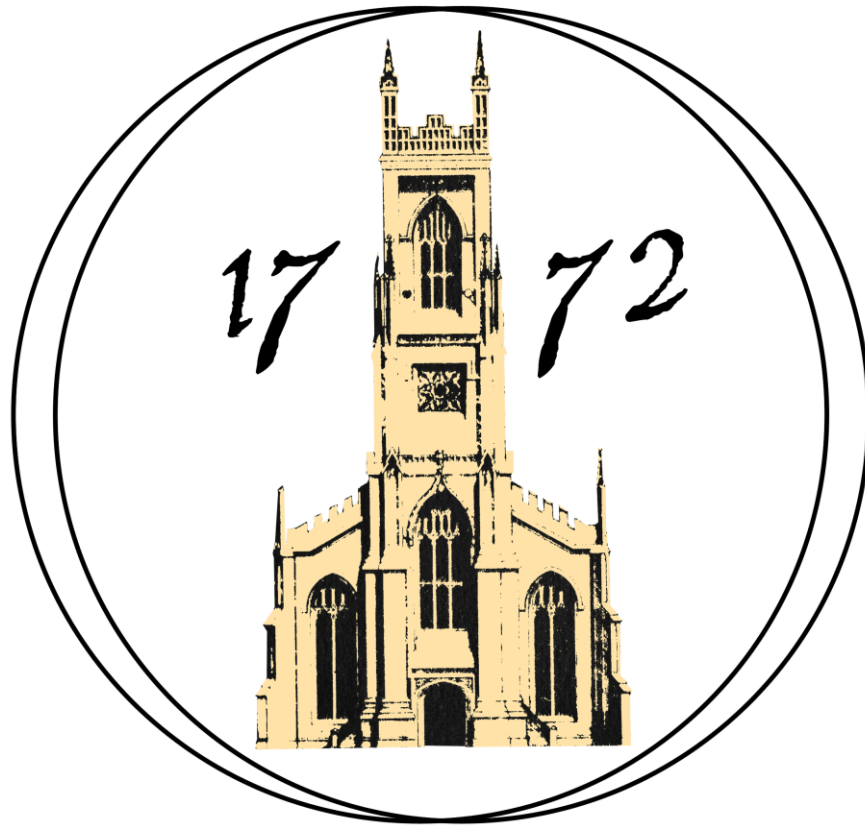


UNITARIAN CHURCH IN CHARLESTON  
ANNUAL REPORT  
2015-2016



May 15, 2016

**“Building a welcoming home for spiritual freedom  
that enriches our lives and serves our world”**

## Vestry

Though the saying, “May you live in interesting times” is neither ancient nor Chinese and was meant as a curse rather than a blessing, I can certainly say we as a congregation have lived through interesting times this year!

In many ways, the year began before it had truly ended, before our picnic on Father’s Day and way before our September Pancake Breakfast when a sadly troubled young man determined that taking up a gun against the members of a bible study at Mother Emanuel would somehow cure all the misfortunes that had befallen him. Nancy Pellegrini, Carol Oates and I sat at the UUA General Assembly in late June and heard our own Rev. Danny’s words about Mother Emanuel and the beloved community read by our denomination’s moderator, and wept together.

This devastating specter has hovered over us all year, especially as we negotiated the divisive shoals of our Safety and Security proposals. Fortunately, we managed to move beyond the divisions. Unfortunately, the historical flooding in October facilitated that move by giving us more important priorities for our limited resources. The rest of the year the Vestry tackled the problem of where to obtain resources to fix what had flooded or leaked.

The Vestry has a separate fund that comes from the Endowment Investment Board, not the operating budget. We oversaw dispersal of that money for the two defibrillators, parking lot signs, Gage Hall lighting, walkie-talkies for the Safety Team, a laptop for our office administrator. We have pledged the remainder of this year’s monies and all of next year’s money as needed to completing the Safety and Security project list, in particular an improved fire detection system, monitoring and video capture of all external doors in the sanctuary and Gage Hall, monitoring in the great room of Gage Hall for liability purposes and nanny cams in the Annex. To that end, five companies have been out to see the property and present proposals. The Vestry asked John Narkunas to oversee the final decisions in consultation with the Vestry and Safety Steering Committee. A proposal will be brought before the Congregation at the Annual Meeting. We may not have chosen a company but we will ask for a ceiling number above which we will not spend.

I have learned much this year. Two lessons stand out.

First, one must have an infinite amount of patience to see projects from conception to fruition in a church. The Vestry began a long-range property evaluation with our architect Glenn Keyes and has just now found enough funding to begin the drawing plans. We have also proposed looking at enhancing the Nominating Committee’s work by expanding its portfolio to include Leadership Development. Though we have had this on the back burner for many months, it is still in its infancy and will continue next year.

We also researched ways to improve the sound in the sanctuary and dampen it in Gage Hall and hope to complete that work this summer. I view much of this as the legacy I wish to leave the church and hope to be part of the planning and completion of these projects. And so it goes!

The second lesson I have learned is that we already have superb leadership in all aspects of our church life. I have taken advantage of my position to invite myself into every committee's meetings at least once this year. I am impressed by what I see in the organization and running of meetings and the business that is discussed! Our task going forward is to tap into the new members coming in: discover their passions and strengths and help them find a place to use them in the church.

To serve this church as Vestry Chair this year has been not just a source of many sleepless nights but, of sheer delight. This role has brought me into relationship with many more church members than I would have met on my own. It has deepened my love and commitment to this church and its members and my understanding for its mission and organization. Thanks to all of you for your trust and support and the opportunity to walk with you on the journey.

*Respectfully submitted by Judy Manning, Vestry Chair*

### **Minister**

This report reaches you during the late spring when nearly every Sunday features a special component. The Sunday before last (5/1), we welcomed new members and celebrated membership milestones. Last Sunday (5/8), we honored the Alliance and celebrated the Flower Communion. The Sunday ahead of this writing (5/14), will feature the recognition of our graduating High School students, the distribution of this Annual Report, and our Annual Meeting. (Just to finish the list, on Sunday 5/22 the Caring Committee will be appreciated and on Sunday, 5/29 our Middle Schoolers will participate in the Worship Service and some will share their personal statement of belief.)

I mention these eventful Sundays as calendar reminders but more so, to raise up a primary function of the church: organizing us to stop now and then to commemorate special, but not extraordinary, benchmarks in our individual lives and in the life we share together as a congregation. Our church brings us together, to join in strength and sometimes in sorrow, to worship heart to heart and work side by side. Our church invites us to recognize our lives as our best attempts to savor relationships and be of service along the course of our lives. This high purpose involves all of us and requires the coordination of our membership, our volunteer leaders, and professional staff.

Under the leadership of Judy Manning, our Vestry (Nina Fair, Frank Hardie, Erica Hattings-Brodeur, John Klintworth, Jonathan Lamb, Maureen Porter, Nolan Prestwood, Steve Simon, and Sue Weller) successfully managed the usual business of the church but also took on unexpected challenges this year. The exploration of enhanced safety measures, and the repair of flood damage to the Sanctuary, were particularly demanding surprises. With the considerable help of the Safety Committee, led by Carol Tempel, and the Buildings and Grounds Committee, led by Ron Updike, safety issues and facility repair continue to be addressed.

Our able staff serves the congregation with commitment and talent. Steady growth in activity and membership requires each of them to adapt to new demands on their important roles. I'm honored to describe their character and contributions.

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New to our team this year, Bill Epes serves as Intern Minister. A seminarian enrolled at Meadville Lombard Theological School, and also a member of our congregation, Bill meets career and educational goals while bringing us a different participation and perspective. Bill relies on the feedback and support of a fine committee whose members evaluate his strengths and encourage his growth. It is an honor to be part of Bill's ministerial formation.

Johanna Evenson, Music Director, ensures the quality of the music we are fortunate to enjoy every Sunday. She leads our dedicated adult choir, our children's choir, performs regularly in services, and coordinates musical guests and other events.

Joe McCormack, Sexton, arranges our rooms for multiple events each week and helps keep our program life organized and our facilities maintained. Joe is entrusted with significant responsibility and interacts easily with our guests, members, and vendors.

Carol Oates, Membership Coordinator, connects with newcomers, welcoming them into the church community, learning their interests and responding to their questions. She also helps seasoned members reconnect with the church when they are ready to explore new opportunities or launch new initiatives.

Sandra Selvitelli oversees the essential functioning of the church office. As Administrator she bears more responsibility and tends to more tasks than many know. She is always looking for ways to improve church communication and streamline routine functions. We all benefit from her successful efforts—a smarter office makes for a more efficient church.

Janet Watts, Director of Religious Education, is responsible for Sunday educational programming and occasional weekly offerings. Many volunteer teachers, helpers, and Religious Education Committee members work alongside Janet to spark the spiritual development of our children and community.

Rev. Nancy Pellegrini, Affiliated Community Minister, participates in Sunday services and occasional adult religious education offerings. Nancy is also Chaplain to the patients and staff of the Hollings Cancer Center of the Medical University of South Carolina. She has been guided by a strong committee whose members have provided counsel and insight.

I remain significantly involved with the Charleston Area Justice Ministry and other justice endeavors. As the one year anniversary of the Emanuel AME murders draws near, I am mindful of both the vulnerability and the resilience of a worshipping community. The shootings, and other recent, disruptive events in Charleston call us to consider anew our commitments to one another and to evaluate the ways we can make a progressive and prophetic difference here and beyond. Lately, I've been repeating the scenario of ministers who struggle for justice *ahead* of their congregations, hoping their membership will have the faith to step up and journey forward. I do well to simply *keep up* with our socially conscious congregation and I am inspired by the many examples of worthy work and witness that are present in the Unitarian Church in Charleston.

This report is always insufficient and I have likely forgotten or overlooked individuals and items that should be included here. Please pardon any inevitable lapses herein. In closing, Thank you for all you do to preserve the blessed church that brings us all into relationship. Thank you for sticking out the tough conversations, taking on the the difficult decisions, and also for sharing laughter so easily, and so often. Your support of my calling, encouragement of my success, and acceptance of my shortcomings are priceless. It remains a blessing to be your minister and to share this historic congregation.

Respectfully submitted,



### **Community Affiliated Minister**

I am excited to be in my third year as your Community Minister serving in the community as the Chaplain at the Hollings Cancer Center at the Medical University of South Carolina where I provide pastoral care to patients and staff. This year I was also asked to assist with the Outpatient Palliative Care Clinic and to take part in the Psychosocial Steering Committee at Hollings. I was interviewed about my career transition from CIA analyst to minister for the series “The Next Act for Women” <http://nextactforwomen.com/coaching-and-counseling/from-cia-analyst-to-reverend-nancys-story/#more-5629>.

As part of my covenant with our church for voluntary work this year, I preached an auction sermon in October, assisted in worship services once a month, and taught an adult education class on the book *Just Mercy*. I turned over facilitation of the “Dealing with Serious Illness Support Group” that I started last year into the capable hands of Intern Minister Bill Epes.

In addition, our church contracted with me to preach several more sermons this year. I have also conducted weddings and participated in memorial services and child dedication ceremonies. I have continued to accept guest-preaching opportunities at the UU Congregation of the Low Country in Bluffton. Following the tragic shooting at Mother Emanuel Church, I have been participating in gun control efforts with Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America.

Ordained as a Unitarian Universalist minister in 2013, I will complete the process this fall for being granted full ministerial fellowship. (The Unitarian Universalist Association requires those in their first three years of ministry to submit yearly evaluations for renewal of fellowship). My Committee on Ministry from our church has met with me monthly and generously completed these evaluations. I want to thank current committee members Diane Aghapour (from Hollings), Al and Kaye Finch, Sally Flynn, and Nancy Simpson, as well as previous members Emily Carey, John Massey, and Bruce Evenson for their wise council and support. I also am indebted to Reverend Danny Reed for his mentorship.

*Respectfully submitted by Nancy Pellegrini, Affiliated Community Minister*

### **Intern Minister**

This year, Unitarian Church in Charleston put a seminarian on staff. What a privilege. What a year of learning. As a working volunteer, this former member was invited to learn ministry hands-on, hearts-in, minds-on – while taking classes full-time in a low-residency program in Chicago, Meadville Lombard Theological School. Church year 2015-16 was the first of two years of part-time service to the church.

Most of my work this year consisted of listening, observing, training, and close contact with clergy, key staff members, and lay leaders, in preparation for deeper work next year. I met weekly with Rev. Danny, who became my Teaching Pastor. I met monthly with six congregants generous with their time and experience to help grow a UU minister-to-be.

Building on a summer of chaplaincy training at Roper St. Francis, I offered pastoral care to several congregants, in hospital and out. I helped facilitate the Dealing with Serious Illness group for several months. I also served several walk-ins who needed a minister.

Other church participation included C.A.J.M., Forum, and staff meetings. I observed meetings of Vestry, Safety, Men's Group, Worship, RE, and Caring Committees. I had coffee, conversation, and even a few formal interviews, with over a dozen members. I observed every level of RE, and, thanks to your generous DRE, took O.W.L training.

In turn, I delivered four sermons and a homily. I regularly proofread the Order of Service. (If you found an error, it was mine.) When not in the pulpit, I wrote Opening Words, Story for All Ages, Meditations, and Benedictions. I robed for Easter, read for Christmas Eve. And now I look forward to year two with a major church project to plant.

Let me express my deep gratitude to this congregation; to Vestry and its Chair, Judy Manning, for agreeing to my internship; to my insightful and hard-working Lay Committee members, Sue Weller, Suzanne Hardie, Lee Westbrook, Gale Simmons, Kevin Eakes, and Priscilla Shumway; and to my wise, patient, and calming on-site professor, Rev. Danny Reed. There is nowhere else I would rather be.

*Respectfully submitted by William Epes, Intern Minister*

### **Treasurer**

The Church's fiscal year runs from July 1<sup>st</sup> through June 30<sup>th</sup> of the following year. We ended the last fiscal year on June 30, 2015 in a very strong financial position. The Operating Budget income was approximately \$29,700.00 over expenses. This overage was used as income in the 2015/2016 fiscal year. At the start of the 2015/2016 fiscal year (July 1, 2015), the balances of the Endowment Fund was, \$954,458, Churchyard Fund was \$11,024 and Landmark Fund was \$69,379. Our reserves totaled \$51,185.

As of March 31<sup>st</sup> 2016:

1. The Endowment is \$916,478

2. The Churchyard Fund is currently \$10,076
3. The Landmark Fund is currently \$38,102
4. There is \$45,331 in our Reserve accounts. Our reserves are divided into four different categories. 1. The Operating Reserve, 2. Maintenance Reserve, 3. Emergency Reserve, and 4. Auction Reserve.
  - The Operating Reserve is \$14,474 and is held to insure the balance of the Operating fund stays positive during the year.
  - Maintenance Reserve is \$3,944 is used for major deferred maintenance projects.
  - Emergency Reserve is \$26,517 and 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 is \$5,896 of which \$4,500 was used for UUA Annual Program and \$1,000 for CAJM. Leaving a balance of \$396.

The HVAC system installed in the Sanctuary was financed through donations from the Congregation, \$75,000 from the Endowment Fund (transferred from the Endowment during the 13/14 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 31, 2016 the loan balance is \$6,274.

The current fiscal year has again been strong through the first 9 months showing \$20,479 income over expenses. As long as we continue to have timely payments on our 2015/2016 church year annual pledges, I project that we will once again end the year with our income over expenses.

This has been my first year as Treasurer. I appreciate the opportunity to serve and have enjoyed working with the Finance Committee, Vestry, committee chairs and congregation the past year. Many thanks to Terry Walsh, Sandra Selvitelli, Richard Hayes and Debbie Kirby for all their help throughout the year.

*Respectfully submitted by Nolan Prestwood, Treasurer*

### **Administrator**

The 2015-2016 church year has been a great year as your administrator. I felt more confident in my role having been through one full year understanding the church cycle better and having my new procedures and ideas in place.

Last year, Carol Tempel and a few members with a specific knowledge base spearheaded a Safety Committee. In the fall of this year, their hard work generated respectful discussion, action plans, and great accomplishments. Because of their achievements we have been able to make great strides towards safer buildings for staff, members, and our children. I am pleased to have offered whatever assistance I could for their important endeavors.

October was difficult for all of the lowcountry with the terrible flooding that we experienced. We all owe the Mannings, Paul Garbarini, Ron Updike and Joe McCormack a great deal of



thanks for their roles in being on the scene to determine damage and to take quick action to resolve the problems that did arise.

Our event calendar has remained very active. We have hosted many concerts, films, social justice events and recording sessions for local bands. I am pleased to say that I made contact with the Piccolo Spoleto organization after realizing we were not on their list of preferred vendors. They needed verification of our ADA status and once received they booked a few events in short order. I hope to expand this in the coming years. We also continue to have a strong relationship with the Charleston Day School. They are kind to offer us space on Sundays and they use Gage Hall for various events including their musical performances, ballet classes and science projects.

I began working with our new Treasurer Nolan Prestwood, and am grateful for his hard work. It is a daunting task and we should all tell him “thank you.” Terry Walsh has continued to be a wonderful resource and fount of knowledge. Debbie Kirby, our bookkeeper, is also a tremendous asset.

This year, I continued managing our Sexton Joe McCormack. Joe is such a hard-working and likeable person. We are lucky to have him on our team. I am pleased to say that I felt I could save the church funds this year by not hiring an assistant. With some new processes and equipment in place I felt confident that the many tasks handed to me could be handled without outside help. I was also successful in saving the church money in my other budget line items for the year.

I am continuing to streamline communications between staff members and the congregation at large. I am also starting to delve deep into the old files in my office and streamlining the record keeping process, particularly for items such as Buildings and Grounds maintenance schedules, warranties, etc. I would like to thank Erica Hattings-Brodeur, Joe McCormack and the Archives Committee for their help with this.

As a member and employee, I recognize that my relationship with the church has changed. However, my appreciation of the church has grown for seeing all of the dedication, love, friendship, and fierce loyalty that our message of acceptance and love instills in our wonderful congregation. I am also very grateful for the love that is shown to my children and family. We are so very fortunate to have the warmth of your kindness shine on us.

*Respectfully submitted by Sandra Selvitelli, Administrator*

### **Music Director**

**Mission Statement:** *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.*

### **Activities and Accomplishments:**



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- Musicians from our congregation as well as musicians from the community at large provided music during our regular Sunday services.
- Amy Ball was hired to be the Accompanist for the adult choir.
- The Adult Choir met for weekly rehearsals from September to the end of May. The Choir sang for approximately three out of four Sunday services per month.
- The Adult Choir with visiting musicians, presented their annual Christmas Cantata in December.
- The Children's Choir practiced in the morning the majority of the Sundays between September and May, and performed during the services approximately once a month.
- A call for qualified candidates to submit applications for the Martha Welsh Music Award was posted in the Spring of 2016. However, no youth applied this year.
- In November the Choir met at one of the choir member's home for a day long choir retreat to practice for the Christmas Cantata and to socialize. The retreat was mainly supported financially by a contribution granted by the Vestry in response to the Music Committee's Dream Budget request.
- The Music Committee, together with the Fine Arts Committee, collaborated on three Candlelight Concerts, followed by receptions, one in the Fall and two in the Spring. The proceeds from the Candlelight Concerts benefitted the Music Battery Program.
- The Choir, in collaboration with Circular Church, performed the last of the three Candlelight Concerts on April 29. Extra rehearsals were scheduled throughout the Winter and Spring to prepare for the concert.

*Respectfully submitted by Johanna Evenson, Music Director*

### **Religious Education Director**

**Mission Statement:** *The purpose of the Religious Education Program is to create an environment where children will feel loved and safe; encourage and support our children's spiritual and ethical growth; provide an open and compassionate community that promotes acceptance and principled guidance; offer young people a place to explore Unitarian Universalism and other faiths; encourage innate curiosity, wonder and joy; provide opportunities to apply and model the seven principles of Unitarian Universalism.*

**Staff:** Mariana Pena-Morrison and MJ Welch (YRUU Leaders), Melissa Zahler (Religious Education Assistant), Deloris Crawford (Nursery), Tina Carnell, Amanda Gabriel and Alex Harrell (Preschool).

### **Activities and Accomplishments:**

This year we put all events into seven categories that are not mutually exclusive, and many events straddle multiple categories. The different categories of RE work are Sunday Classes, Childcare, Teens, Adult Religious Education, Social Justice, Social Events/Holidays, and Outreach.

### **Sunday Classes**

The backbone of our RE program is our Sunday school classes offered to children and youth ages 3-18. Creating, implementing and organizing a safe and quality educational program is essential to the healthy life of our church.

- We have over 135 individuals registered in RE classes, and average 80 children and youth on any given Sunday, September through June.
- We selected, trained and supported 30 volunteer teachers who are given dynamic curricula to stimulate the minds of their students. Encouraging the lifelong learning of children, youth and adults is vital to our church community.
- Our children have taken field trips this year to services at the local Hindu Temple, the Buddhist Dharma Center, Circular Congregational Church, Reform Synagogue, Quaker Meeting and several UU services.
- Our Middle School “Coming of Age” participants have shared their belief statements in church services.
- Working with the Circular Congregational Church we trained five members of our church in the newest Our Whole Lives Sex Education curriculum, along with 4 others from neighboring Unitarian congregations, 7 Circular Church members, and one staff member of the SC Teen Pregnancy Prevention Council from Columbia. This three day workshop required organizing accommodations, food, material and finances to ensure the two trainers from Boston could facilitate the 17 trainees.

### **Childcare**

We offered childcare for three hours during the Sunday services and at all major church events including the Auction, New UU programs, funerals, the UU Parenting group, classes and church-wide events in Gage Hall and off campus. This is a vital service for the families in our church and it is no small feat to organize qualified, engaged and committed adults to nurture our children.

### **Teens**

- This year our teens, led by Marina Pena-Morrison and MJ Welch, have covered topics in their classes ranging from Diwali to Mormonism, gender identity to suicide.
- They have had multiple overnights, movie nights, and dinners out, and they have attended two Youth Conferences in NC.
- Supporting both our congregation and the larger community they have collected clothing items for Operation Refugee Child for Syrians, volunteered for church social justice events like the Take Back the Night march and survivor speak out. Our teens have spoken at a Charleston Area Justice Ministry public event, in church on Social Justice Sunday, and for the Intern Minister’s service.
- The teens have enjoyed their newest fundraiser activity, Flocking, to raise money for the 2017 trip to General Assembly in New Orleans. This activity involves putting 50 plastic

flamingoes on the lawns of various church members and soliciting a bribe/contribution to remove the birds. This light-hearted activity has brought many youth in contact with older members of the church they may not have known, and it has increased their bank account as well as been an enjoyable bonding event.

### **Adult Religious Education**

- Our ARE offerings include weekly, monthly and one-off events.
- On a weekly basis we offer Wu Tai Chi, Meditation, and Forum.
- Monthly we have the women's group Red Tent and the popular UU Parenting evening that includes a family pot luck, childcare, and adult class.
- Other adult classes this year include a five-part class entitled "Change is Our Choice: Creating Climate Solutions," four classes of "Articulating Your UU Faith," Rev. Nancy Pellegrini's two discussions on *Just Mercy*, Alex Hild's "The Greatest Hits of the Supremes," an "Ageing to Sage-ing" workshop with Rev. Pat Hoertdoerfer, and Rev. Danny's two discussions on *Between the World and Me*.

### **Social Events/Holidays**

Community is created in ways other than the socially conscious and academic, so, as in previous years, we have created opportunities for families and the entire church to come together and celebrate at purely social events. These have included five Game Nights, nine UU Parenting evenings, a large Halloween Party, Youth Conferences in NC for Middle and High Schoolers, the Winter Holidays Party, Holiday decorating of the buildings and grounds, the RE Oyster Roast at Bowen's Island (providing scholarships for children, teens and adults for conferences, classes and summer camps affiliated with the UU church), Easter festivities (stretched over two Sundays due to rain; we celebrated with a large egg hunt, petting zoo, crafts and food), recognition of nine graduating High School seniors, and the end of the year RE party.

**Outreach** The RE Committee and the program as a whole works with numerous agencies within the church community to encourage a teamwork approach to the important work we do. To foster communication and cooperation within the church we work closely with the New Member and Pathway classes, the Social Justice Committee, the Chalice Choir and Martha Welch music scholarship program, the young adults group, the campus group at the College of Charleston, the newly formed two services committee, summer services, and the Caring Committee.

**RE Committee Members** Communication about all this activity, and the work of running the varied aspects of the RE programs are shared with the active RE Committee, chaired for the second year by John Massey. Our REC members include: Alex Hild (ARE), Audrey Brown (Secretary), Downing Child, Erica Hattings-Brodeur (Vestry liaison), Jee Youn Fickling, Heather Chumley-Jones, Jill Chumley-Jones, Joe Krause (Two Services liaison), John Hyatt, Kevin Eakes, Kris Rife (Social Justice liaison), Marina Penna-Morrison (Youth liaison), Natalie Davidson (Youth member).

**Professional Standards** Janet Watts is a member of the regional and national Liberal Religious Educators Association; state, regional and national DRE mentor programs; certified in

all ten UUA Renaissance Modules; certified in all seven modules of Our Whole Lives; and a member of the National Autistic Society, New Morning Foundation Ambassador, SC Coalition for Healthy Families, and a board member of the Charleston Teen Pregnancy Prevention Council.

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

### **Membership Coordinator**

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

#### **Activities and Accomplishments:**

- Pathways Classes: This year I continued to facilitate three Classes (Fall, Winter, Spring), with the support of the Membership Committee. The format was changed from 3 sessions for each class, to 2. This seems to work well in terms of getting commitments for attendance from both Participants and Mentors.
- 44 New Members were welcomed into the congregation.
- Mentors for Pathways: Again, this process seems to work, and will continue for the coming year. I have received consistently positive feedback from them about the experience of Mentoring.
- Pathfinders: Facilitated 6 classes (1 more than last year) for newcomers (July, September, November, January, March and May). I plan to continue this schedule offer Pathfinders more frequently in the coming year.
- 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: I continue to collaborate directly with the Membership Committee and the Caring Committee.
- Membership Sunday, honoring significant membership anniversaries (10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, and 40+ years) was celebrated.
- I continue to take part in professional development opportunities through the Unitarian Universalist Association of Membership Professionals (UUAMP). This year I have been participating as a Field Tester for UUAMP's developing certification program. I will also attend the UUAMP Professional Day at UUA GA in Columbus, OH, in June.
- I have begun tracking congregational engagement of our Members, Friends, and Visitors. I publish a preliminary report in January, and hope to publish a report each May.

- I, along with Judy Manning, Vestry Chair, have begun a new group for people who have completed Pathways. The purpose is to give people more information about Unitarian Universalism, to introduce them to the idea of Connecting Circles, and to encourage a deeper connection to our church. The name of the group is not yet settled....perhaps "Continuing the Journey".

*Respectfully Submitted by Carol Oates, Membership Coordinator*

## **Committee Reports**

### **Alliance**

**Members:** Susan Hartry (President), Susan Hutto Robinson (Vice-President), Sue Prazak (Treasurer), Toni Johnson (Assistant Treasurer), Secretary will be on rotation. This year the Alliance had 27 Members and Friends.

**Purpose/Mission Statement:** *The Alliance is a service committee that organizes and contributes to social functions in the church.*

#### **Activities and Accomplishments:**

- The Alliance held 3 Rummage Sales and a November Holiday Bazaar and Luncheon. Income came from dues (which are \$1.00), UU cookbook sales, Sunday book sales and donations.
- Sponsored the annual choir Cantata reception on December 13<sup>th</sup>.
- At our annual meeting on April 11, 2016 we voted to make the following disbursements on Alliance Sunday, May 8<sup>th</sup> as follows: \$150 each to My Sisters House, People Against Rape, Pet Helpers and this year we added Planned Parenthood (501C3).

#### **Additional Comments:**

Over the years, the Alliance has contributed thousands of dollars to the following worthy causes: staff bonuses, kitchen upgrades in Gage Hall, the slave memorial, the plaque honoring Rev. Jacqueline Collins, re-covering the pew cushions, the operating fund, the Landmark fund, soundproofing Gage Hall, and much more.

As mentioned above, we raise these funds through our rummage sales and holiday bazaar. We could use more help with these fundraisers. You only need to commit to whatever time that you have to spare. Pricing items the day before the sale is fun and working the sale the next day is even more fun. The fellowship is priceless! We can even offer child care!! If you can help, please send me your email and I can keep you informed of upcoming sales. My email address is: hartry.susan@gmail.com

*Respectfully Submitted by Susan Hartry*

### **Archives**

**Members:** Gail Schiffer (Co-chair), Susan Robinson (Co-chair), Nancy Waters, and Rose-Marie Williams. Rosemary Hutto is an honorary member.

**Purpose/Mission Statement:** *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.*

#### **Activities and Accomplishments:**

In addition to the ever-present task of filing and preserving church documents, the Archives Committee has made progress on three projects begun in previous years. Last summer, we assisted in the reorganization of the church filing system in accordance with a Document Retention Policy passed by the Vestry last year, and we have had two of our old books placed in protective boxes that also act as supportive cradles when they are in use. An old membership book is currently being repaired. We are also in the process of preparing taped interviews of church members, created in the 1980s and 1990s, for donation to the South Carolina Historical Society. These interviews will then be made available for research historians by the Lowcountry Digital Library.

#### **Additional Comments:**

Next year, we will continue with our plan to transfer more of our existing archives to the South Carolina Historical Society. We are also seeking leadership for the oral history project. 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. We hope to work on this with the Bicentennial Committee. Another on-going project is identifying and preserving photographs of church activities and events.

*Respectfully submitted by Gail Schiffer, Chair*

### **Bicentennial Committee**

**Members:** John Newell (Chair), Karen Abrams, Diane Boyer, Paul Garbarini, Richard Hayes, Hillary Hutchinson, Cristy Landis, Sally Newell, Rev. Danny Reed, & Nancy Waters

**Purpose/Mission Statement:** *The Bicentennial Committee has been created to develop ideas to celebrate our 200-year anniversary in the 2016-17 church year.*

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The Bicentennial Committee is suggesting to the Vestry a number of activities to occur in conjunction with the bicentennial of the establishment of our church as the Second Independent Church in Charleston. We anticipate some activities occurring throughout the year, but with a concentration of major activities (and most expenses) in the fall of 2017. We anticipate that the cost of some of these events can be borne by the appropriate committees, some will require an allocation from the Vestry or funding by members of the congregation, and some can be done without any costs. We will seek permission of the Vestry to raise funds to cover some of these costs.

Yearlong events at little or no cost:

- Notes in the Sunday bulletin and in *Gateway* of what was happening in Charleston (and in rest of the US and the world) in 1817.
- Showing in Gage Hall of two films dealing with African-Americans in Charleston: *The Language You Cry In* and *Priscilla's Story*.
- Performance in the fall in Gage Hall of Alex Hild's play about the Unitarian Church in Charleston.

Events at some cost:

- In late September or early October a Camp Meeting service performed by Alphonso Brown, the music director at Mt. Zion AME.
- In October or early November, a number of events held in conjunction with Charleston hosting a District or Regional UU meeting.
- Candlelight Concert with professional musicians with music that would have been performed in Charleston in early 19<sup>th</sup> century, introduced by Dr. Nic Butler.
- On Sunday, December 3, several activities celebrating the separation between the First and Second Independent Churches in Charleston and the chartering of our church as an institution:
  - Commissioning of an anthem celebrating the Unitarian Church in Charleston
  - Inaugural Performance of that work during the Dec. 3 Sunday service
  - After the Church service, a walk from our church to Circular Congregational and back, followed by a major reception
- The Official Charleston Christmas ornament for 2017 will feature the Unitarian Church in Charleston. We can purchase these and sell them for \$21.00 to members, friends, and visitors.

### **Books & Coffee**

**Members:** Jo Anne Simson (Chair), various members who enjoy reading and discussing books.

**Purpose/Mission Statement:** *The UU 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. The Books & Coffee group offers a chance for both information and fellowship to those who like to read and discuss books.*

**Activities and Achievements:**

- 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 a 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, 2015 – 2016, we read and discussed the following books:
  - In October, we discussed *All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr, a haunting book, which won the Pulitzer Prize this year. Claire Bush led the discussion.
  - In November, we discussed *David and Goliath* by Malcolm Gladwell. Sue Nelson led the discussion.
  - In December we discussed *Zealot*, by Reza Aslan. Ellie Setser led our discussion
  - In January we discussed *Living in Fear*, by Will Moredock. Paul Nelson led the discussion.
  - In February, we discussed *A Fighting Chance*, by Elizabeth Warren. Jo Anne Simson led the discussion with help from Paul Nelson.
  - In March, *Between the World and Me*, by Ta Nehisi-Coates. Claire Bush led that discussion.
  - In April and May, the book to be discussed will be *Daughter of Persia*, by Sattareh Farman Farmaian. Judy Bruce will be leading that discussion.

*Respectfully submitted by Jo Anne Simson*

**Caring**

**Members:** Kay Haun (Chair), Mary Ann Terry (Co-Chair), Myrtle Staples Bennett (Mt. Pleasant), Marcia Castano (James Island, Johns Island and Folly Beach), Mela Khedouri (West Ashley), Mary Ann Terry and Mary Ann Hughston (Downtown), Kay Haun (North Charleston, Daniel Island and Summerville) Ex Officio: Danny Reed, Bill Epes, Carol Oates, Sandra Selvitelli

**Purpose/Mission Statement:** *The mission of the Caring Committee is to support each of our members and friends as they experience momentous and memorable events, stages, and transitions in their lives. The committee is apprised of a need for assistance by referrals from the minister, the membership coordinator, and our congregants. Always mindful of privacy concerns, we monitor and react in ways deemed appropriate to each situation. The Committee's*

*Area Leaders meet once a month and communicate by phone and email many times between those meetings.*

**Activities and Accomplishments:**

- During the current church year, our committee leaders and network volunteers have provided meals, rides, cards, visits, flowers, telephone calls, and churchwide cards on Sundays to over 50 people or families.
- The Committee also reaches out to homebound members and to those who have left the area but remain closely affiliated with our Unitarian Church in Charleston.

**Additional Comments:**

At this time, 79 UUs participate as network volunteers from the wide geographical area of this church. New volunteers are always welcome on board—they are the key element in seeing that services are available as they become needed. The Caring Committee maintains a page under “Get Involved” on the church’s website, where a volunteer form can be found and downloaded. The form can be sent to the office, and an Area Leader will call to welcome the volunteer and share activities and requests with that person.

*Respectfully Submitted by Kay Haun, Chair*

**Churchyard**

**Members:** Bob Jontos (Chair), Sarah Cothran (Secretary), Laura Moses (Correspondance Coordinator), Cris Sumptor (“Wayside Pulpit”) Stan Boyer, Karen DelPorto, Suzy DeMerell, Fran Ennis, Tommy Hughston, John Meffert, Karen Ruef and Ed Stephens.

**Purpose/Mission Statement:** *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.*

**Activities and Accomplishments:**

- **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 completed. The open space landscape and seating design was updated and revised to reflect input from committee members and the Vestry. New plantings have been donated by John Meffert. The Vestry also donated a plant in honor of past Vestry members. Additional plantings will be installed by the Churchyard Committee and the Eden Keepers.
- **Burning Bowl:** The Burning bowl proposed by Steve Simon, on behalf of the RE and Worship committees, was constructed in the Open space. Materials included the

repurposing of bricks, sandstone curbing and a crocket from the sanctuary as a base for the bowl. A new oval-shaped concrete bowl tops 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 walk way plants and hardscapes has been drafted and reviewed by the Vestry. The document was 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. This process continues.

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:** An application and supporting documents prepared by Glen Keyes, the church's architect 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 approved the application. Installation of the door is under consideration by the Vestry.
- **Churchyard Management Plan:** Preparation of the first draft of the plan has been completed. 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.
- **Bench Moratorium:** The Churchyard committee recently reaffirmed its position not to add additional memorial benches to the churchyard. As an option, we encourage the donation of a tree or flowering shrub as a memorial to loved one. Many plants were lost due to hurricane Hugo and this is an opportunity to reintroduce plantings into the churchyard. Please contact Bob Jontos or other Churchyard committee members for assistance in selecting plantings.

#### **Additional Comments:**

- The Churchyard Committee has modified its meeting schedule. The committee meets after the monthly work party on the first Saturday of the month. 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.

- All are encouraged to join us regardless of gardening experience.

*Respectfully Submitted by Bob Jontos, Chair*

### **Community Ministry Evaluation**

**Members:** Diane Aghapour (from Hollings), Al and Kaye Finch, Sally Flynn, and Nancy Simpson as well as previous members Emily Carey, John Massey, and Bruce Evenson

**Purpose/Mission Statement:** *This committee meets to support the needs of our Community Minister, Nancy Pellegrini.*

The community minister committee has met regularly with Nancy who continues to do a great job. This year Bruce was replaced by Nancy Simpson. The committee will complete its work in the fall as Nancy's three years of supervision will be completed.

*Respectfully Submitted by Al Finch, Chair*

### **Denominational Affairs**

**Members:** Richard Hayes (Chair), Hillary Hutchinson, Judy Manning, and Nancy Pellegrini

**Purpose/Mission Statement:** *The 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, and the Southern Cluster of SED UU Churches, encouraging and promoting our financial and member support to the UUA (including the Southern Region) -- UCC is striving to be a Fair Share Congregation, encouraging support of and participation in denominational activities and staying connected with the larger UU faith community.*

#### **Activities and Accomplishments:**

- 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 Küküllődombó that want to attend a Unitarian boarding high school in Cluj (lead by Hillary Hutchinson).

Our Regional UUA Governance was inaugurated last year -- the ***Southern Region!*** The Denominational Affairs Committee keeps the UCC informed and up to date on UUA, Southern Region, and Southern Cluster activities, programs, and support through a strong presence on the church website, and continuing articles in the Gateway and on Facebook.

Respectfully *Submitted by Richard Hayes, Chair*

### **Docents**

**Members:** Abby Himmelein (Chair), Susan Hutto Robinson (Scheduling Coordinator), Tom Hartry, Erica Hattings-Brodeur, Abby Himmelein, and Mike McCabe (Steering Committee), Liaison to Building and Grounds: Erica Hattings-Brodeur (Liaison to Building and Grounds), Paul Garbarini (Docent Educator), Cisco Lindsey and John Preston (Computer and Digital Media Consultants)

**Purpose/Mission Statement:** *The mission of the Docent Committee is to share the history and beauty of our church with visitors, members of the church and the Charleston community.*

#### **Activities and Accomplishments:**

- Increased the number of tour days from one to three per week (Friday, Saturday and Sunday).
- Created a Visitors Self-Tour Guide to the Sanctuary.
- Completed first revision of the Docent Notebook since 2010.
- Increased number of Docents from 19 to 32.
- Donations collected for first quarter 2016 are \$571 and \$27 in postcard sales.
- 1556 visitor tours were completed in the first quarter of 2016. We anticipate over 5000 visitors in 2016 and over 9000 in 2017.
- The program runs 40 weeks out of the year and currently provides 8.5 of tours weekly. We have recently averaged 27 tours per hour.

#### **Additional Comments:**

##### **The Committee would like to recognize the following service awards:**

- Ten Year Plus Service Award to the following Docents: Joanne Milkereit, Anna Stephens, Gail Schiffer, Joanne Simson, Kay Haun, Toni Johnson, Susan Robinson

- Joe McCormack, Sexton, for superlative service to the Docent Program.

*Respectfully Submitted by Abby Himmelein*

## **Endowment**

### **Members:**

**Purpose/Mission Statement:** *The Endowment Fund is formally recognized as the Fund which accepts gifts which are primarily to be used for the long-term vitality and financial health of the Church community. Principal in the Endowment Fund will be protected on an inflation-adjusted basis according to the specifics laid out in its policy. Upon at least a majority of those voting at an officially-called meeting of the congregation: Portions of the Endowment Fund (including up to 10% of the protected principal) can be committed as security for loans, and in extreme conditions threatening the survival of the UCC community, annually if more than 10% of the protected Principle or the entirety of the Endowment Fund (including protected principal) can be committed to help the congregation recover by a written vote of more than 50% of the corporate members.*

*The Endowment Investment Board is formally established to oversee the investment of the Endowment Fund and to establish and maintain guidelines for acceptance of gifts.*

*Respectfully Submitted by Bill Finn*

## **Finance**

**Members:** Richard Hayes (Chair), Nolan Prestwood (Treasurer), Terry Walsh (Assistant Treasurer), Charles Everett, Fred Himmelein, Fe Houston, Mike McCabe, Stuart Terry, Paige Wisotski,, and staff support from Reverend Danny Reed and Sandra Selvitelli.

**Purpose/Mission Statement:** *The Finance Committee, in conjunction with the Treasurer, a) oversees the church's finances, b) provides advice to the Vestry and the Congregation on the church's finances and 3) controls the church's finances in accordance with decisions by the Vestry and the Congregation.*

### **Activities and Achievements:**

- 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 reviewed monthly by the Committee. The proposed budget for 2016-2017 (Fiscal year 2017) was submitted to the Vestry for consideration at the annual meeting. Working with Betsy Grund (Personnel Chair) this budget ensures continued fair remuneration for our outstanding staff. And for the fourth 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 Strategic goals – this year concentrating on Church Safety and planning for our minister's sabbatical. Ren Manning and Tony Isaac lead a superb Pledge Drive – The 2017 was the largest in the history of the Church.
- Stuart Terry continues to oversee the parking contract and support the Planned Giving program with Hillary Hutchinson. Stuart and Hillary did great job educating the Congregation of the benefits of “planned giving“ to the Church in their wills.
- Nolan Prestwood gets our highest praise and thanks as our Church Treasurer.

*Respectfully Submitted by Richard Hayes, Chair*

### **Fine Arts**

**Members:** Joanna Innes and Amy Ball (Co-Chairs), Rachel Bradford, Susan Findlay, Jack Hurley, Lisa Lindahl, Cisco Lindsey, Myrtle Staples, Tobias Van Buren.

**Purpose/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.*

#### **Activities and Accomplishments:**

- Conducted nine art shows
  - Fall Show I: Lisa Lindahl
  - Fall Show II: Shelly Pullen
  - Winter Show I: Live Auction Art
  - Winter Show II: Poetry of the late Jean Pendleton
  - Winter Show III: Barb Lang
  - Spring Show
    - I: Members and Friends Art Show
    - Spring Show II: James Island High School Art Students' Show
    - Summer Show I: Illustrated Book Show
    - Summer Show II: Winslow Tuttle and Tobias Van Buren
- The back entrance of Gage Hall Mini-Gallery features works by Cisco Lindsey and Friends.



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- 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.
- All of the art shows were successful. We were pleased to exhibit so many solo shows this year. Unfortunately, we did not have the Private Collection Show, so we will begin with it in the fall. It increases the opportunity for members' participation.

**Additional Comments:**

- Joanna Innes will continue to chair, and Amy Ball will co-chair for the next year.
- Planning the following types of shows next year:
  - Solo shows from youth who were in our RE program.
  - One show for the work of our own members.
  - Private Collection Show
  - Invitational Shows and Solo Shows for members or guests
  - Cooperate with the Auction Committee to display art work at the Live Auction
  - 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.

*Respectfully Submitted by Joanna Innes, Chair*

**Forum**

**Members:** Simon Lewis (Chair)

**Purpose/Mission Statement:** *The Forum provides members and friends of the Unitarian Church in Charleston with thought-provoking talks and discussion sessions, mainly on topics of general interest but also on topics pertinent to the church. They occur from 10:00-10:50 a.m. on Sundays.*

**Activities and Achievements:**

- Lineup of speakers covered a range of topics from current affairs (e.g. talks on Iran and the Middle East) to church business (e.g. financial state of the church, safety plans, and two services).
- Green Sanctuary co-sponsored a number of presentations.
- Audience size ranged from 15-50.

- Audience satisfaction seemed high based on feedback.
- Calendar for Forum topics established and published a month in advance so that people can see what's coming up.

*Respectfully Submitted by Simon Lewis*

## **Membership**

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

**Purpose/Mission Statement:** *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 and Accomplishments:**

- 5 committee meetings were held on the following dates:
  - August 26, 2015 kick-off BBQ hosted by the Updikes
  - November 5, 2015 hosted by Sue Weller
  - February 8, 2016 Chinese New Year celebration hosted by Sue Weller
  - May 2, 2016 hosted by Karen Ruef
- 3 sessions of Pathways Classes were held along with new member potlucks on the following dates with a total of 48 attendees:
  - Fall 2015: October 11 & 18, 2015
  - Winter 2016: January 31 & February 7, 2016
  - Spring 2016: April 10 & 17, 2016
- Pathways classes have moved from a 3 session format to a 2 session one. Participants and mentors have provided positive feedback regarding these changes.
- There were 3 New Member Ceremonies where welcomed 30 new members, with a potential of 13 more joining on the May 1, 2016 New Member Sunday.
- Carol Oates, UUC Membership Coordinator, held 5 Pathfinders classes with over 61 attendees on the following dates:
  - July 19, 2015
  - September 27, 2015
  - November 11, 2015
  - January 10, 2016
  - March 13, 2016
  - May 15th, 2016

- Mentors have been following up with new members at two and six months after signing the book to ensure members feel welcomed and integrated into church activities.
- Vestry members and members of other church committees regularly assist the Membership committee at the Welcome Table.
- The Membership Integration Subcommittee (MIS). The purpose of the MIS was to explore ways to encourage and facilitate the integration and active involvement of new members into church activities. This committee was dissolved by the end of 2015 due to no longer being needed.
- "The Week that Was" met in the Sanctuary during coffee hour to provide an opportunity for quieter conversation. There were a 3 sessions held during October with 25 people attending. Sessions were put on hold until another person can be found to chair this process and facilitate the sessions.

*Respectfully submitted, Sue Weller, Chair*

### **Music**

**Members:** Claire Law and Sally Newell and Claire Law (Co-Chairs), Amy Ball, Johanna Evenson, Frank Hardie, Joanna Innes, Richard Nelson, Myrtle Staples, Emelle Wade

**Purpose/Mission Statement:** *The Music Committee supports the music program of the church, provides community outreach through the Candlelight Concerts, and supports young musicians enrolled in the RE program through annual Martha Welch scholarships.*

#### **Activities and Accomplishments:**

The Music Committee has presented three Candlelight Concerts this year: Duo Cortado in November, Jean Harlow and John Roper in February, and the combined choirs of the Unitarian Church in Charleston and Circular Congregational Church in April under the direction of Johanna Evenson and Marilyn Taylor, music directors. In addition, we have shifted our financial support from James Simons, the school that has benefited from our previous concerts, to Music Battery Charleston, a non-profit helping students at Morningside Middle School academically and musically through their drumline. This group of students performed for us at a worship service in April. This nonprofit has received \$4000 for their music program.

#### **Additional Comments:**

We will have three concerts for next year, two of which are already set: Susan Conant on November 4, and the Men's Choir from St. John's Lutheran next door in April. The performer for the February concert is still to be determined.

Next year's Co-Chairs are Claire Law and Emelle Wade.

*Respectfully Submitted by Sally Newell, Co-Chair*

## **Personnel**

**Members:** Betsy Grund (Chair), Tony Brown, Bill Finn, and Nancy Waters. Ex Officio: Danny Reed, Sandra Selvitelli and the leadership of our Vestry and Program Council.

**Purpose/Mission Statement:** *The Mission of the Personnel Committee is to assure that our church has sound human resource policies and procedures that comply with the law, are competitive in the marketplace, and adhere to the principles of our Unitarian Universalist faith. The Personnel Committee, working with the Minister, Office Administrator and the Vestry, works to ensure that the policies and procedures as described in the Personnel Manual are followed.*

- **They're all good:** I'm again resisting a 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.
- **Two Services:** This year, Trip Banner represented Personnel on the committee to study the possible need to add an additional service on Sunday mornings. As Priscilla Shumway, who is leading that committee, has said – this has been a very educational process! The collaboration between staff, lay leaders and members of the congregation has yielded critical information and ideas, which will continue to inform the path forward. Many Thanks to Trip for lending his expertise to that effort!
- **Safety Committee:** Another critical effort involving collaboration among all groups in our congregation has been the Safety Committee's work. I am personally gratified to have participated in various aspects of the Safety Committee and am impressed by the ongoing success of our democratic processes in navigating difficult questions.

### **Additional Comments:**

- The items above are only two of the many essential areas our staff has invested in this year. There are scores of immediate, short term and long term issues our staff members are prioritizing and balancing at any given point during the year. As we grow, supporting Staff will continue to be a key to sustaining our healthy growth.
- Like all committees, Personnel continues to stretch 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, established, professional team and the Personnel Committee seeks to support them as they support every aspect of church life.

*Respectfully Submitted by Betsy Grund, Chair*

### **Planned Giving**

**Members:** Hillary Hutchinson (Chair), Ken Fickling, Kay Haun, Myrtle Staples, Stuart Terry, Bill Walsh (ex officio), Steve Wilson

**Purpose:** *Planned Giving (PG) is a subcommittee under the auspices of the Finance Committee at the Unitarian Church in Charleston. The Planned Giving Committee's mission is to secure and enhance the vitality of our congregation and its impact on the Charleston community by informing and educating the congregation about estate gifting, appropriately recognizing donors, identifying new gifting concepts of interest, and assuring that benefactors' intentions are met within Church endowment guidelines.*

#### **Activities and Accomplishments:**

- We can happily report that we have now nearly \$2 million in legacy commitments.
- Regular meetings were reinstated after the committee was unable to meet for the duration of church year 2014-2015.
- For several years we have been working to increase the endowment for six restricted endowments and for the endowment generally. The Restricted Endowments are Buildings and Grounds, Churchyard, Ministry, Music, Religious Education, and Social Justice. Our financial leaders have set \$50,000 as the minimum gift for each area. Five of these have now been funded and are able to receive donations **in any amount** from those who want to be part of securing the future. The final, very important endowment still waiting for a legacy gift is that of Ministry. The interest on these restricted endowments provide a steady stream of income and discretionary funds of up to \$2,000 for other church committees.
- A boulder was installed in the In November 2015 at the northwest corner of our grounds, The Planned Giving Committee of The Unitarian Church in Charleston placed a decorative boulder in the Gilman area adjacent to the Samuel and Caroline Gilman Society plaque. The Samuel and Caroline Gilman Society founded in 2003 recognizes church members whose bequests help insure the vitality of our church community today and into the future.
- The committee has provided monthly newsletter items to keep awareness of the PG programs, thanks to Kay Haun. All documents are available on Google drive to committee members, as well as the Office Administrator (Sandra Selvitelli) and the Minister (Danny Reed). A reception to honor legacy givers is being planned for the next

church year on October 21, 2016 by Myrtle Staples. Ken Fickling is working to provide some template legal documents that can be used by donor and potential donors. Stuart Terry is working on a new program, tentatively to be called “Extend Your Pledge” as a way of asking for decreasing amounts of annual pledge commitments after the death of a congregant, to ease the shock of losing a large donor in the operating budget funds. Steve Wilson has worked on publicity despite serious illness.

*Respectfully Submitted by Stuart Terry*

### **Religious Education**

**Members:** John Massey (Chair), Alex Hild (Adult RE), Audrey Brown (Secretary), Downing Child, Erica Hattings-Brodeur (Vestry liaison), Jee Youn Fickling, Heather Chumley-Jones, Jill Chumley-Jones, Joe Krause (Two-Services liaison), John Hyatt, Kevin Eakes, Kris Rife (Social Justice liaison), Marina Penna-Morrison (Youth liaison), Natalie Davidson (Youth member).

**Purpose/Mission Statement:** *The Religious Education Committee embodies congregational responsibility for the religious education for children and youth by articulating directions and supporting the professional and volunteer staff in realizing the goals of the program.*

#### **Activities and Accomplishments:**

- Over the last year, the work of the Religious Education Committee and the Director of Religious Education has been largely threefold: (1) to seek input from, and assess the needs of, our fellow congregates regarding the religious education mission of our church, (2) to work alongside the Vestry and our Senior Minister to develop a manageable plan for the implementation of a coherent and inclusive religious education program that meets the needs of our church, and (3) to work to provide our religious education staff and volunteers with the resources and support to implement this plan. Within this, of course, has been our work with our fellow church committees to play our part in the church’s larger challenge of managing change and growth.
- Janet Watts has been the driving force in maintaining the standard of excellence that our members (new and old) have come to treasure as a central strength of our church community. The religious education committee has striven to take a stronger role in the development and implementation of our committee’s mandate, and we feel that we’ve

made great strides over the last year that has resulted in an expansion of our religious education program. With inevitable growth on the horizon, we feel we are well positioned to meet the challenge.

- Please go the Director of Religious Education's report for details of the work carried out this year.

*Respectfully Submitted by John Massey, Chair*

## **Service Auction**

## **Social Justice**

**Purpose:** *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 (listed below in alphabetical order) who meet as necessary to achieve their objectives. Other church committees are 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.

## **Advocacy**

### **Purpose:**

### **Activities and Accomplishments:**

- We supported a float for the August 2015 Gay Pride Parade with many UUs in attendance. We also had a float in the Civil Rights Parade, January 1. We are proud to have done this for several years.
- Our largest advocacy effort was the Gun Sense SC Stand Up Sunday on January 31. About 75% of the UUs attending the service stood up to support background checks for all gun purchases. We collected 253 signatures from our congregation to be mailed to each individuals' state senator and congressman. This was part of a statewide effort to raise awareness of our representatives.



- We will be attending the “Hands Around the State House” rally on May 12 in Columbia. Those in attendance will meet with legislators before the rally.

*Respectfully submitted by Diane Narkunas*

### **Charleston Area Justice Ministry (CAJM)**

**Members:** Team Leaders included: Linda Maxwell Allen, Natalie Davidson, Frank Hardie, Suzanne Hardie, Joanna Innes/George Tempel, Joe Krause, Diane Narkunas, Bill Thomas/ Jackie Thomas. In addition to the team leaders, Mike Griffith devoted considerable time and resources to get people to the Nehemiah Action Assembly. Including the team leaders, 116 members committed to being network members.

**Purpose/Mission Statement:** *The Charleston Area Justice Ministry, CAJM, is a growing network of Faith Based Congregations who are culturally, geographically and religiously diverse – coming together to make the Charleston area a more just place to live.*

#### **Activities and Accomplishments:**

- All teams had house meetings, either in homes or at the fall potluck. Only about half of the network members attended the Community Problems Assembly (CPA), which led to concern about participation in the rest of the CAJM activities during the year. At the CPA, those present voted to make the problem of Racial Discrimination the focus for the year. This problem was later narrowed to Police Discrimination in Police Investigatory Stops in Charleston and North Charleston. The problem of the high rate of School-Based Arrests was later added to this year’s agenda by vote at a later meeting.
- A number of our members were very active in the research process leading up to the Nehemiah Action Assembly. In spite of the low turnout of network members at the CPA, which was considered to be predictive of how many would attend the Nehemiah, at this point it looks like we have met our goal of 300, although we have not yet received the official final numbers. Last year UU members were by far the largest financial contributors to CAJM. This year we submitted an estimate of \$14,480 for individual investments, but will not know for some months whether we have achieved that goal. This is in addition to the CAJM dues coming from the church’s budget.
- A number of members are concerned about the process that took place at the Action Assembly, and that feedback is being given to CAJM organizers and leaders. Because we think CAJM is important and want it to be successful, the methodology that is used must be as effective as possible. CAJM has had some successes, but there is a lot more social justice work to be done.

*Respectfully Submitted by Diane Boyer*

### **Coffeehouse Concert Fundraising/Mitchell School Programs**

**Members:** John Narkunas (Chair), Mark Farnham and Bill Morris (Co-Chairs); Mitchell Math and Science Elementary School staff.

**Purpose/Mission Statement:** *The Coffeehouse Concert Program promotes educational equity for children living in poverty in the Charleston Tri-County area. Funds generated through monthly Gage Hall Coffeehouse concerts are used for academic enrichment activities at Mitchell School. The activities include enhanced math and science programs as well as field trips for children in grades Pre K-5.*

#### **Activities and Accomplishments:**

- Coffeehouse concert funds continue to support student enrichment activities at the Mitchell Math and Science Elementary School in Charleston.
  - As of March 30, 2016 the Mitchell School expenditures for enrichment activities for the 2015-16 school year was \$4,882.
  - Net amount in revolving account that will carry over to next year is currently \$4,088. Additional invoices for April-May trips/activities are forthcoming so we have adequate funds to provide support for their activities for the next school year.
  - All 375 students participate in the program in grades Pre K through 5. 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:
    - **Pre-K (Child Development)**  
Isle of Palms: Observed the low country environment in which they live.
    - **Kindergarten**  
Middelton Place: Studied and observed the life cycle of plants.  
Isle of Palms: Observed aquatic life.
    - **First Grade**  
Legare Farms: Focused on plant life and animals.  
Halsey Museum: Observed objects of fine art.
    - **Second Grade**  
Birds of Prey: Focused on the life cycle of birds and animals.  
Cypress Gardens: 54 students were able to attend. Students learned about reptiles and went on a swamp ride in a canoe.
    - **Third Grade**  
Charlestowne Landing: Learned about life in the colonial period of Charleston's history.  
College of Charleston: Worked in the science laboratory and conduct simple experiments.

Bee's Ferry Landfill: Focused on recycling and how it benefits society.  
Isle of Palms: Observed the environment and life cycle of animals.

▪ **Fourth Grade**

College of Charleston: Worked in the science laboratory and conduct experiments.

Old Exchange Building: Learned about life in Charleston during the pre-civil war period.

▪ **Fifth Grade**

Magnolia Plantation: Focused on animal habitat and gather materials for classroom presentations.

Grans Gourmet: Focused on mixtures and solutions.

Patriot's Point: Focused on topography and the Vietnam War.

- 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.

*Respectfully Submitted by John Narkunas, Chair*

### **Community Outreach Giving**

#### **Purpose/Mission Statement:**

#### **Activities and Accomplishments:**

- The fall 2015 Community Outreach Giving Project was the Johns Island Barrier Island Clinic: Diabetes Prevention and Control. This project was nominated by Diane Boyer. From September to December donations were made in red envelopes. On December 13, 2015, Wanda Weart, Nurse Manager for the Johns Island Barrier Island Clinic, accepted our donation for \$4,000. The money will support a part time diabetes educator.
- There were other charitable giving events. The two Christmas Eve Services collected over \$2,500. The donations went to the Children in Crisis Fund, a group that works closely with the Charleston County School District. These children are coping with the most difficult circumstances, such as dealing with being homeless.
- On March 21, a donation was made to One80 Place Homeless Shelter in the amount of \$603.97. These funds were in the previous Crisis Ministries line item that was traditionally used to buy food. One80 Place prefers monetary donations.

*Respectfully Submitted by Diane Narkunas*

### **Community Outreach Volunteering**

**Purpose/Mission Statement:** *Many members and friends of the Unitarian Church in Charleston have indicated that they are volunteering or would like to volunteer in community organizations. This group can help you learn additional information about community volunteer opportunities or help supply additional volunteers where you already serve.*

**Activities and Accomplishments:**

- The primary group project within the community continues to be with Low Country Food Bank. Approximately 20-25 UCC members participate once a month during the school year to prepare bags of weekend nourishment for Elementary school children at risk to be hungry. This program is called Backpack Buddies. We usually pack 2,000-2,500 bags of food. In the last 2 years, new members are made aware of this opportunity to volunteer in the Pathways Classes and it seems to be enjoyed by new church members as a great entry for church participation. The minimum age of participation has been more relaxed and this allows for more families with children 12-ish and above to participate together. I was made aware that some volunteer groups provide funding for the food they are packing. This is definitely not necessary for our continued participation but worth being aware of in case there is a donor desiring this option.
- In Sept. of 2015 we participated in Days of Grace March in recognition of the need for improved racial relation within our community. Our church gave a donation to support this weekend of events and a couple dozen members attended a conference led by Rev. William Barber and others mini-courses in voting rights, need for Medicaid expansion, stronger gun laws, race relations within law enforcement, and public education.
- I served as the Social Justice liaison with the RE committee which had numerous community projects led by Janet Watts to increase the youths awareness of community needs of those oppressed and less fortunate and to instill the importance of lifelong community volunteering.
- There has been increase in the Charleston area community assistance to the homeless with much attention given in the media to up 100 citizens in Tent City near Huger Street although homeless Tent clusters are in many areas of the Tri-County. Our members have kept abreast of options to participate and we are looking for ways in which our church may become involved. The new Charleston City Mayor Tecklenburg has engaged in planning and involving churches in a “Hope for the Homeless” plan.  
Submitted by Kristina Rife 4/27/16

*Respectfully Submitted by Kris Rife*

**Endowment Fund**

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

**Activities and Accomplishments:**

- In September 2014, our first mini grant was awarded to We Are Family.
- We are currently soliciting nominations from congregational members of local non-profit organizations for an award of \$4,000 for 2016.

*Respectfully Submitted by John Narkunas*

**Green Sanctuary**

**Members:** Laura Moses (Chair) Emilie Carey, Erin Demory, Nina Fair, Marcus Giddens, Bill Grayson, Kathy Hale, Casey Huff, Mela Khedouri, Jonathan Lamb, Richard Moss, Sharon Strong.

**Purpose/Mission Statement:** *The Green Sanctuary is a subcommittee of the UU Social Justice Committee. Our 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."*

**Activities and Accomplishments:**

- Met monthly in members' homes.
- Continually worked to reduce the church's environmental footprint.
- Provided expertise to other church committees, especially those involved with capital improvements, to encourage the church to make environmentally sound decisions.
- Continued to work toward a church that is accessible to alternative transportation. For example, we have installed bike racks near Gage Hall.
- Worked with the Religious Education program to promote sustainability awareness and green educational activities.
- Earth Day Service (2008 – present) Our guest speaker this year was Angela Halfacre, director of Furman University's Shi Center for Sustainability.
- Green Forums (2007 – present) Green forums this year included topics such as Natural Investments, the MUSC Community Garden, and the Lowcountry Land Trust.

- Change is Our Choice: Creating Climate Solutions – a five-session Northwest Earth Institute class offered by GS, open to the congregation, and run by Sharon Strong. (4<sup>th</sup> class offered by GS in the NWEI series; 2013-present)
- Recycling of e-waste, printer cartridges, batteries and light bulbs (2007 – present)
- Green Films GS co-sponsored a showing of *Cowspiracy* with Charleston Veggies & Vegans and Satsang Yoga, open to the public, followed by Q&A with local experts.
- Gateway articles (2007- present) Contribute a column to the Gateway in support of environmental education with topics on green topics of interest.
- 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 continue use of composting, recycling and landfill bins in Gage Hall and to give guidance to the congregation for their appropriate use.
- Charleston Green Business Challenge - GS, on behalf of the Church, participated in the Charleston Green Business Challenge, a program for local organizations to promote health, sustainability and energy efficiency. UC-CHS has achieved GBC Palmetto Tier with 42 GBC Points and is working to reach Magnolia Tier.

*Submitted by Laura Moses, Chair*

### **Religious Education**

**Purpose/Mission Statement:** *The Religious Education program strives to involve our children and families in social justice events that benefit the community and the church as a whole.*

- Collections drives through the year:
  - Book Worm Angel’s book drive.
  - Harvest Sunday food collection for the Lowcountry Food Bank.
  - Collection of winter items for the homeless “Mitten Tree” for One80 Place.
  - Annual beginning-of-the-year collection for school supplies for the Women’s shelter, My Sister’s House.
- Worked alongside members of the adult social justice committee:
  - Hosting the Take Back the Night event with People Against Rape.
  - Working monthly at the Lowcountry food bank for Backpack Buddies.
  - Marching in the summer Pride Parade.
  - Marching in the January first Emancipation Proclamation Parade.
- Helped organize a special collection of baby carriers for refugees entering Europe. After collecting the items we worked with the Central Mosque of Charleston to package these carriers and send letters of encouragement to families.

- Built and sold gingerbread houses during the Holidays and painted and sold glass bowls for our Empty Bowls fundraiser and church-wide meal. The proceeds of \$1,194 from both these events went to One80 Place.

### **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 LGBTQI 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 LGBTQI members, LGBT discussion in the curriculum of the *Our Whole Life* (OWL) teen religious education program, a major sponsor of the Alliance For Full Acceptance (AFFA) Annual Dinner, strong support for marriage equality and human rights in South Carolina, and our Charleston Pride Parade involvement -- over 50 Church members marching and riding on a float in the 5th Annual Charleston Gay Pride Parade in August 2015.

*Respectfully Submitted by Richard Hayes*

### **Candlelight Concert Fundraiser (Music Committee)**

**Members:** Claire Law and Sally Newell (Co-Chairs), Amy Ball, Johanna Evenson, Frank Hardie, Joanna Innes, Richard Nelson, Myrtle Staples, and Emelle Wade

**Purpose/Mission Statement:** *The Candlelight Concerts are performed in an effort to raise money for a local cause. This year they have shifted our financial support from James Simons, the school that has benefited from our previous concerts, to Music Battery Charleston, a non-profit helping students at Morningside Middle School academically and musically through their drumline. This group of students performed for us at a worship service in April.*

#### **Activities and Accomplishments:**

- The Music Committee has presented three Candlelight Concerts this year:
  - Duo Cortado in November.
  - Jean Harlow and John Roper in February.
  - The combined choirs of the Unitarian Church in Charleston and Circular Congregational Church in April under the direction of Johanna Evenson and Marilyn Taylor, music directors.
- The Music Battery has received \$4000 for their music program.

#### **Additional Comments:**



- We will have three concerts for next year, two of which are already set: Susan Conant on November 4, and the Men's Choir from St. John's Lutheran next door in April. The performer for the February concert is still to be determined.
- Next year's co-chairs are Claire Law and Emelle Wade.

*Respectfully Submitted by Sally Newell, Co-Chair*

### **Stewardship**

**Members:** Ren Manning (Chair), Tony Isaac (Vice-Chair), Judy Bruce, Stan Goldberg, Michele Insinger and Ellie Setser

**Purpose:** *The Stewardship Committee is to attend to the financial stewardship of the Church and to conduct the annual pledge drive to fund the general operations.*

#### **Activities and Accomplishments:**

- As of April 30, 2016, 267 pledges had been received for an aggregate of \$375,913, an increase of 8% over the 2015-16 pledge drive. Results were adversely affected by the loss of a number of pledges that resulted in the number of pledges this year being flat with the number last year, despite the addition of 34 new pledging units. We also experienced several significant reductions in amount of past pledges. These factors resulted in reductions of about \$25,000 in pledges that were not renewed (vs \$14,000 last year).
- Overcoming these headwinds, however, 40% of renewed pledges were increased over last year (vs. 27% last year), while the percentage of pledges that were decreased declined slightly to about 9% this year. Overall, renewed pledges increased in amount by an average of 5.9% and averaged \$1,510, up from \$1,488 per pledge last year. We received 35 new members' pledges, averaging \$815, up from \$463 last year.
- Factoring in the substantial losses we experienced from lost pledges, the general trends of pledging members far exceed the results from last year by every measure and point to an energized and upbeat congregation.

#### **Additional Comments:**

I would like to thank the members of the Committee and all those who assisted us in calling for pledges! It was a long, hard pull, but we can all be buoyed by the results.

*Respectfully Submitted by Ren Manning, Chair*

### **Worship**

**Members:** Priscilla Shumway and Bernadette Victor (Co-Chairs), Cecil Bennett, Ralph Haller, Richard Hayes, Roy Hiller, Tommy Hughston, Hillary Hutchinson, Hilary Nelson, Jerry Prazak, Sharon Strong, and Tobias Van Buren

**Purpose:** *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.*

**Activities and Accomplishments:**

- Arranged at least one service each month not conducted by the minister.
- A church picnic in June provides a fun social beginning and end to the summer season.
- Summer services were conducted to large audiences.
- Helped in overseeing the smooth running of Church services.
- Helped in organizing the transition from one service to two services, should this happen after reevaluation in November.
- We have made available to the congregation supplies and directions for the use of burning bowl in the church yard.
- We are currently organizing 14 summer services with the starting date of June 19th and ending September 4th.
- We are currently making plans for the June 19th summer picnic.
- We are currently putting together a brochure which will include the topic, date and guest speakers for all summer services.

*Respectfully Submitted by Bernadette Victor*