside Pulpit” that would allow us to easily drop in and remove signs informing visitors and residents of rummage sales, Candlelight Concerts, Coffee House Concerts and other events.

I feel that a small A-board sign, similar to the “Church is open” sign we’ve employed for years at the Archdale Street gateway to the churchyard when docents are on hand in the sanctuary, and placed back from the King Street sidewalk in the ‘bow’ of the brickwork that forms the entry to our property and Gateway Walk, would be effective in directing tourists into the Sanctuary for the few hours that docents are on hand, and easily removed when we’re not. If this proves not to be the case, there’s a simple remedy, and signage of this type is relatively inexpensive.

Respectfully Submitted by Tom Hartry, Co-Chair

Endowment

Financial Statistics

| | |
|------------------|---------------|
| 12/31/2013 Value | \$960,429.36 |
| Deposits | \$50,100.00 |
| Withdrawals | (\$97,575.00) |
| Net Invested | \$912,954.36 |
| 12/31/2014 Value | \$950,143.37 |
| 2014 Return | \$37,189.01 |

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The endowment investments increased 4.1% during 2014. A representative benchmark (40% S&P 500 /40% MSCI EAFE / 20% Barclays Aggregate) increased 4.7% over the same period.

The current allocation is 84.4% equities, 5.6% Bonds and 10% Cash remains aggressive.

The Endowment received additional gifts of \$50,100 with the most significant gift of \$50,000 from the estate of Donald Hearth.

The endowment approved spending of \$75,000 for Air Conditioning of the Church and \$22,575 for other Vestry Approved Church projects. These requests were consistent with the spending policy.

The Endowment Committee met four times during the year and used the investment and advisory services of Conrad Zimmerman and John Warren of R. W. Baird.

Members: William Finn (Chairman), Richard Hayes (Adjutant), Tripp Banner, Stan Goldberg, Frank Hardie, Ellie Setser, Stuart Terry & Terry Walsh

Respectfully Submitted by Bill Finn

Finance

The financial status of the congregation is outstanding. The Finance Committee continues to:

- Provides review of the Church's finances through open meetings monthly with the Church Treasurer.
- Provide recommendations and counsel to the Church Vestry on all financial matters.
- Develop and manage Church budgets for the Vestry review and congregation approval every May at the Annual Congregational Meeting.

Details of the budget and cash flow are presented monthly to the Vestry. The proposed budget for 2015-2016 was submitted to the Vestry for consideration at the annual meeting. It included 2% raises for staff. For the third year in a row the Operating Budget includes no funds from the Endowment. As is the policy, 2-5% of the Endowment is used for special projects each year to help achieve the Church's goals (Four Bold Steps). Steve Simon and Ren Manning ran a fantastic effort Pledge Drive. Thank you to both!

Stuart Terry continues to oversee the parking contract and Planned Giving. Planned Giving had a very successful year because of the outstanding job Stuart and his team has done on educating the Congregation of the benefits of "planned giving" to the Church in their wills

Terry Walsh gets our highest praise and thanks as our Church Treasurer.

Members: Paige Wisotski, Paula Knecht, Fe Houston, Stuart Terry, Richard Hayes (Chair), Terry Walsh (Treasurer), Nolan Prestwood (Assistant Treasurer), Charles Everett, Steve Simon (Vestry Liason)

Respectfully Submitted by Richard Hayes, Chair

Fine Arts

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:

- Conducted seven art shows
 - Fall Show I: Lillian Trettin Solo Show: Art Opening at the Coffee House
 - Fall Show II: Members and Friends Show
 - Winter Show I: Carolyn Ter Poorten Solo Show: The Homeless
 - Candlelight Concert/Art Show: Rick Schmiedt's Solo Photography Show
 - Winter Show II: Works from Private Collections (members and friends)
 - Candlelight Concert/Art Show: Cisco Lindsey's Solo Show
 - Summer Show (TBD)
- The back entrance of Gage Hall Mini-Gallery features works by Cisco Lindsey and Friends.
- The Fine Arts Committee worked cooperatively with the Music Committee to present benefit concerts/art shows that aid music programs in poverty-level schools in the area.
- Cisco Lindsey prepared a group tour at The Halsey Institute at the College of Charleston as part of the church's Annual Auction.
- 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. The show featuring works from members and friends' private collections continues to be a favorite. It increases the opportunity for members' participation.

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

- Continue to show the work of guest artists (mostly Cisco Lindsey's contacts).
- One show for the work of our own members.
- Private Collection Show
- Invitational Shows
- Solo Shows for members or guests
- Conduct a gallery tour at The Halsey Institute at the College of Charleston for the Annual Auction.
- Long Range Plans: Children's Shows based on Art Workshops conducted by a paid artist.

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

Respectfully Submitted by Joanna Innes

Forum

Forum has had a good year. By the time we close down operations for the summer in June, we will have had 32 separate Forum sessions, covering a huge range of topics and including church-oriented Social Justice-oriented, Green Sanctuary-oriented, and general interest presentations. I don't keep precise records, but our audiences have ranged from 10 to about 50; generally attendance is in the Club Med range--18-30.

I'd like to thank all who have helped with Forum this year, notably Laura Moses and Nina Fair, and all those in the church who have proposed presenters or presented themselves--e.g., Ren Manning, Lee Westbrook, Nancy Pellegrini, Will Moredock, John Newell (apologies to anyone overlooked in this list).

Respectfully Submitted by Simon Lewis

Membership

The mission of the Membership Committee is to welcome visitors and to facilitate the transition of interested persons with their membership and integration into the life of the Congregation.

Activities, Accomplishments and Transitions:

We held 5 meetings: August 2014 BBQ, September 21, 2014, December 2014 and March 8, 2015 including the Membership Integration Subcommittee (MIS). The purpose of the MIS is to explore ways to encourage and facilitate the integration and active involvement of new members into church activities.

We held 3 sessions of Pathways Classes and new member potlucks (Fall 2014, Winter 2015 and Spring 2015).

We have held 3 New Member Ceremonies and welcomed 64 new members.

Carol Oates, UUC Membership Coordinator has held 3 Pathfinders classes in advance of each Pathways classes. Carol has now asked that Mentors follow-up with new members at two and six months after signing the book.

We implemented having each Sunday's Vestry member assist at the Welcome Table.

Committee Members: Susan Hartry, Chair; Ren Manning, Co-Chair; Karen Ruef, Secretary; Claudia Updike, Past Chair; Will Moredock, Kris Rife, George Castano, Marcia Castano, Marjorie Beecher, Rhoda Sterling and Sue Weller.

Respectfully submitted, Susan Hartry, Chair

Music

The Music Committee has presented two Candlelight Concerts this year and assisted with the concert held by the Harvard Glee Club. In addition, we have shifted our financial support from James Simons, the school that has benefited from our previous concerts, to E. B. Ellington Elementary in Ravenel. This school will be receiving over \$2000 for their music program.

In addition, the committee sponsored the Martha Welch Music Award in March. A concert by Becca Darling with Amy Ball and Marc Kruza raised the funds for Aidan Ross, an RE student who is this year's winner. This award is always judged by an outside adjudicator. Aidan will be using his funds for camp to improve his performance on a new instrument, the cello.

We have lined up three concerts for next year: a guitar duo from Columbia, SC, in November, a local flute-harpsichord duo in February, and the combined choirs of our church and Circular Congregational in April.

Respectfully Submitted by Sally Newell, Chair

Personnel

Like all committees, Personnel is stretching as part of this vibrant, growing community. Serving our dynamic, dedicated staff in a manner that equals their commitment is a daunting job. We have an awesome,

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established, professional team and the Personnel Committee strives to support them as they support every aspect of church life.

Last July, Karen Abrams led a search that brought Sandra Selvitelli to the Administrator position. Sandra immediately showed her willingness to “step in and step up” in this central role with her many excellent skills and fresh perspective. In ten short months, Sandra has focused on successful improvement of our communications, while supporting all of us - Danny, staff, leaders and members - in countless other ways, including on Sunday mornings! We are grateful to Sandra, and for this successful transition!

I’m resisting the (strong) temptation to list each of our staff members and their virtues; I hope you know them all and take every opportunity you can to thank them. On Sunday morning and throughout the week, they apply their talents and at least one of them keeps us “covered” pretty much 24/7! Whether it’s in the Church vestibule, pulpit, churchyard, at the organ, in the office, Gage Hall (up or down), the playground, or Annex, we ask a lot, and receive even more, from each of our employees.

This year, in addition to our usual tasks, the Personnel Committee updated our policy on employee health insurance to ensure that we provide these benefits in a way that is fair to our staff and institutionally fiscally responsible. Bill Finn was instrumental in reviewing the health insurance policy revision. Connie Hayes, Elaine Earl, and UUA staff members were generous with their time as well.

In the coming year, the church will host more events with air-conditioning in the sanctuary. We will also continue to imagine and consider having two services. We will attempt to anticipate all the consequences of such a change, and to ensure professional and volunteer staffing and schedules that are sustainable. I invite you to help us anticipate – imagine with us – the challenges and opportunities for staffing two services.

As Chair, I have appreciated working with committee members Tony Brown, Nancy Waters, Bill Finn, Danny and Sandra. I also spent more time with our effective Vestry and enjoyed being part of Program Council. It's an honor to be part of an important and relevant institution in the Charleston community.

Respectfully Submitted by Betsy Grund, Chair

Planned Giving

The Planned Giving Committee enables and encourages members of our congregation to plan an estate gift benefiting our church or our church's endowment. The emphasis of this committee continues to be on increasing awareness of estate gifts and on increasing the proportion of our church community that has committed to estate gifts. About 18% of our congregation has now committed to estate gifts and this proportion is growing. The value of these gifts vary widely reflecting the broad financial demographic of our congregation. Our Endowment received a gift this year from the estate of Don Hearth and, per his wishes, his gift established a Church Endowment for Music. An appreciation event was held to thank our future benefactors and the cornerstone of our awareness effort was a Sunday service in early November.

Members: Kay Haun, Hillary Hutchinson, Myrtle Staples, Stuart Terry, and Steve Wilson

Respectfully Submitted by Stuart Terry

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Service Auction

Dates: Silent Auction Noon, November 2 Live Auction 6:30 pm, November 8

Planning for the Auction began in September with publicity tasks, theme development, and outlining of tasks. Terry Walsh purchased new software for easier record-keeping: *Community Auction Services*. Donations were solicited beginning on September 28 and ending on October 19.

Some statistics:

241 bidders were involved
80 donors
220 items and events were donated

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------|
| Income from Both Auctions: | \$31,442.00 |
| Ticket Sales for Live Auction: | 380.00 |
| Donation: | <u>70.00</u> |

Total Income: \$31,892.00

Expenses:

| | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| Auctioneer | \$250 |
| Food | 250 |
| Programs | 85 |
| Credit Cards | 484 |
| Sexton | 50 |
| Software | 385 |
| Printer Ink | <u>64</u> |
| Total Expenses: | \$ <u>1,568.00</u> |

Net Auction Proceeds: \$30,324.00

Dates have been set and spaces reserved for the 2015 Silent and Live Auctions:
Nov 8, Silent—Charleston Day School Nov 14, Live—Gage Hall

Members: Kay Haun (Co-Chair), Susan Garrison (Co-Chair), Terry Walsh, Jonathan Lamb, Michael Carnell, Claudia and Ron Updike, Abby Himmelein, Mike Griffith, Donna Reyburn, Sandra Selvitelli, Fran Ennis, Ellie Setser, Kathy Hale-Brewer, Anita Harrison, Nancy Simpson, Ren Manning, Gail Schiffer, Harrison Reed, Emelle Wade, Mark Farnham. Fred Skipper (Auctioneer) and Joe McCormack (Jack-of-all trades).

Social Justice

The committee serves as an umbrella group that provides coordination and communication with the Unitarian Church in Charleston 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 achieve their objectives. Other church committees are

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also active in Social Justice in our community, such as the Alliance, the Music Committee and the Religious Education Program. We support and collaborate with these groups.

The Social Justice Committee meets three times a year: October, January and May. Minutes are available upon request.

Social Justice Highlights 2014-2015:

- Pride Parade – August 2014
- Fourth Social Justice Sunday – September 2014
- CAJM – Planning Potlucks – October, 2014; February, 2015
- Two Candlelight Concerts
- Coffee House Concerts – September, 2014 – May, 2015
- Emancipation Parade – January 2015
- CAJM Nehemiah – April 2015
- Earth Day – April 2015
- CAJM Celebration – May 2015

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 social justice committee has actively advocated for social justice primarily in the Charleston area. We are looking for church members who have an interest and commitment to social justice advocacy and awareness to chair this committee. Please contact Adrienne Troy-Frazier, if interested.

Members: Suanne Ansari, Chair, resigned February 2015; Adrienne Troy-Frazier, Chair, May, 2015; Kris Rife, Co-Chair & Secretary; CAJM, Danny Reid, Minister; Bill Thomas & George Tempel, Co-Chairs; Community Outreach Giving, Diane Narkunas, Chair; Community Outreach Volunteering, Kris Rife; Endowment for Social Justice, John Narkunas, Coffee House Concerts, Mark Farnham, Bill Morris, Co-Chairs/Mitchell School Enrichment Program, John Narkunas, Chair; Green Sanctuary, Laura Moses, Chair; Welcoming Committee & Outreach, Richard Hayes, Nina Fair, Vestry Liaison.

Charleston Area Justice Ministry (CAJM)

This is the third year for CAJM with 3 more congregations joining the organization bringing the total membership congregations to 27. Thanks to the strong commitment and participation of our UU church and its members, we again played an active and important role in the continued success of CAJM in our community. The following are highlights from the past year:

- During September/October of last year, several UU "House" meetings were held as well as a CAJM Potluck in Gage Hall to solicit ideas from the congregation on what social justice issues CAJM should consider for 2015. Domestic violence was the leading issue coming from our UU members.
- Rev. Reed along with Rev. Nelson Rivers from Charity Missionary Baptist Church represented CAJM as part of a panel discussion on the local TV Show, "Bounce", to discuss the Ferguson, MO riots and how CAJM could help defuse a situation like that if it were to occur in the Charleston area.
- On October 27th, network members from all the CAJM congregations gathered at New Tabernacle 4th Baptist Church for the Community Problems Assembly to vote and select the one justice issue which CAJM will focus on this year. Wages was chosen over racial profiling and health care.

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- On November 17th, CAJM held its Research to Action Kickoff at Father Figaro Hall. Approximately 160 people from the CAJM congregations attended to begin the process of researching the wage issue and identifying a specific area within it to focus our action "Ask". Several UU members volunteered to be on the wage research team.
- On February 20th, a potluck dinner was held in Gage Hall with 75 UUs attending. Shantelle Scott was the guest speaker and gave an excellent talk on what CAJM has meant to her. Updates were given on the status of the actions taken on our past CAJM issues (expanded pre-K education, reducing the number of CCSD kids being incarcerated for non-violent offenses, reducing suspensions within CCSD schools, and implementing a Charleston city hiring policy for young unemployed workers). An update on the Wage committee research was also presented with the focus narrowed to illegal wage practices or wage theft.
- Because of his work with CAJM, Rev. Reed has been asked by the Charleston County School District to be a member of a School Diversity Task Force.
- On March 23rd, CAJM held its Rally at the Church of the Holy Communion in preparation for the Nehemiah Action Assembly. Seventy UU's attended and heard inspirational presentations from clergy and congregational members (including our own Kris Rife's son Austin) on the impact of wage theft on our community and need for action to be taken to address it by our local government leaders. Dr. Herring from the Charleston County School District also gave an update on their successful implementation of PBIS in 10 schools and planned implementation of a trial of Restorative Justice to reduce school suspensions. Both are acknowledged best practices.
- On April 27th, CAJM held its Nehemiah Action Assembly at the Mount Moriah Baptist Church. The assembly was a huge success. The venue was great, the choir fantastic, and the agenda well planned. Presentations were given by many of the CAJM clergy including our own Rev. Reed and "Rev" Suzanne Hardie (the City Pages gave her the title!). Approximately 1800 were in the audience including 255 UU's to hear Elliott Summey, chairman of the Charleston County Council and two other council members say yes to supporting CAJM's request for \$150k in funds to hire a legal aid attorney to handle wage theft complaints and to promote this service throughout the community. This is a similar action taken by a sister CAJM group in Florida which has already resulted in over \$200,000 in stolen wages recovered for employees. The next step to help Mr. Summey convince the other Council members to vote in favor of the proposal. A representative from Mayor Riley's office also gave an update at the meeting on their new hiring policy for unemployed youth. The policy had been delayed for several months but has been finally written and will be presented to the City Council in May for approval. CAJM would like to see some changes to the policy so members will be attending that Council meeting to make their case for those changes to be adopted. The most important issue for CAJM is lowering the city projects amount to \$1,000,000 from \$3,000,000 for instituting the sole source city of Charleston hiring policy.
- The next big meeting for CAJM is the Celebration scheduled for May 18th. All UU CAJM leaders and network members are invited to attend to celebrate this year's accomplishments, enjoy a nice meal and kick off the investment drive necessary to insure the continued financial health and vitality of CAJM for the coming year.

The Unitarian Church has been a charter member since the beginning of CAJM over 3 years ago. Every year, CAJM's congregational membership continues to grow and it is now recognized and respected by many of our local government leaders for the good work it is doing in addressing injustice in our community. This has been hard earned, but our UU church can be proud of the important role we have played in helping make this happen thanks to the leadership of Rev. Reed, Suzanne Hardie, the Network Team Leaders and all the Network Members. We are making a difference!

Leadership Team: Danny Reed, Minister; Team Leaders: Diane Boyer, Frank Hardie, Suzanne Hardie, Richard Hayes, Joanna Innes/George Tempel, Diane Narkunas, Adrienne Troy-Frazier, Joe Krause, and

Lesly Davidson, Bill Thomas and George Tempel are the UU CAJM Co-Coordinator. Suzanne Hardie also serves as a special consultant to CAJM. Including the team leaders, there are 126 UUs who are actively involved as CAJM Network Members.

Respectfully Submitted by Bill Thomas and George Tempel, Co-Chairs

Coffeehouse Concert Fundraising/Mitchell School Programs

Program 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 programs as well as field trips for children in grades Pre K-6.

Accomplishments:

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

- As of March 30, 2015 the Mitchell School expenditures for enrichment activities for the 2014-15 school year was a little over \$2,500.
- Net amount in revolving account that will carry over to next year is currently \$8,070. Additional invoices for April-May trips/activities are forthcoming so we have adequate funds to support their activities for the next school year.
- All 375 students participate in the program in grades Pre K through 6. The objective is to provide each student with 4 field trips during the school year or one trip every 9 weeks.
- Students were involved in science-based field trips to the following locations:
- South Carolina Aquarium where they were able to further study about fish and animals indigenous to South Carolina; Children's Museum where they explored and experimented with various water machines, a mock shrimp boat and measurement items; Birds of Prey to view and study birds native to the area; Fort Sumter to experience the history of the civil war in Charleston; Isle of Palms to visit the marsh area to learn about the natural habitat of local animals of the low country waterways; Boeing to observe engineering ideas and designs; MUSC in conjunction with the school's Green Heart Project to learn about healthy choices in eating and life styles; Magnolia Gardens where they visited the slave houses and discussed the historical connection to Charleston – K students visited the petting zoo, nature center, and the swamp walk; Legare Farms-students looked at plant life and farm animals; Charles Towne Landing -students discussed the colonial period in the Charleston area and learned about habitats of many of our state's animals; Cypress Gardens – learned about reptiles and swamp life; CAW CAW – discussed the local environment and the rice fields that were an important part of the local 18th century economy; Channel 2 – students learned about the elements of news casting and the different types of positions that support productions; College Of Charleston Hollings Science Center – students worked in the lab with college students and professors and completed experiments that connected to their grade level standards.
- 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 trips.

Members: Mark Farnham and Bill Morris, Co-Chairs; Mitchell School: John Narkunas, Chair

Respectfully Submitted by John Narkunas

Community Outreach Giving

The Church Vestry reinstated the Community Outreach Giving project on February 12, 2015. This is a Vestry project coordinated by the Social Justice Committee. In the fall of 2013, the Community Outreach Giving project went on hiatus due to a lack of participation from the congregation re nominating non-profit projects that serve disadvantaged groups. Twelve nominations were received spring 2014, for the Social Justice Endowment Fund award to support projects for people in need. These were mostly from new members. We felt it time to reinstate Community Outreach Giving the fall of 2015.

The process begins with requests for nominations May, 2015. Requests for proposals will go out to nominated groups in June. The amount of the mini-grant will be \$4,000. One project will be selected in August. The Community Outreach Giving campaign will begin Social Justice Sunday, September 20. We collect donations until December 6. The Community Outreach Giving award date is Sunday, December 13.

The Community Outreach Giving Project was launched the fall of 2007. Since then, we successfully funded projects in the Charleston area totaling over \$62,000 due to the generosity of our church community.

Members: Diane Narkunas, Chair; Suzanne Hardie, KayHaun, JoAnn Simson; Myrtle Staples

Respectfully Submitted by Diane Narkunas

Community Outreach Volunteering

Community Outreach Volunteers primary outreach was to Lowcountry Food Bank during their Backpack Buddies Program for weekend nutrition for school children. About 15-20 church members volunteered once a month to prepare bags of nutritious food to be distributed to school children in need each Friday during the school year.

Plans have been discussed to involve families in a volunteer program at One80 Place (formerly Crisis Ministries). A lead member to start project this will be sought. This will be a collaborative activity with the Religious Education Program.

Also under consideration is listing family friendly volunteer opportunities/and ideas on the social justice CUU web page. Funds (\$604) are available in the account for One80 Place to facilitate this plan.

There are many other opportunities for volunteering in the community, and we hope we can find a “lead” to direct each action to grow this committee.

Respectfully Submitted by Kris Rife

Endowment Fund

In September 2011, the Unitarian Church received an endowment gift of \$100,000 that is targeted to achieve social justice to the greater Charleston community. Interest from this endowment is used to support individuals and organizations engaged in bringing equity to those in need.

In September 2014, our first mini grant was awarded to We Are Family. The award utilized \$4,800 in interest earned from the endowment investments. WAF’s application was one of nine proposals submitted by local organizations nominated by members of the Unitarian Church and received the highest score from a panel that reviewed the applications. The funds were awarded to support activities and leadership development opportunities for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex

(LGBTQQI) and straight ally youth ages 7-23 in Charleston, Berkeley and Dorchester counties. At its core, WAF aims to address the plight of LGBTQQI youth who suffer disproportionately from premature death, suicide attempts, disease, and substance abuse resulting from the underlying fear, ignorance, and prejudice they encounter in their communities. Specifically, the funds augmented the WAF budget to support the annual Spirit Day Rally and candlelight vigil that was held at Gage Hall on October 16, 2014 which was part of an international effort to take a stand against bullying and demonstrate support for LGBTQQI youth.

- Published data suggests that the risk of suicide is 20% greater for LGBTQQI youth who live in unsupportive environments, while the presence and visibility of supportive public figures and organizations like WAF cause a significant decrease in suicide risk in this vulnerable group of teens. Spirit Day offers a way for youth to tell their stories and make a positive impact on the lives of others and provides support for LGBTQQI youth who are victims of bullying. It is a youth-led, adult-supported initiative that provides a platform for youth to speak out against bullying; inspiring them to tell their own stories and demonstrates to others that they are not alone. WAF and Spirit Day promote a message of hope in the face of adversity.
- The Keynote speaker was Chely Wright, a well known Country Music singer who was also the first country music performer to come out as gay. She cited among her reasons for coming out a concern with bullying and hate crimes toward LGBT people, particularly LGBT youth, and the damage to her life caused by “hiding”. She gave an inspirational talk and responded to questions from the audience. There were other speakers and entertainers from the LGBT community as well.
- It is expected that by July 2015 the Social Justice Endowment will have approximately \$2500 in accumulated interest. We expect that in 2016 the endowment fund will increase to a level where we can again consider awarding a mini grant to a local organization.

Members: John Narkunas; Stan Boyer & Nancy Waters, Review Panel

Respectfully Submitted by John Narkunas

Green Sanctuary

Green Sanctuary’s mission is to lead the church's effort to become more environmentally sustainable through capital improvements, education, and outreach, often in collaboration with other UU committees. Green Sanctuary’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 with green-themed Sunday forums and services. 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 environmentally sound 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 the Religious Education program to support sustainability awareness and activities.

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Accomplishments:

- Earth Day Service (2008 – present) Our guest speaker this year was Rudy Mancke, naturalist and co-host of ETV's Naturescene.
- Green Forums (2007 – present) Green forums included Carolee Williams on Charleston Green Business Challenge, Wayne Koeckeritz on food waste disposal and composting, and Kim Counts on gardening with native plants.
- Seeing Systems: Peace, Justice, and Sustainability A six-session Northwest Earth Institute class offered by GS, open to the congregation, and run by Sharon Strong.
- Recycling of e-waste, printer cartridges, batteries and light bulbs (2007 – present)
- Vegetarian Potlucks Held quarterly at Gage Hall, open to the congregation, organized by Erin Demory.
- Gateway articles (2007- present) on green topics of interest submitted by GS members each month.
- Beach Sweep and City Sweep (2008 – present) Participation in area clean-ups. This year Richard Moss and Carol Oates cleaned the marsh at Charles Towne Landing.
- Composting/Recycling/Landfill bins in Gage Hall GS members worked with staff to purchase and label new composting, recycling and landfill bins in Gage Hall and to give guidance to the congregation for their appropriate use.
- Charleston Green Business Challenge GS enrolled the Unitarian Church in Charleston as a participant in GBC, a program for local organizations to promote health, sustainability and energy efficiency. As a participant, we have benefited from these free services:
 - Sustainability Institute Energy Walk-Thru SI representative walked through our facilities with sexton Joe McCormack to point out ways to utilize equipment more efficiently.
 - Charleston County Recycling Walk-Thru Representative walked through our facilities with sexton Joe McCormack to point out ways to improve waste stream process.
 - Lighting Assessment David Friedland of SC Energy Solutions walked through our facilities with sexton Joe McCormack to assess lighting. He will provide a report giving suggestions for the most economical and energy efficient lighting options for Gage Hall and other facilities.

Budget:

For 2014-15 Green Sanctuary was allocated \$500 by the Endowment in support of the Green Film Series. Since we decided not to host a Green Film Series, these funds were donated for support of composting program and LED lighting upgrades.

Members: Laura Moses, Chair, Nina Fair, Erin Demory, Bill Grayson, Mela Khedouri, Jonathan Lamb, Richard Moss, Sharon Strong.

Submitted by Laura Moses, Chair, and Nina Fair, Vestry Liaison to Social Justice

Welcoming Congregation

Our Welcoming Congregation activities are well integrated with our church life. Although I serve as the focal point for Welcoming Congregation 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 SC Equality (South Carolina Equality Coalition).

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, a major sponsor of the AFFA Annual Dinner, strong support for marriage equality and human rights in South Carolina, and our

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Charleston Pride Parade involvement -- over 50 Church members marching and riding on a float in the 5th Annual Charleston Gay Pride Parade in August 2014.

Respectfully Submitted by Richard Hayes

Candlelight Concert Fundraiser (Music Committee)

The Music Committee presented two Candlelight Concerts this year, and assisted with the concert held by the Harvard Glee Club. In addition, we have shifted our financial support from James Simons, the school that has benefited from our previous concerts, to E. B. Ellington Elementary in Ravenel. This school will be receiving over \$2000 for their music program.

We have lined up three concerts for next year: a guitar duo from Columbia, SC, in November, a local flute-harpichord duo in February, and the combined choirs of our church and Circular Congregational in April.

Respectfully Submitted by Sally Newell, Chair

Religious Education Social Justice Events

The RE program is responsible for a number of social Justice events, including a We Are Family Spirit Day Rally (teen LGBT support) and after-party, a Take Back the Night March and speak-out with People Against Rape, a Book Worm Angel's book drive, a program building and selling gingerbread houses and Mitten Tree collections for One80 Place, our annual Thanksgiving food drive and monthly teen volunteer sessions for the Backpack Buddies program at Lowcountry Food Bank (organized by SJ volunteer coordinator Kris Rife), and attendance at the annual Homeless Memorial service.

Social justice-oriented fundraising events included a very successful fundraiser for LGBT scholarships to the Mountain (\$1,200), as well as our more regular Empty Bowls crafts and lunch fundraiser for One80 Place.

The children, youth and families of the church continue to find Social Justice events to be a wonderful avenue to serve their community as well as a way to grow their own personal spirituality. This year has been a typically busy, typically varied year, serving large number of our congregation and collaborating with numerous like-minded individuals and organizations in the larger community and working in partnership with other church committees.

Respectfully Submitted by Janet Watts

Stewardship

The 2015-2016 Stewardship Committee added Michele Insinger this year. The committee has conducted most of its meetings via teleconferencing calls.

The committee organized "Imagine Card Sunday" on Sunday, December 7th, 2014 for the purpose of ascertaining the priorities, likes and dislikes from the church members present during that service. The results were kept confidential and assisted the committee in understanding the pulse of those who resounded.

"IMAGINE" was chosen as the theme for the 2015-2016 Stewardship Campaign.

The committee decided not to hold a Major Donor event this year but will hold one next year.

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The annual Stewardship campaign kick was on Sunday, February 15th, 2015 and pledge packages were distributed during Coffee Hour in Gage Hall on February 15th and on February 22nd.

A Stewardship Team was formed again this year comprised of members from the Vestry and Program Council. The Team assisted the committee in following up with members and friends who had not submitted their pledge by late March to ascertain when (and in some cases, if) they would be submitting their pledges.

As of April 23rd, 2015 the 2015-2016 Stewardship Campaign has received pledges of approximately \$326,764.

Members: Ren Manning (Co-Chair), Steve Simon (Co-Chair), Stan Goldberg, Michele Insinger, Ellie Setser, Priscilla Shumway

Respectfully Submitted by Ren Manning and Steve Simon, Co-Chairs

Worship

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.

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 provides 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. This year the services will be in the Sanctuary.
- We hired a Worship Coordinator to run the summer services. Vestry agreed to pay \$500.00 for this position. Lisa LoVullo will be the coordinator for summer 2015. As well, the Vestry agreed to pay for a Music Coordinator (Amy Ball). As a result of these 2 positions, the summer services went extremely well.
- We held two services this past Easter.
- We have coordinated with other church initiatives to incorporate themes into services (such as compassion, social justice, and stewardship). An Earth Day service was conducted and a summer service on sustainable practices will be this summer.
- We encourage new voices in our summer services such as a service on the use of fire in religious ceremonies, the types of music used in religions, a Quaker service and a Presbyterian minister.

Members: Cecil Bennett, Ralph Haller, Richard Hayes, Tommy Hughston, Hillary Hutchinson, Jerry Prazak, Bernadette Victor, Roy Hiller, Lisa LoVullo, Richard Hayes, and Tobias Van Buren (with Rev. Danny Reed and Assoc. Minister Nancy Pelligrini). Judy Manning is Vestry liaison.

Respectfully Submitted by Priscilla Shumway and Bernadette Victor, Co-Chairs