

UNITARIAN CHURCH IN CHARLESTON  
ANNUAL REPORT  
2019-2020



UNITARIAN CHURCH  
IN CHARLESTON

*Est. 1772*

**The Unitarian Church in Charleston**  
**Church Year 2019-20**  
**Membership: 394**  
**Honorary Members: 5**  
**Friends: 36**

**Vestry:**

Priscilla Shumway, Chair  
 Al Finch, 1st Vice-Chair  
 Mark Madden, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-Chair  
 Mary Ellen Giess, Secretary  
 Zachariah Conover, Treasurer  
 Ren Manning, Assistant Treasurer  
 Jeffrey Fleming  
 Joe Krause  
 Diane Narkunas

**Minister(s):**

Rev. David H. Messner, Interim Minister  
 Rev. Jennifer Ryu, Affiliated Community Minister

**Staff:**

Sandra Selvitelli, Executive Director  
 Susan Conant, Music Director  
 Danielle Lopez, Director of Religious Education  
 Carol Oates, Membership Coordinator  
 Regina Ruopoli, Communications Manager  
 Christine Magnarella Ray, Bookkeeper  
 Joe McCormack, Sexton

**Children's Staff:**

Melissa Zahler, Annex Manager  
 Amanda Gabriel, Preschool  
 Deloris Crawford, Nursery  
 Lauren Insinger and Kennedy Ross,  
 High School Youth Group Leaders

## Vestry

**Chair:** Priscilla Shumway

**1<sup>st</sup> Vice-Chair:** Al Finch

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-Chair:** Mark Madden

**Secretary:** Mary Ellen Giess

**Treasurer:** Zachariah Conover

**Assistant Treasurer:** Ren Manning

**Members:** Jeffrey Fleming, Joe Krause, and Diane Narkunas

**Ex-Officio:** Rev. David H. Messner, Interim Minister and Sandra Selvitelli, Executive Director

### **Purpose/Vision Statement:**

The Vestry is the Board of Directors for the Unitarian Church in Charleston. The Vestry is comprised of nine elected members including the Chair, two Vice-Chairs, a Secretary, and the Treasurer.

### **Activities and Accomplishments:**

As of this writing, our church family is in virtual lockdown! No one could have anticipated this scenario when we began our church year. Despite the Covid-19 virus, our church is alive and working hard to maintain social connections, despite physical distancing. How will we remember these days? I hope we will remember them as a time of great challenges met with love, patience and kindness, to ourselves and to others.

First, I want to say what an honor it has been to serve on your Vestry for the past 2 years. Our team, along with Rev. Dave and our staff has been putting in long hours to uphold our responsibilities as your chosen church leaders. Thank you for your trust in us and thank you to other members of the Vestry, staff and Rev. Dave. As I began writing this summary, I reviewed each monthly Vestry meeting minutes and am amazed at how much we have taken on and how much we still have to do.

We began our church year welcoming our new interim minister, Rev. Dave Messner. Bringing him onboard and helping him to settle into our church family has been a joy and we continue to reap benefits from his ministry. He has much to teach us and we are working on being open to change.

*Vestry Report (cont.)*

We renovated the apartment over the RE Annex and were able to rent it to the folks from Buxton Books, our neighbor down the alley. The increase in rent has helped our budget. The Personnel Committee has completed a living document which is our new Personnel Manual. It was a huge amount of work and sorely needed.

Behind the scenes Sandra, along with our Bookkeeper, Treasurer and the Finance Committee have made changes to our financial systems, allowing us more long-term financial insight and budgeting.

Our Planned Giving Committee was successful in obtaining a matching gift of “Wake Now Our Vision” funds in the amount of \$26,000 to be paid to the church in four equal installments, the first of which was received last month.

A Long-Range Planning Board has been set up to work on a new 5-year Strategic Plan. Over the winter a series of face-to-face visioning sessions were held to gain input from all of you. In addition, benchmarking of other UU churches was done and a review of past documentation began. Another smaller group is crafting new Mission and Vision statements which will be presented to the congregation for comments and input. This will be helpful as we begin the search process for our next settled minister.

That process is being led by Al Finch, the Vice Chair of the Vestry. By now you all will have received nomination forms through Sign Up Genius. The top nominees will be voted on at the congregational meeting in May, with 4 people being elected and an additional 3 being selected by the Vestry to ensure diversity and skills. The search committee will begin a 10 month process to find us the best candidate for our church.

Another major project that we have been working on for over 2 years is a review and revision of our church constitution. Many of the proposed changes are minor edits, typos and word changes. However, there will be some structural changes that reflect how we actually do business now in 2020. The last revision was done in 2014. These changes will be presented to the congregation over the summer and fall and then put to a vote at a fall congregational meeting.

*Vestry Report (cont.)*

Thanks to a generous bequest from Fabian Schupper, our churchyard committee, along with Sandra and a few others, has hired two landscape architects to draw up a master plan for the churchyard. Major clearing of dead trees and non-native plants has begun, and several new projects will be underway in the coming months. This will allow for yearly maintenance, lessen the load on the Eden Keepers, and allow us to host events in the churchyard.

*Respectfully submitted by Priscilla Shumway, Vestry Chair*

## **Interim Minister**

This has been a year rich with excitement and change. I suppose it is what should be expected in a transition ministry, but the coronavirus epidemic and associated distancing is more than we could have expected. My main report to you is that this church has real heart, persistence, and resilience. With those virtues in hand, the future looks bright from where I sit (like you, at home in front of my computer!)

In my first months here, I feel that we made progress in building relationships, stabilizing operations, and focusing on leadership and engagement for health and growth. Having experienced many other Unitarian churches, I can say that the strength and depth of lay leadership here in Charleston is top of class. People are willing to step up and commit to lead and to work, to stay on year-to-year and to let new folks in. In our recent survey for the strategic plan and ministerial search we asked what you thought would attract a new minister to choose Charleston. I want to suggest it is this characteristic which will be at the top of the list right next to staff competence and commitment.

We moved to virtual operations on March 13 in response to coronavirus spread and risk. We acted relatively early and extremely quickly, with good and fast leadership, decision-making and consensus building. I believe these are the strengths of the congregation that are serving us well now and in the transitions to come.

We successfully migrated core programs to virtual space and initiated a number of new offerings suited to that context. We launched our virtual service on 3/15/2020 and have had significant and sustained attendance. We have promoted a clear program grid each week which gives everyone chances to be involved beyond Sunday worship. These include adult small groups and religious education events, several groups for children and

*Minister Report (cont.)*

youth divided by age, lunch and one-on-one slots with the minister every week, the parenting circle, the music sharing circle, virtual coffeehouse concerts, and more. We have lots of programmatic activity with participation across the board, thanks especially to the work of the staff and volunteer teams working together and willing to go the extra mile.

Personal connection among us is at a high level. Calls, small groups, and web contacts from the pastoral side to the social side to the technological side are happening daily. Appreciation here to many people -- Vestry leaders, Staff, the Caring Committee, and so many individuals. We actually have people coming back to church and discovering it for the first time while we are out of the building. This has exceeded my expectations and makes me excited for the way we are actually gathering up and building strength in this time of public health challenge. Who thought so many of us could so quickly learn so much about Zoom?! Less surprising, but doubly heartening is how eager people are to find ways to help each other. One example is that every time I announce that we have a special fund to help those in crisis, I get one request for help and two checks wrapped in messages of kindness. We are simply that kind of congregation. I feel blessed to be with you at this time and look forward to all we have in the year ahead, as we wrap our strategic plan together and ready all of the ministries for the next chapter in the great story of this church.

*Respectfully Submitted by Reverend David H. Messner, Interim Minister*

## **Treasurer**

It has been my pleasure to serve as your Treasurer for the past two years. I am happy to report that due to the hard work of the Staff and Vestry, supported by the Congregation, I am turning my responsibilities over with our Church in a stable financial position.

### **Budgeting:**

We truly are living in “interesting times” and within these times uncertainty abounds. Your Vestry, Minister and Staff have taken a conservative, but values based, approach to developing a budget and operating plan for the coming year.

*Treasurer Report (cont.)*

In response to the uncertainty that we face in the COVID response, we have taken the following actions while building the budget:

- Our funding levels were adjusted downward for line items that we felt could be impacted due to social distancing such as Churchyard Tours, Service Auction and Facility Rentals.
- The EIB funds that are generally put toward a non-operating initiative were used to ensure full funding of the reserve accounts.
- We pulled back on UUA Dues in order to fully fund Social Justice initiatives believing that supporting our local community during the challenging time is of the utmost importance.

On the nuts and bolts side, we continued our efforts this year to document our budgeting process and financial forecasts and models to ensure continuity through personnel transitions. To that end we have built or refined financial models for:

- IT Expenditures (Hardware and Software)
- Carry Forward Calculator
- Emergency Reserve
- Operating Reserve

Other notable actions include:

- Insourcing our bookkeeping and transitioning to QuickBooks.
- Collapsing applicable accounts to simplify the budget moving forward.
- Transitioning documentation to cloud based shared documents to ensure visibility to all parties.

**Financial Stability:**

As I transition out of the role as Treasurer, I feel confident that our Church is in a stable financial position and has the organizational infrastructure and foundation to face future challenges. From the pure money side, our pledge payments have continued strong, our pledge drive was tremendously successful, our reserve accounts are being funded on track and our EIB funds are being wisely managed. But more important than the money, our Church family has remained committed throughout three years of organizational and operational flux that is being capped off with the COVID response.

*Treasurer Report (cont.)*

Our demonstrated strength and commitment to each other and the Church is what gives me confidence that our Church will continue to thrive in the coming years.

*Respectfully Submitted by Zachariah Conover, Treasurer/Vestry*

## **Executive Director**

I write my annual report to you from my home office which was thrown together very quickly in March and has given a part of my house a new life. I don't think I had spent more than an hour in this room before the pandemic. This room is like many other aspects of my life that I see differently now. The grand oak in the backyard that scared me during hurricanes has brought immense calm to my soul, zoom calls that used to fluster me now brings me to a place where I can see and talk to you all, small things that once seemed so very important now seem trivial.

What rises to the top of concerns and care really are what matters in this world. Friends, family and our church community. We are blessed people that we found one another. There are so many lovely stories of how we got to Charleston, decidedly found or stumbled upon the church, what brought us together and what keeps us together. I am more grateful for that connection now than I have ever been.

We started the 2019-2020 church year with a strong Vestry. There is a diversity of gender, age, background and opinion that has allowed for very fruitful discussions and decisions over the year. Priscilla Shumway was doing a fabulous job before the pandemic, and her ability to pivot into a virtual world has been commendable to say the least. With Al Finch as Vice-Chair, Zach Conover as Treasurer and Ren Manning as Assistant Treasurer we have a decidedly strong executive team. I am also very grateful for the work Mark Madden has done in examining the Constitution and organizing any change efforts. Every member of the Vestry is really very impressive in their own right and I thoroughly enjoy my time spent with them.

In August we welcomed our Interim Minister, Rev. David Messner. Rev. Dave came right in and got to work. We had our first ever staff retreat which gave us all an opportunity to get to know one another. Right away, I will say Dave's energy was contagious!



*Executive Director Report (cont.)*

Fast forward to moving to virtual church, and I honest-to-goodness am so grateful for Rev. Dave's leadership during this time. He is doing a great job leading Sunday services and our congregation through an incredibly difficult time – not just in our church or community but globally.

I worked closely with the Stewardship Committee and cannot celebrate our efforts enough. Getting 98% of the pledge ask fulfilled with an 11% increase over last year is a huge win. Like epic huge! Members, you all should pat yourselves on your back and do a little happy dance, stadium wave, or at least break into a big smile! We had 2020 visions and, trust me, stay at home orders and virtual church were not among them, but look how we have come together to make it work. To me that is our 2020 Vision - we came together to make it work. We are making our church thrive! Week after week, year after year. Thank you to the Stewardship Committee and to all of you who pledged. We quite literally could not do it without you!

We recently wrapped up the church budget. As you will see, we are ending the church year in good shape. Of course, certain income items will be off due to the pandemic but others remain as strong as ever – primarily due to you and your continued pledge payments. There are uncertainties for next year in all of our lives including church budget life, but I believe that this church community will again come together and not just make it work but make it thrive! Many thanks to Zach Conover for his tenure as Treasurer. He has brought his expertise and knowledge to allow for both the process and the result to be transparent. I am grateful for his insight.

I am also very happy to say that we have hired an in house Bookkeeper, Christine Magnarella Ray. Christine has done the books for other UU churches and organizations, and the stars aligned for us when our former Bookkeeper gave notice and Christine had an opening in her time. The Finance Committee and I have been working towards an internal and eventual external audit for a while now. What we discovered are some anomalies with our database functionality and the reports that it produces. We agreed that moving financial records from PowerChurch to Quickbooks would give us the reliability and functionality that we need. Christine hit the ground running and has converted all of those records. Throw in a pandemic and moving all accounts to an online paying platform, reconciling books in PowerChurch and Quickbooks, moving towards taking over payroll, reviewing the budget and many other items and you will see that she is doing an amazing job!

*Executive Director Report (cont.)*

Regina Ruopoli continues to do a wonderful job of organizing our communications. As with the rest of us, she pivoted quickly to new focuses. Where time had been spent on producing an Order of Service, she now spends creating ways to continue getting people the information they need to stay connected. From the website, to Facebook, Instagram and our e-blasts, she is doing a great job of keeping ever-evolving and changing information organized, up-to-date and communicated.

Our much-loved Sexton, Joe McCormack has retired. His last day with us was May 2. Joe has been at the church for 7 years and many long term members will often tell me he is the best Sexton we have ever had! His affability and dedication to the people of the church will be greatly missed. I thoroughly enjoyed working with him and will miss that part of my daily work life very much. Joe says not to worry though! As soon as the pandemic is over he is driving right down to Archdale to make sure we hire a good replacement and that they get trained on items that Joe knows best!

As we move into the 2020-2021 church year we will finish the Lime Wash, do the work towards finding a Settled Minister, stay connected virtually and eventually in person again, come up with new initiatives, perhaps change some old ones, think of clever ways to engage kids, raise money, find new music to share... We will do all of this and more together. It may be that for now my new ideas come to me as I look at my grand oak rather than listen to the children at the Charleston Day School play on their playground across the street from our offices, or that your new ideas come from your favorite chair or on a long walk. But they will come and we will make it work. We will make it thrive. Together.

*Respectfully Submitted by Sandra Selvitelli, Executive Director*

## **Music Director**

2019-2020 was a year of successes and challenges for the music team at the Unitarian Church in Charleston.

Our church nurtures a bountiful, enthusiastic and talented group of staff, members and guest musicians and sound technicians. This music team is eager to share their gifts with the congregation. Working with them continues to be a joyful and rewarding task.

*Music Director Report (cont.)*

Early in fall, this hard working group coalesced in a great way. They proved themselves ready and able to adapt to requests for a wide range of musical genres, styles and formats. They sailed through the demands of November and December's music-heavy calendar (Interfaith Thanksgiving, Transgender Memorial, Cantata, Pageant, Christmas Eve etc.). By January, we were really cooking along with a continuing high level of choir participation. They sounded great and were working hard on challenging repertoire. And our large group of talented members/friends regularly added their special touch soloists, instrumentalists and in small groups.

Also in the fall, we were fortunate to recruit two new talented accompanists. Bill Gesin, with deep choral and chamber music accompaniment experience, provides around beautiful playing and solid support for our choir and soloists. Alex Collier, organ specialist and composer, is able to join us about once every two months. Alex has proven to be a talented player who is able to move easily between many genres and is also great with the choir. Richard White, Jr continues to dazzle us with just-right piano interpretations, leadership during contemporary music sessions and an all-around great vibe.

This year we were able to host a number of special guest musicians including Alva Anderson, Rebecca Darling, David Hunt, Andrew Emmet, Gregory Guay, Star Acheson, Jake Holwegner, Brett Johnson, Paul Moore and Karin McQuade.

Our choir remains strong and enthusiastic with an average of 15-20 members. The One-Week Choir has been popular with a few additional singers that love to sing but have limited time. We held the amazing Pageant Band again this year. Our Cantata included over 25 participants. The teens provided great music for a service this fall. Regina Ruopoli led a fun drum circle in the churchyard. We started January off right with Jazz Sunday and staged a fun musical extravaganza for Stewardship Sunday.

Our group of two consultants and one volunteer sound technician continues to work behind the scenes to keep us sounding our best and maintaining a trouble-free setup. Our musicians now perform worry-free even when a more complex set-up is required. It is not a minor thing to say that we experienced NO significant issues with the system this year. In other roles as Music Director, I supported the Music Committee in their mission to produce two Candlelight Concerts – the Phantasmagorical Extravaganza in fall and Winter Winds in February. Our third concert, Latin Night, has been postponed due to Covid-19.

*Music Director Report (cont.)*

Music-making together during the Covid-19 crisis has been difficult at best. A combination of technical issues including reduced internet speeds, Zoom's sound processing algorithms and internet latency has caused us to limit the musical offerings during virtual services. With the help of our intrepid member musicians and guests, we continue to learn what works and doesn't work. Another consideration during online broadcasts is managing copyright permissions for the musical content.

The Music Sharing Circle on Wednesday evening has been a welcome session of fellowship, technological experimentation and music making. We are experimenting with a new initiative focusing on providing social media content during the week. This started with Richard White Jr's session on jazz improvisation and self-discovery.

The virtual meeting setting continues to be fluid. It is difficult to predict how things will play out in the coming months. I will continue to respond as best I can and look forward to resuming a regular schedule in late August.

*Respectfully Submitted by Susan Conant, Music Director*

## **Director of Religious Education**

I am deeply grateful to serve as your Director of Religious Education. This has been a wonderful year of professional and spiritual growth. I am in awe of the support I receive from Reverend David Messner, our church staff team, our lay leaders, and the members of the Unitarian Church in Charleston. I am excited about the work we are doing together. In the summer of 2019, I worked hard to update and revamp the classroom spaces in Gage Hall, as well as the preschool and nursery space in the Annex. The hot summer days were spent painting walls and moving every piece of furniture until the spaces flowed. Thank goodness for Sandra Selvitelli who helped to move furniture and then stand with me while we debated if the layout worked. And I am so thankful for Priscilla Shumway who happily helped paint and even taught me a few painting tricks! In the end, I felt proud of the work we had done, and excited to show off the spaces at the start of the church year.

*Director of Religious Education Report (cont.)*

The summer wasn't all painting and remodeling. In early July, I had the wonderful opportunity to attend the Religious Educators week at the Mountain Retreat Center in Highlands, North Carolina. It was a week filled with educational and networking opportunities. I met many wonderful Religious Education leaders from all over the Southeast. I also completed my first Renaissance Module that will be added to my Credentialing folder as I continue on the journey to become a Credentialed Religious Educator. It was also a deeply spiritual week and one that I believe set me up for success at the start of the church year.

And what a church year it has been! Let me highlight three exciting changes that will continue to grow our Religious Education program beginning in childhood and continuing through adulthood, creating a true Lifespan Religious Education.

**New RE Curriculum**

This year we offered two new Unitarian Universalist curriculums to better meet the needs and interests of our children and families. The 3rd-5th grade class used the wildly popular curriculum called "Harry Potter and UU." This curriculum uses the Harry Potter books to encourage social action from all ages. Children were excited to meet and talk about their favorite parts from the book series and I am grateful the volunteer teachers were equally as excited.

Middle school youth learned about world religions using a mix of the classic curriculum, Neighboring Faiths, and a newer version known as Crossing Paths. The two curricula worked together to teach factual information and spiritual elements to provide a more diverse learning experience. With the help of passionate volunteer teachers, this small but engaged group of learners walked away with new knowledge of world religions.

**Re-envisioning High School Youth Group**

This year our High School Youth Group was led by Lauren Insigner and Kennedy Ross. Teens were engaged and excited to come together on Sunday mornings for a time of acceptance and growth. As a congregation we have done a wonderful job of showing support, respect, and acceptance of our youth. However, it is clear that we can do more for the teens in our congregation. As they bridge from teens to young adults, they need a place in our congregation. With the support of Reverend David Messner, we will revise the structure of the High School Youth Group. We will invite them into our worship services and encourage them to be active participants, much in the same way we encourage our new members.

*Director of Religious Education Report (cont.)*

In our faith, we know the importance of finding “your job” in a church and we want our youth to feel the same empowerment and ownership of our church.

In addition to participating in Sunday morning worship, the group will continue to meet on Sunday afternoons. During this time, they will continue nourishing their spirituality through worship, ritual, small group ministry and other practices to enrich their journey to become Unitarian Universalists. The goal of this program is to support, inspire and transform our congregation.

**Expanding Adult Religious Education**

As a newer Director of Religious Education, I inherited some thriving Adult RE programs including Meditation, led by Gary Smith, and Sunday Forum, led by Simon Lewis. Upon further inspection by Reverend David Messner and myself, it became clear that our congregation had the opportunity to offer more Adult RE programs. In the fall, two offerings were introduced. Reverend David led a monthly Minister’s Seminar which explored themes around religious identity, money, and covenant circle practices. Members, Stuart Terry and Richard Hayes, led a monthly discussion group on Religious Naturalism using different resources as topics. Both offerings were a hit among our members and friends.

In addition to offering new programs, I began the journey of taking over existing Connecting Circles and being in charge of forming new circles. By collaborating with Carol Oates, our Membership Coordinator, we communicated with members of the congregation of this new change. I am so thankful for the work and dedication of Carol Oates and I am honored to carry on her hard work of developing and overseeing the Connecting Circles.

**Closing Note**

I am confident in my work over the past year and excited for the opportunities to further grow and develop the Lifespan Religious Education Program at the Unitarian Church in Charleston. I am pleased to be a part of a strong staff team under the leadership of our Interim Minister, Reverend David Messner. I am grateful for the support of this thriving congregation.

*Respectfully Submitted by Danielle Lopez, Director of Religious Education*

## Membership Coordinator

In this, my seventh year as Membership Coordinator, I have enjoyed working with people all along their journey from visitor to committed church member. It has been another year of extraordinary change for our congregation and I appreciate the evolving nature of our processes and culture in response to these changes.

A big change in Membership this year has been the piloting of a new structure that has dispensed with the Membership Committee as a unit and divides it into Membership Ministry Teams, with the Membership Coordinator providing support and oversight. The Teams included Dinners for Fun (Nina Fair and Claudia Updike), Kitchen Hospitality (Susan White), New to UU Charleston, Pathways, Stewards (Suzanne Hardie), Ushers and Greeters (George Castano and Kathleen Mulroy) and the Welcome Table (Karen Ruef). In January I facilitated a workshop and potluck lunch for the Team Leaders to support the camaraderie that had been such a part of the previous committee structure.

New to UU Charleston, an introductory session for newcomers, had eight scheduled sessions this church year. As of this writing, six of those sessions have occurred with 49 participants. These sessions give me the opportunity to hear the stories of what has brought people to our door and to guide them toward the feeling of belonging in this community.

Pathways is our class for those interested in learning more about what it means to be a member of our Church. This year's calendar includes four classes (fall, winter, spring and summer). As of this writing, three of those classes have occurred, with 42 participating and 42 joining (up 12 from last year). Two important changes were implemented this year. First, I recruited Hillary Hutchinson to facilitate the fall and Spring Classes, each two-session classes. The intent was to encourage lay leadership and to focus my responsibility and time on reaching out to each participant to help facilitate their decision to become a member and to help them to find their place in our congregation. Due to the pandemic, the second session of the Spring Class was facilitated via Zoom. The Mentors for the fall and spring classes were Anne Lewis, Mark Madden, Aliix Plaxco and Nancy Simpson. The second change was to offer Pathways as a one-session class. Rev. Dave and I led this without Mentors. The purpose was to offer a session for those who might find it challenging to attend two Sundays in a row, thereby potentially increasing the number of participants who may complete the class. The fourth class will be a one-day session in June, facilitated by Rev. Dave. Both the one-day and two-day formats have merit and I would encourage both to be continued.

*Membership Coordinator Report (cont.)*

Many thanks to Caitlin French, Katie Mullis, Karen Ruef and Susan White for providing the lunch for the Pathways Classes.

Our Ushers and Greeters continue to lead us in our welcoming ministry each week. Many newcomers let me know that they found our congregation to be warm, friendly and welcoming. And I know this starts at the Sanctuary door. Thanks to George Castano and Kathleen Mulroy for scheduling the Ushers and Greeters and to Karen Ruef for scheduling the Welcome Table. Many of you not officially on either of these teams have also done an amazing job of extending that welcome into Gage Hall, after the service. Thank you for helping to create a welcoming atmosphere to those who come seeking a new community of faith.

Another change this year has been the addition of the Kitchen Hospitality Team, led by Susan White. Susan is a natural in the kitchen and has worked beautifully with Joe McCormack to make each coffee hour special and welcoming with a variety of treats. Many thanks to Susan and all who bring refreshments and lend a hand with clean-up.

As has been announced earlier, I have resigned my position of Membership Coordinator, effective May 3, 2020. I will always be grateful for the opportunity I was given to be our Church's first membership professional. And I have been grateful every day of the past seven years for the support I have received not only from my supervisors and fellow staff members, but from so many of you. I am pleased with the progress that has been made. I have taken this position as far as I can and now it is time for someone else to take on this work. I am looking forward to a little more space in my life for other pursuits with my husband, Richard Moss. We will both continue active membership in this congregation.

*Respectfully Submitted by Carol Oates, Membership Coordinator*

## **Communications Manager**

As the Communications Manager I help create clear and compelling printed publications and digital content to share relevant and timely information with members and the community.

August will mark two years in this position. I feel fortunate to be utilizing my time and talents in service to the Church and to the greater purposes of our principles.



*Communications Manager Report (cont.)*

I truly enjoy working with this talented and dedicated staff, and have watched us further coalesce as a team under the new ministerial leadership of Rev. David Messner.

I worked collaboratively with our terrific Executive Director, Sandra Selvitelli, to accomplish our communications goals.

I produced the weekly Orders of Service/Bulletin for Sunday services, coordinating with all parties for each element including the service outline, special announcements, calendar listings and other pertinent information. I also produced many of the inserts, handouts and brochures, which highlight key special events and happenings.

I produced the monthly e-newsletter, *The Gateway*, published at the beginning of each week, and emailed it to members via Mail Chimp as well as posted copies to our website and social media accounts for perpetuity. Sandra and I refreshed the design of this e-Newsletter early in the church year, giving it an updated, easy-to-read look.

In addition, I sent regular Tuesday Updates to our e-mail marketing list, highlighting a special upcoming event or our general calendar for the week, as well as other e-mail campaigns as warranted. The work of being a compositor, editor, writer and graphic designer is gratifying. It is rewarding knowing our publications are helpful to Church members by providing them an easy “go to” for all the latest news and events.

This year, I began working more actively with social media, including Facebook and Instagram, providing engaging content for our members and the general public, as well as helping to create our events on Facebook platform. I also created and implemented an advertising plan for social media, which just began in April, but has already proven to be an effective tool for outreach and in reach. I look forward to further making the most of social media channels for more effective communications and public relations.

I regularly updated the Calendar of Events on our website with all of our upcoming services, forums, special events, as well as other edits as needed. I assisted with Sign-Up Genius as needed, attended weekly staff meetings and production meetings as needed.

I continued to work collaboratively with Sandra Selvitelli to refine our Church brand, carrying a consistent and cohesive look and tone through for all platforms and publications. We created a new temporary logo utilizing available UUA graphics, and continue to define and refine our style guidelines.

*Communications Manager Report (cont.)*

In mid-March, the Covid-19/coronavirus pandemic came into play for our Church. In-person services were temporarily suspended, therefore all of our events and communications efforts pivoted to 100% digital and online content. I worked closely with our staff team to help make adjustments and edits, and assisted in planning, production, troubleshooting and assembling a tech help team/process. I felt proud to be a part of a team that moved swiftly and strategically to make those sudden shifts so effectively.

It has been a productive and dynamic year, and I feel I'm hitting my stride. I appreciate all the support, patience, assistance and good humor I have so generously received from my fellow staff members and the committees, teams and church members with which I have worked. I look forward to continuing and further developing a solid and comprehensive communications program for our Church going forward.

*Respectfully submitted by Regina Ruopoli, Communications Manager*

## **Committee Reports**

### **Archives**

**Co-chairs:** Susan Robinson and Randi Hoffman

**Members:** Gail Schiffer, Kate Timbers, Nancy Waters (emerita) and Rose-Marie Williams

**Purpose/Vision Statement:**

The Archives Committee preserves the history of the Church and educates the Congregation and community about its heritage. We foster the institutional memory of the Unitarian Church in Charleston, collect and maintain documents and objects entrusted to our care. We assist those who wish to access files and materials for historical research.

**Activities and Accomplishments:**

The Archives Committee met on Wednesdays. Our main focus was to gather, file, and preserve church documents, many of which are stored permanently with the South Carolina Historical Society at Addlestone Library on the campus of the College of Charleston. The balance of our files are kept in archival safe containers in cabinets in Gage Hall, Room 4. In addition, we answered queries, did research on church history, and prepared educational exhibits.

Our primary project this year has been transferring documents from before the year 2000 to the South Carolina Historical Society. In addition, Gail Schiffer has been surveying documents currently on file in the church office, updating maintained materials according to guidelines outlined in the Document Retention Policy.

**Goals/Action Plan for Next Year:**

Continue to identify and preserve relevant photos and documents. Restart oral history project. Prepare and transfer historical collection to year 2000 to The SC Historical Society for safe-keeping and future digitization.

## **Alliance**

**President:** Susan Garrison

**Past President:** Susan Hartry

**Vice President:** Susan Robinson

**Treasurer:** Diane Boyer

**Secretary:** Barbara Kelly

33 Members

### **Purpose/Vision Statement:**

The Alliance of the Unitarian Church in Charleston is an organization of friends who value each other and who enjoy working for the good of the church since 1831.

### **Activities and Accomplishments:**

The very first bazaar was held May 17, 1832. As times change so does the bazaar and this year was some major changing. This year it took on more of a festival feeling to celebrate Valentine's Day season. We moved it to Sunday with a brunch after church because with the traffic and parking situation, church members prefer to not come into the city on Saturday as in the past. We wanted to do something to cater to Unitarians while keeping the best parts of the bazaar, which is fellowship while we eat with friends. We sold gift baskets and baked goods along with the sit down brunch. It was successful! We also gave \$3,000 to the church's general fund. In the past here is just a short list of our contributions:

- Installation of powder room
- Remodel kitchen
- Acoustical panels for Gage Hall
- Desk for administration head

We are still the most active group in the church, sponsoring events and always available to manage and provide for the special occasions that require volunteers, materials, and money. We are still known as the movers and shakers.

### **Goals/Action Plan for Next Year:**

The Alliance is a serving and learning organization etched with Unitarians of the past, the present, and the future. Our presence continues to make a difference to our Church.

## **Auction Committee**

**Co-chairs:** Susan Garrison

**Data Expert:** Terry Walsh

**Members:** Fran Ennis, Prudence Finn, Lisa Hajjar, Abby Himmelein, Barbara Kelly, Judy Manning, Ren Manning, David Ruef, Karen Ruef, Gail Schiffer, Ellie Setser, Claudia Updike, Ron Updike, and Bill Walsh.

### **Purpose/Vision Statement:**

The Auction Committee strives to make as much money as we can on our two auctions, which are the first Sunday in November (silent) and the following Saturday night (live). The auction raises money for the Church's general fund. We look for ways to improve our advertisement, donations and our actual auctions for maximum returns on our hard work.

### **Activities and Accomplishments:**

Our theme for 2019 was inspired by Nat King Cole's 100th birthday and as a title for the Service Auction we used his song "A Little Street Where Old Friends Meet." It was a perfect title to describe our wonderful church on little Archdale Street. We kept the "sneak peek" from last year to the silent auction and added live entertainment to our live auction. Students from both School of the Arts and College of Charleston provided the musical entertainment arranged by Karen Ruef. We had to add tables at the last minutes to accommodate the large turnout. Our auctioneer, Justin Pye, kept the pace fast and bids often and high. We raised approximately \$40,000 during this year's auctions. The committee members did an amazing job this year!

### **Goals/Action Plan for Next Year:**

To conduct two very successful auctions and to have fun and enjoy fellowship with each other. Look at ways to add online bidding. Seek additional committee members who are tech savvy or have a creative spark.

## **Buildings and Grounds**

**Chair:** Judy Manning

**Active Members:** Barbara Goldberg, Erica Hattings, Alan Moore, Richard Moss, Ron Updike

**Advisor:** Joe McCormack, Sexton

**Ex-Officio:** Sandra Selvitelli, Executive Director

### **Purpose/Vision Statement:**

The Buildings and Grounds Committee knows that the Sanctuary is not just a landmark, a beautiful old building, but a spirit-filled space that beckons us in where we find peace, history, inspiration, relationship. The entire campus functions as a beacon for free religious thought and social justice action for members and seekers and it is the mission of the Buildings and Grounds Committee to maintain the health and integrity of the structures on this campus.

Buildings and Grounds envisions using best practices to stabilize and fortify our buildings and hardscape for the future with advice from our Church architect, Glenn Keyes, and the experts he recommends to us. We espouse the 2017 stewardship theme, “200 years, just the beginning.”

### **Activities and Accomplishments:**

Again this year we have endeavored to keep up with maintenance and repairs that normally are needed in church buildings of this age. Thanks to Richard Moss and Ron Updike, we have a new and stabilized handrail for the side entrance of the Annex and bright yellow stripes on the Gage Hall back outside stairs. Alan Moore has enclosed all outside electrical wires in conduit assuring continuous lighting in the parking lot and along the brick wall across from the annex.

And at the moment we are keeping a daily eye on the huge lime wash project that, even though affected by the coronavirus worries, is staying relatively on schedule.

## **Caring Committee**

**Chair:** Marcia Castaño

**Area Leaders:**

Marcia Castaño and Barbara Johnson - James Island, Folly Beach, Johns Island

Karen Abrams and Mary Ann Hughston - Downtown

Judy Bruce - Mt Pleasant, Daniel Island

Mela Khedouri and Ellie Setser - West Ashley

Aliix Plaxco - Summerville, North Charleston

**Purpose/Vision Statement:**

The Caring Committee supports Church members and friends discreetly as they experience illness, injury, momentous and memorable events, stages and transitions in their lives.

**Structure:**

- Information regarding needs is received from the ministers, the church office, UU members & friends and Caring Committee volunteers by passing the information along to the Committee Chair or any area leader.
- The Committee Chair or any area leader advises other area leaders by email when a need arises.
- Area leaders maintain a list of their area volunteers and notify them by email or calls when a need is established in their area.
- The area leaders coordinate the help given. With the permission of the “Caree” information is passed along to the church office and included in the Gateway Newsletter.

**Activities and Accomplishments:**

The Caring Committee has provided support with meals, transportation, cards, visits, telephone calls and, pet care, and coordinates Church-wide cards most Sundays.

**Goals/Action Plan for Next Year:**

The Caring Committee plans to enlist the help of more volunteers and establish co-leaders for all areas.

*Caring Committee Report (cont.)*

**Caring Committee Subcommittee: Pastoral Care Committee**

(Established October 2017 by former Assistant Minister Nancy Pellegrini)

**Chair:** No active chair at this time, and the committee is in transition.

**Committee Coordinator:** N/A

**Pastoral Care Visitors:** N/A

**Members:** Linda Maxwell Allen, Barbara Kelly, John Kelley, and Jan Stanton

**Purpose/Vision Statement:**

The Pastoral Care Committee is a ministry of presence and support with regular monthly visits to those who cannot attend Church or are chronically or seriously ill.

**Activities and Accomplishments:**

The Pastoral Care Committee was established in October of 2017 and determined characteristics to look for in a Pastoral Care Visitor, selected and trained lay members to act as volunteer visitors.

**Goals/Action Plan for Next Year:**

The committee will renew its structure and the Pastoral Care Visitors and Recipients List.

**Churchyard Committee**

**Chair:** Bob Jontos

**Co-chair:** Stan Boyer

**Recording Secretary:** Sarah Cothran

**E-mail Correspondence Coordinator:** Laura Moses

**Members:** Lancey Clough, Karen DelPorto, Krystina Deren, Tom Hartry, Stan Hunton, Pat Jontos, Scott Morgan, Sally Preston and Sarah Redmond

**Purpose/Vision Statement:**

The Churchyard Committee works to restore the Churchyard to a condition where the committee can effectively manage the gravesites, tombstones and plantings; to showcase the beauty and variety of seasonal plantings and the historical significance of the space.



*Churchyard Committee Report (cont.)*

**Activities and Accomplishments:**

- **Tombstones:** One crypt remains to be repaired.
- **Churchyard Management Plan:** The Churchyard committee continues to work with the Churchyard Management committee and our Landscape Architects to develop conceptual management plans for the churchyard including procedures, policies and administration.
- **Annex Gate:** A new iron gate stop was installed to replace the temporary gate stop.
- **Storage Shed:** The small tool shed is currently being reconstructed.
- **Churchyard Cleanup:** The services of an outside landscaper were retained to periodically assist with the removal of trees, invasive and aggressive plants and maintenance issues beyond the capacity of the churchyard committee. The second major cleanup of the churchyard was accomplished this March by Planet Green Landscaping under the supervision of our Landscape Architects and Bob Jontos, Chair of the Churchyard committee. This project was funded by the annual budget allotment.

**Goals/Action Plan for Next Year:**

- Completion of the Churchyard Management Plan and eventual adoption of the plan by the Churchyard Committee and the membership.
- Encourage greater participation from the membership, both young and more mature, to assist with Churchyard maintenance and management.
- Continue with the development of the Churchyard management plan and photo index of “What’s Blooming in the Garden.”

## **Docent Committee**

**Chair:** Abby Himmelein

**Co-chair:** Randi Hoffman

**Scheduling Coordinator:** Susan Robinson

**Steering Committee:** Abby Himmelein, Randi Hoffman and Erica Hattings

**Media Consultant:** John Preston

**Docent Educator:** Paul Garbarini

**Building & Grounds Representative:** Erica Hattings

**Members:** Linda Maxwell Allen, Diane Boyer, Stan Boyer, Caitlin French, Erica Hattings, Kay Haun, Marilyn Henderson, Abby Himmelein, Randi Hoffman, Mary Ann Hughston, Hillary Hutchinson, Marcus Giddens, Alan Moore, Ginny Morgan, Katie Mullis, Kathleen Mulroy, John Newell, Sally Newell, Gary Nichols, Aliix Plaxco, John Preston, Maureen Porter, Susan Robinson, Karen Ruef, Gail Schiffer, Darragh Simon, Mark Teseniar, Bill Thomas, Lisa Tryssesoone, Jan Treyssoone, Timmy Van Parys and Floy Work

### **Steering Committee Purpose/Vision Statement:**

The purpose of the Steering Committee is to investigate ways to increase visitors and donations to the Sanctuary.

### **Purpose/Vision Statement:**

The Docent Committee works to share the history and beauty of our Church with visitors, members of the Church, and the Charleston community.

### **Activities and Accomplishments:**

Since 2015 we have dramatically increased visitor attendance from 2,385 in 2014 to 10,040 in 2017. For the past two years, due to closings and a weak Spoleto, our visitors dropped to 8,116 in 2019. Our participation in the Charleston community Spiritual Brunch brought 426 Charleston residents over a three hour period on Earth Day to tour our church. That is up from the previous year with 327 visitors. We had six Docents available for tours.

John Preston, Randi Hoffman, and Abby Himmelein revised the Docent Handbook. Randi Hoffman created a 250 page addendum of background information and historical documentation as support for the Docent Handbook.

*Docent Committee Report (cont.)*

2017 Donations were \$4,212.88

2018 Donations were \$3,889.01

2019 Donations were \$4,324.26

**Goals/Action Plan for Next Year:**

- Revision and update of the UUC Wikipedia page. (John Preston)
- Create a Virtual Tour of the Churchyard and Sanctuary. (Sally Newell)
- Participate in the Spirited Brunch on Earth Day 2020.
- Increase number of Docents to extend Saturday tour hours.

## **Endowment Investment Board**

**Members:** William Finn (2017-2020) Chair, Richard Hayes (2017-2020) Adjutant, Karen Abrams (2016-2019), Steve Wilson (2018-2021), Ellie Setser (2018-2021)

**Ex Officio:** Zach Conover, Treasurer/Vestry

**Consultant:** Terry Walsh (Statistics Analyst for the Board) and John Warren (Baird)

**Purpose/Vision 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 a majority of those voting at an officially called meeting of the congregation: Portions of the Endowment Fund can be committed as security for loans, and in extreme conditions threatening the survival of the congregation. 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.

*EIB Committee Report (cont.)***Activities and Accomplishments:**

- The EIB meets on a quarterly basis, and is tasked with overseeing the investment of the endowment funds using a formula that calculates the protected (inflation adjusted) principal so that the endowment funds will be maintained for generations to come.
  
- During 2019 the Endowment funds experienced an investment gain of 21.15%, ending the calendar year with a balance of \$1,127,606. The gain and performance were consistent with the general gains in the stock markets but was consistent with our benchmarks.
  
- The Endowment board followed its policy and made 3% distributions to the Vestry of \$24,345; the Social Justice Committee of \$4,588; Church Yard Committee of \$2,969; and Music Committee of \$1,927. These funds are to be used for necessary projects deemed critical by the Vestry and Committee, but not for normal yearly operating funds.
  
- The Endowment Board has worked with Baird (consultants) to utilize a standard investment software analysis tool that reviews our investments with industry standards. This has made it possible to have the best possible investments for the Church in accordance with EIB policies. In addition, the EIB has moved 23% of its investment to “socially responsible” funds, or ESG (Environmental, social and governance). Socially Responsible Investing ensures that our investments are aligned with our Church and UU values.

## **Finance Committee**

**Chair:** Richard Hayes

**Members:** Charles Everett, Fred Himmelein, Fe Houston, Ren Manning and Terry Walsh

**Ex-Officio:** Zachariah Conover, Treasurer/Vestry and Sandra Selvitelli, Executive Director

### **Purpose/Vision Statement:**

The Finance Committee supports the Vestry, Treasurer, and Executive Director in financial matters, and assures the Church Congregation that the Church has an accurate, auditable and accountable financial system.

### **Activities and Accomplishments:**

- Executed the 2020 finance plan in the black.
- Developed the 2021 Budget
- Continued Development on the Balance Sheet as a required monthly document from the Treasurer and required for Bank loans and audits.
- Made the decision to move from “Power Church” to “QuickBooks” for better and easier church financial management.
- Continued development of policies and procedures with the Executive Director for Finances required for an audit.

### **Goals/Action Plan for Next Year:**

- Ensure 2021 Budget execution goes according to plan, legally and with transparency.
- Develop the 2022 Budget in accordance with Vestry vision.
- Finalize procedures and execute an internal audit.

## Fine Arts

**Chair:** Jack Hurley (took over for Joanna Innes and Cisco Lindsey)

**Members:** Rachel Feher

**Purpose/Vision 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.

**Goals/Action Plan for Next Year:**

Due to the closure of the Church & Gage Hall due to the Covid-19 pandemic, all exhibits are on hold. Once regular church life returns, the expectation is to host one art show each quarter. The Committee Chair will also reach out to the Music Committee to offer support.

## Music Committee

**Chair:** Diane Boyer

**Co-chair:** Elaine Hunter

**Members:** Jim Burke, Sue Findlay, Barbara Goldberg (resigned Jan. 2020), Kathy Guy and Sally Newell

**Ex-Officio:** Susan Conant, Music Director

**Purpose/Vision Statement:**

To work with the Music Director to create and facilitate an excellent and diverse Music Program that uses the power of music to uplift our worship services, provide joy and enhance spirituality in our members, and to reflect Unitarian Universalist values within our Church and in the larger community.

**Covenant:**

In our work together, the members of the Music Committee agree to:

- Treat each other kindly and with respect;
- Do our fair share of the work of the committee;
- Be respectful of other committee members by being on time, responding to messages quickly, and completing work in a timely fashion.

*Music Committee Report (cont.)*

**Activities and Accomplishments:**

- **Candlelight Concerts:** The purpose of the Candlelight Concerts that the Music Committee produces each year is to raise funds to support music education for underserved young people, and to bring high quality musical performances to the community. Small grants are given to community organizations working with the target population. Over the past two years, inspired by the creativity of our Music Director, Susan Conant, we have worked to increase the diversity, quality and attendance at our concerts.
  - In November we held a second highly-successful Phantasmagorical Extravaganza Halloween-themed concert.
  - In February, the four principal woodwinds from the Charleston Symphony Orchestra plus a talented pianist gave a wonderful concert of 20th Century music.
  - For our last concert on April 3, we had planned another innovative concert, Latin Night, to be held outdoors in the churchyard. That had to be cancelled, but because of the high degree of interest that was shown, we plan to reschedule this concert as soon as possible.
- **Music Education for RE Students:** In the past, through a competitive audition process, we awarded a \$500 scholarship each year to one of our RE students who was taking music lessons. We made a decision to find a way to use that money to benefit the music education of all our RE students, not just one. Susan Conant and Danielle Lopez devised a plan to be implemented this spring that is now on hold. We plan to move ahead with this plan when feasible.
- **Auction:** We supported the annual church auction by offering VIP packages for our Candlelight Concerts and a Singing Telegram by members of the choir.
- **Support of the Music Director and the Music Program:** This is an ongoing goal for the committee. Members have helped with such things as cataloging the music library. We also decided to contribute to the cost of a new sound system for Gage Hall that would be portable for outside events.

*Music Committee Report (cont.)***Goals/Action Plans for Next Year:**

It is impossible to make specific plans at this point, but as soon as possible, we plan to:

- Offer 1-3 Candlelight Concerts in 2020-21.
- Award a mini-grant to a community organization that is offering music education to underserved young people (K-12).
- Implement the plan for a music program for RE students.
- Support a new sound system for Gage Hall.

## **Nominating Committee**

**Chair:** Nancy Simpson

**Co-chair:** Kathleen King

**Members:** John Klintworth, Ellie Setser and David White

**Purpose/Vision Statement:**

The Nominating Committee promotes leadership development for our Church. One of our major tasks is to identify and nominate potential new Vestry members each year, in accordance to the Church Constitution. The Nominating Committee also nominates members of the Endowment Investment Board as needed.

The Vestry appoints one or two Nominating Committee members, depending on the year, to complete the five member committee. Committee members are elected annually at the congregational meeting in May.

**Activities and Accomplishments:**

- For the 2019-2020 the committee met three times and was able to identify three new Vestry candidates and one member for the Endowment Investment Board (EIB) before the pandemic shut down. Vestry candidates are Hillary Hutchinson, Preston Saks, and Bill Walsh. The candidate for EIB is Fred Himmelein.



*Nominating Committee Report (cont.)*

**Goals/action plan for next church year:**

- The committee will meet in January to begin the task of identifying 3 future vestry members and any vacancies in the EIB as needed in accordance with the Church Constitution. A broader goal of this committee will be to educate the congregation on the ideals of service leadership. This may be accomplished through forums and possible adult education sessions.

## **Personnel Committee**

**Co-chairs:** Floy Work and Maureen Kelly

**Members:** Karen Abrams, Bob Egelson, Maureen Porter

**Ex-Officio:** Sandra Selvitelli, Executive Director; David Messner, Interim Minister

**Purpose/Vision Statement:** The Personnel Committee assures the implementation of 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, Executive Director and the Vestry, works to ensure that the policies and procedures as described in the Personnel Manual are followed.

*NOTE from the Co-Chairs: As the UUA reminds us, the Covid-19 Pandemic offers us a unique opportunity to honor our Unitarian Universalist principles in the workplace. We thank Reverend Dave and Sandra for leading with compassion and integrity.*

**Activities and Accomplishments:**

- We bid farewell to our hard working chair, Al Finch.
- The Executive Director assured us each employee's personnel folder (part time and full time) was up-to-date with all required documents in place: Annual Benefit Letters, Job Descriptions, Benefit documents, Annual Evaluations, Tax documents (W-2 and W-9, I-9's), etc.
- Each employee received a written evaluation with a focus on goals, their achievement and ways to support their continuing education.

*Personnel Committee Report (cont.)*

- The Committee conducted an Exit Interview with the Reverend Nancy Pellegrini prior to her departure.
- The Committee's Chair worked in concert with the Executive Director and Minister (using UUA guidelines as information) to review staff budget items for the 2020-21 fiscal year.
- Worked with the Finance Committee on the Staff portion of the budget. This year we began offering Long Term Disability Insurance to staff and more staff chose to purchase health insurance through the Church, increasing staff costs significantly.
- We were busy at nearly every meeting reviewing and editing the church's Personnel policies for the most recent Personnel Manual. This was a long process. It is a living document, open to edits. We believe we, in tandem with the Vestry, have created a Personnel Manual that honors our UU principles.
- John and Floy met with the Interim Minister at the start of his tenure to welcome him and share relevant past experiences.
- Maureen Kelly and Bob Egleson joined the committee.
- We bid farewell to John Jamrogowicz, our Personnel Co-chair and a valued committee member. Maureen Porter agreed to fill the final year of John's tenure and she also agreed to Co-Chair the Committee with upcoming Chair, Maureen Kelly.
- The 2020-21 year will find the Committee working on our usual tasks outlined on our calendar.

## **Planned Giving Committee**

**Chair:** Trip Banner

**Co-chair:** Hillary Hutchinson

**Members:** Judy Bruce, Prudence Finn, Steve Wilson

**Ex Officio:** Floy Work

### **Purpose/Vision Statement:**

The Planned Giving Committee of the Unitarian Church in Charleston enhances benefactor gifting through education of needs and options for gifting, reliable management of funds, and appropriate recognition of donors. By providing a platform and informative communications program to support the steps and process to establish a legacy giving plan for the Church, a significant percentage of congregants and friends identified as high potential benefactors will be recognized on the list posted in Gage Hall. This group's future legacy gifting to the Church will continue to make a strong contribution to sustain a healthy fiscal institution supporting our shared covenant (our seven Principles) for the free and responsible search for truth and meaning.

### **Activities and Accomplishments:**

Added several to the list posted in Gage Hall to recognize those who have already pledged a bequest to the Unitarian Church in Charleston.

Pledged bequests now total over \$1.25 million.

- Received the gift from the Fabian Schupper estate with funds directed to long term planning and upkeep of the church yard.
- Received half of the matching gifts for the Wake Now Our Vision program with the balance to be received by September 2020. The total will be \$26,000. The WNOV matching gift was funded by the Shelter Island UU Church in Manhasset, Long Island with the goal of energizing planned giving among Unitarian Universalists.
- Worked with the Vestry and Finance Committees to draft a policy for the receiving of gifts to the church. The Vestry approved this policy.
- 29 separate bequest representing 12% of our church membership
- 8 pledges are over \$100,000 each for a total of \$1,085,000

*Planned Giving Committee Report (cont.)*

- 11 pledges are for amounts from \$5,000 to \$60,000 for a total of \$261,000
- 10 pledges are percentages of wills, estates, IRAs or assets, and real estate. The amounts are not known and not tallied in the above
- Hosted a party for those benefactors already on the list.

**Goals/Action Plan for Next Year:**

Continue to cultivate potential legacy benefactors, and recognize them through various means. Make sure that newly received bequests are memorialized on the Gilman Society Wall in the church courtyard.

## **Safety and Security Committee**

**Chair:** Carol Tempel

**Co-chair:** David Ruef

**Members:** Lisa Hajjar, Richard Hayes, Marilyn Henderson, Judy Manning, Alan Moore, and John Narkunas

**Purpose/Vision Statement:**

The Safety Committee works to ensure the Church prepares for, responds to, and recovers from emergency or disaster incidents and provides the safest environment possible for congregants, visitors and staff. The Committee supports all 7 Church Principles because without a basic level of safety, we cannot focus on the higher areas of belief.

**Activities and Accomplishments:**

- Staffed each Sunday service with a Volunteer Incident Coordinator and Safety Team members. Provided safety team members to special events when requested (e.g., Phantasmagorical Extravaganza and the cancelled Latin Night)
- Organized and funded free CPR/AED certification training for 10 Church members (March 1, 2020)
- Held an annual service evacuation drill (Jan 19, 2020) to ensure all attendees are familiar with safety protocol and identified sources for improvement.

*Safety and Security Committee Report (cont.)*

- Prepared recommendations to the Vestry and Finance Committee, including for the unsuccessful hiring of a professional security officer and for more door safe-exit push bars. This included interviewing Circular Church on their process for hiring and managing a professional security officer.
- Reviewed the Emergency Operations Plan internally and by reviewing UU Greenville's policies and procedures. Updated plan as circumstances required.
- Communicated with UUA to learn from other congregations about safety policies. Served as a resource to other churches regarding our safety measures and the Emergency Operation Plan.
- Identified and advocated to Buildings & Grounds safety issues such as the safety painting of staircase to upper Gage Hall, highlighting the step outside the Sanctuary gate and labeling of the unwieldy door at Gage Hall disabled entrance.
- Conducted an annual review of safety equipment (AED/first aid kits/panic buttons/walkie-talkies/video cameras), facilities and pew evacuation cards.
- Presented information to the Program Council and relevant parties (Ushers, Greeters, Event Coordinator), RE Program, Choir, Docents and others as needed) to encourage the consistent use of safety practices, such as making safety announcements at the start of meetings.
- Held a Safety "spotlight" and recruited new Safety Team members (Feb 2, 2020).
- Advocated church staff fire extinguisher training which was conducted by Sexton Joe McCormick.
- Met quarterly (except for Spring 2020 during coronavirus) to review and discuss safety and security issues. Updated the "organization and hierarchy chart" and emergency phone numbers.

*Safety and Security Committee Report (cont.)*

**Goals/Action Plan for Next Year:**

- Follow up on investigation of whether B.A.R. will allow painting of potentially slippery step by the gate outside the sanctuary.
- Ensure the right people have security passwords.
- Review the lockboxes for the Fire Dept.
- Meet quarterly to consider improvements in executing our mission.
- Partner with Staff and Buildings and Grounds Committee to identify and upgrade safety issues.
- Hold and fund a second CPR/AED certification training session free to church members and employees.
- Organize an annual service evacuation drill.
- Staff a table during coffee hour to gain input, provide information and recruit additional safety team members. Expand membership of the Safety Team and Volunteer Incident Coordinators.
- Prepare a Gateway Newsletter article related to safety.
- Continue to review and update the Emergency Operations Plan policies and procedures.

## Social Justice Committee

### **Purpose/Vision Statement:**

The Social Justice Committee serves as a coordinating group that supports human rights, equality and a safe environment. We participate in advocacy and action, community outreach, community outreach giving and Congregational in-reach based on our Unitarian principles. The varied Social Justice Activities supported by our subcommittees offer many opportunities for rewarding Church member involvement.

### **Activities and Accomplishments:**

Below are a list of our current initiatives.

- **Book Angels:** Book Angels is a non-profit dedicated to children's literacy through the fostering of regular reading habits among at-risk, low- income children in grades pre K-8.

**Contributors:** Members/friends of the Unitarian Church in Charleston who have worked on book drives, book deliveries, book sorting and boxing and Facebook posts include: John Kelley, Judy and Ren Manning, Wendy McGonagle, Kathleen Mulroy, Catherine Rhea and Ron and Claudia Updike

**Program:** We provide new and gently used recreational children's reading books for in-classroom lending libraries for schools where a substantial portion of the students read below grade level and live in poverty. We initially provide 7-10 books per primary and elementary school student and 3-4 longer chapter books per middle school student. Our books are required to be available for at-home use. Our simple-to-administer program lets students select their own books from Book Angels classroom libraries to take home and read. The program is voluntary, and students are not required to take books home to read. No book reports are required. We want them to look upon books as recreational, fun reading. Schools are asked to communicate to parents/caregivers to read with their kids 20-30 minutes every night. Book Angels will return annually to replenish classroom libraries of participating schools, providing 2-3 books per student.

*Social Justice Committee Report/Book Angels (cont.)*

**Accomplishments:** Since beginning in the Charleston area in 2011 Book Angels has collected and distributed almost 125,000 books to 23 primary, elementary and middle Title I schools in Charleston and Dorchester counties. During 2019, Book Angels delivered approximately 16,400 books to Sanders Clyde Elementary, Midland Park Primary/Elementary, North Charleston Elementary, Mary Ford Elementary, Memminger Elementary, Clay Hill Elementary, Harleyville Elementary, Goodwin Elementary, Frierson Elementary, Minnie Hughes Elementary, Jane Edwards Elementary, St. James Santee Elementary, Mitchell Elementary, Ellington Elementary, Chicora Elementary, Hursey Elementary, Zucker Middle and Simmons Pinckney Middle.

During 2019, book drives were held at the following schools: Ashley Hall, Porter Gaud, Christ Our King Stella Maris, Charleston Day, Laing Middle, Cario Middle, Ashley River Creative Arts, First Baptist Lower, Jennie Moore Elementary, Charles Pinkney and the Daily Vacation Bible School at First United Methodist Isle of Palms.

Book Angels is formally incorporated as a non-profit under South Carolina law; it has also filed for service mark protection and has obtained tax-exemption under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

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

Mike Griffith reports that the Potluck for all UU CAJM Network members and those interested in CAJM, held February 3, 2020, was a big success. Attendance was 96 people, about 25 of whom were new to CAJM. Enthusiasm among UU Network members remains high.

The RALLY to present the program for the Nehemiah Action attracted over 300 people.

The all-important Nehemiah Action will be held Monday, March 30, 2020, at the usual location, Mt. Moriah Baptist Church, 7396 Rivers Ave., North Charleston, registration starting at 6PM. Program starts at 7PM.

Social Injustice issues are so critical this year, we are hoping for an exceptional attendance. PEOPLE POWER! A factor which may give attendance a boost is the addition of the host church, Mt. Moriah Baptist, as the 35th and newest member.



*Social Justice Committee Report/CAJM (cont.)*

We will publicize the Action at Church, urging literally EVERYONE to attend, with the reminder: “Take just 2.5 hours of your time to stand up for those who live with social injustice 24/7/365.” With a small sacrifice of time you can demonstrate your support of social justice.

The issues to be presented are as follows:

1. Better Public Transportation. The ASK is for increased frequency on three routes that are heavily used by seniors and low income people to get to work, school, and shops. CARTA says it will cost money, and they are underfunded. We will attempt to get CARTA to rearrange priorities and get public entities to increase CARTA funding.
2. Affordable Housing. The County Council created a Task Force at CAJM’s urging to find solutions. They proposed a 1 mill property tax, \$4 per \$100,000 property value, to raise \$3.7 Million annually. They still won’t vote on it. Our ASK will be a referendum for 2 mills, still short of the minimal \$11 Million needed as the County’s share of a proposed \$30 Million Regional Housing Trust Fund.
3. Education. Charleston County School District has been very cooperative with CAJM’s recommendations for a Restorative Practices system to move away from harsh discipline leading to suspensions and arrests. Where implemented it has been a big success. But progress has stalled. The ASK will be to implement RP district-wide.
4. North Charleston has refused to do a Racial Bias Police Audit like Charleston did, now with much support and success. Our ASK will be for NCHS to do so.

In all these cases we are simply asking the political entities to treat ALL their citizens the same way, not to just single out groups to reward.

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

Coffee House Contacts: Richard Hayes and Mark Farnham

Mitchell Elementary School Contact: John Narkunas

*Social Justice Committee Report/Coffeehouse Concerts (cont.)*

**Purpose/Vision Statement:** To promote educational equity for children living in poverty in the Charleston Tri-County area. Funds generated through monthly Gage Hall Coffee House concerts are used for academic enrichment activities at the Mitchell Elementary School in Charleston where 95% of the students live below the poverty level. These activities include enhanced math and science programs as well as field trips for children in grades K-5.

**Accomplishments:** This Social Justice program has always been very successful, and this year is no exception. Not only did the Coffeehouse have 5 well attended concerts prior to the Covid-19 lockdown, but at the request of the Vestry and the Racial Justice effort, all 5 concerts were headlined by acts featuring racial diversity. The Coffeehouse regularly includes strong participation from the Congregation, with 10 members running the Coffeehouse and at 50 members attending. In addition, the Coffeehouse is now a local community monthly event, always getting strong community attendees. The Congregation can be proud as the Coffeehouse subcommittee will present Mitchell Elementary with a \$4,000 for this fiscal year. Major community impact, strong church and community involvement, leading the way to combat poverty in Children and educating our future generations.

- **Community Outreach Giving - Red Envelope Project**

The grant proposal selected for the Social Justice Community Outreach Giving “Red Envelope” project was Trident Tech Food Pantry, Palmer Campus, and Grocery Vault. The proposal requested a grant for \$4,000 to support 100 students for 12 months. The giving project was kicked off at our Unitarian Social Justice Sunday, where Program Director Dr. Mary Ann Kohli introduced the program. Donations were collected September 22 - December 8. A grant of \$4,000 was awarded on December 15. The Community Outreach Giving Sub-Committee, who reviewed the 8 grant proposals, is composed of Amber Allen, Suzanne Hardie, Kay Haun, Maureen Porter and Diane Narkunas, Chair.

*Social Justice Committee Report (cont.)*

- **Electoral Justice**

No Chair or activity for 2019-2020. Future activity will focus on supporting organizations such as League of Women Voters and Conservation Voters.

- **Endowment Fund**

John Narkunas reports that the Social Justice Endowment Fund has a current balance of \$153,000, and a total of \$4,588 (3%) is available for us to use this year. We will use this money to fund a mini-grant to a local non-profit as we have been doing for several years. The original principal of \$100,000 has grown to over \$150,000 the last 6-7 years. It is suggested that the Social Justice Committee consider using some of these available funds as long as we do not endanger the principal amount. Perhaps considering using as much \$25,000 to support another mini-grant of \$4,500 and other possible uses of the money that the committee agrees is worthwhile. Committee members were invited to the Social Justice meeting on March 10 to discuss possible areas to consider supporting this year, and presented a proposal to the Endowment Board for their consideration.

- **Green Sanctuary**

The Green Sanctuary Committee leads the Church's efforts to become more environmentally sustainable through capital improvements, education, activism and outreach. This falls under the seventh UUA principle: *Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.*

**Members:** David Ruef (Chair), Preston Saks (Vice Chair), Lindsay Brunhouse, Nina Fair, Mela Khedouri, Deen Lakhima, Jonathan Lamb, Laura Moses, Richard Moss, Jill Norton, Sarah Redmond, Darragh Simon and Sharon Strong

**Activities and Accomplishments:**

- Arranged several Forum speakers related to environmental issues (Oct 13, Jan 12) and 1 cancelled (coronavirus)

*Social Justice Committee Report/Green Sanctuary (cont.)*

- Held March 8 Coffee Hour spotlight table which featured information about critical environmental legislation that Church members could use to take action, posters and handouts of energy saving tips, and clarification to attendees about what is recyclable and compostable.
- Members regularly participate in, and publicize, local environmental group meetings and bring that information back to GS members and Church members.
- Two members participated in Arbor Day pine tree planting at Charlestowne Landing on December 7.
- Published Gateway newsletter articles on practical topics of environmental interest.
- Purchased and sold to church members environmentally friendly metal water bottles; proceeds were used to support environmental justice education at the Mary Ford School in North Charleston.
- Provided the Executive Director with a notice to provide to outside event organizers at Gage Hall with renters agreement to announce about using composting bins to improve compliance.
- Facilitated collection and recycling of printer cartridges, electronics, batteries and CFL light bulbs in Gage Hall.
- Contributed a basket of environmentally friendly household items at the November 2 Silent Auction, both raising awareness and raising funds to support our Church.
- Updated the “Get Involved with Green Sanctuary” notice for Carol Oates to provide to Pathways participants. As Carol identifies prospective members, they are contacted by GS and encouraged to get involved. We have added two new members since October.

*Social Justice Committee Report/Green Sanctuary (cont.)*

- Organized the April 19 Earth Day Service.

**Goals/Action Plans for Next Year:**

- Continue to facilitate collection and recycling of printer cartridges, electronics, batteries and CFL light bulbs in Gage Hall.
- Continue practice of various members attending community environmental group events and monitoring environmental actions of other groups to spread the learnings among Church and GS members.
- Continue to arrange Forum speakers related to environmental topics including rescheduling those canceled due to the coronavirus.
- Continue to publish Gateway newsletter articles on practical topics of environmental interest.
- Hold a Coffee Hour spotlight to provide energy saving information and sustainability advocacy information to church members.
- Hold a nature walk which will be publicized to the full congregation.
- Support Social Justice Committee Environmental Justice initiatives.
- Identify other initiatives via a strategic planning meeting.

*Social Justice Committee Report (cont.)*

- **Racial Justice**

**Purpose:** The Racial Justice Initiative will raise awareness and educate the Congregation and Friends about racism to make our church more welcoming to African Americans and other minorities, and highlight racial justice issues in the Charleston area leading to a plan of action to address racial injustices.

Diane Narkunas and Richard Hayes have spearheaded a significant new Racial Justice initiative. They have a committed an energetic group working on this effort whose purpose will be to raise awareness and educate Church members and friends about racism to make our Church more welcoming to African American and other minorities, and to highlight racial justice issues in the Charleston-area leading to a plan of action to address racial injustice.

**Activities and Accomplishments:**

- Partnering with College of Charleston, the Racial Justice Team organized congregation members to attend a film, *American Street*, produced by Idrissou Mora-Kapaiu, November 1, 2019. The film addressed the gentrification of the Charleston East Side as seen primarily through the eyes of Joe, a corner store owner. Joe and other community members shared feelings they have about racial violence in Charleston....by police and the white supremacist who killed 9 members of Mother Emanuel Church. The film was shown to a large audience; 27 members of the congregation attended. Before the film 9 of us gathered at Eli's Tavern for dinner.
- Evening Forums:
  - Friday, January 17, we welcomed guest speaker Daron Lee Calhoun II, Coordinator, Race and Social Justice Initiative, College of Charleston, Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture. Mr. Calhoun's topic was: *Unmasking Racial Disparities: Charleston County Racial Disparities Report* related to jobs, health and education. The program was well received by 42 congregation members and friends. Rev. David provided a welcome and opening prayer.

*Social Justice Committee Report/Racial Justice (cont.)*

- Friday, March 6, we welcomed guest speaker, Jon N. Hale, PhD, Assoc. Professor, USC, and Dept. of Educational Studies. Prof. Hale’s research focuses on the history of student & teacher activism, grassroots education
- Visiting Minority Dignitaries in the Pulpit for Sunday Service:
  - On November 24, 2019, had Michelle Mapp the CEO of the South Carolina Community Loan Fund, a nonprofit, mission based lender that has facilitated the development of more than \$246 million in community leading the service.
  - On March 15, Marcus Amaker, the Poet Laureate of Charleston, SC and the Gaillard Center's artist-in-residence led the service.
  - On July 21 had Judge (ret) Arthur McFlarland scheduled to lead the service. Although he could not make it due to airline delay, worship associate Richard Hayes read his very moving Sermon describing the African American experience in Charleston.
  - On July 7, 2019, Darren Goss, President and CEO at Coastal Community Foundation, led the service and discussed the “case for inclusion with equity.”
- Social Justice’s monthly Coffeehouse Concert Series successfully included a rich tapestry of racial diversity for the 2019-2020 season:
  - Caja De Cuerdas (Box of Strings) Latin ensemble musicians of diverse backgrounds in Classical, Jazz, Latin, rock, and popular music
  - Alva Anderson
  - Kings of Jazz
  - Richard White

*Social Justice Committee Report (cont.)*

- **Refugee Support**

Nancy Hild and her team are still working with Ana and her family. Ana and the children are doing well. Ana's workload is slower in the winter months, but she is keeping up with expenses. Team members occasionally donate food, clothing, household goods, and money. Ana never asks for help but seems to appreciate all that is given.

Lucia (age 8) has another immigration court hearing in Charlotte, NC July 8. The judge this time is following up on our legal defense that Ana (the mother) is her only logical caretaker. To provide proof, our lawyer is sending custody papers to Lucia's father in Guatemala. Nancy has obtained the name and address of someone in Guatemala who will serve the father with these papers. The father does not have to sign them. The server must sign a statement that the father was served. The server will then have this statement notarized and send it to our lawyer. Our lawyer will take this statement to Family Court in Charleston, where the judge hopefully will then grant Ana full custody of Lucia. Libby is conducting a guardian ad-litem study to present to the court at this time. The custody papers will be what the immigration judge in Charlotte is looking for to prevent Lucia from being deported to the care of her father in Guatemala.

Nancy will take Ana and Lucia to Charlotte for the immigration hearing.

Team members Nancy and Marsha Castano took Lucia to the Children's Museum last month to celebrate Lucia's 8th birthday.

The team attended a Christmas party at Nancy's house with Ana and the children where Santa generously left numerous gifts for the family.

Nancy is maintaining close contact with Lucia's 2nd grade teacher and monitoring her school progress. She has enrolled Lucia in an after school tutoring program offered by the school on Thursdays to help her with reading and math. No school bus is available for transportation, so Nancy picks Lucia up at 4 p.m. and takes her home. She says it is an opportunity to keep in touch weekly with Ana and the children.

The team is looking into summer programs for both Lucia and Sharon (age almost 3).



*Social Justice Committee Report (cont.)*

Ana's mother says she will renew her effort this month to obtain a visa to bring Silvia (age 4) to Charleston. Nancy has written letters addressed to the grandmother and to Silvia and had them notarized at Ana's request. These letters welcome them to America and assure them that our church team will help them adjust when they arrive. Ana believes this will help when her mother goes to the American Embassy for a visa. Our lawyer has also written a letter to the embassy explaining why the grandmother needs a temporary visa to come to the United States.



- **Welcoming Congregation** Neil Duffy has developed a plan and budget for re-energizing our LGBTQQI welcoming activities. He has created a brochure describing the Church's commitment to being a "welcoming Congregation." Working with Jeffrey Fleming and others we look forward to seeing the expansion of this important committee in the coming year.

## Stewardship Committee

**Chair:** Jack Hurley

**Members:** Karen Abrams, John Narkunas, Ren Manning and Preston Saks

**Ex-Officio:** Carol Oates, Membership Coordinator; Sandra Selvitelli, Executive Director; and David Messner, Minister

**Purpose/Vision Statement:**

The Stewardship Committee manages a successful pledge campaign to support the mission and work of the Unitarian Church in Charleston.

Working closely with the Vestry and the Finance Committee, the Stewardship Committee designs and executes the congregations' annual pledge campaign which seeks financial commitments from members and friends who pledge their support for the church's work for the upcoming fiscal year. The drive underwrites three quarters of the church's operational budget and its results enable the church to plan with confidence for the future.

*Stewardship Committee Report (cont.)*

**Activities and Accomplishments:**

- After listening and planning sessions held throughout the fall and early winter, the campaign kicked off on March 1, 2020. Our theme was “We’ve Got 2020 Visions”
- Members and friends received campaign materials that included a brochure outlining the goals of the drive, a personal letter asking for their support, and a pledge card that asked not only for their financial support but their opinions and concerns. This mailing was followed up by a visiting steward campaign with 33 volunteers who each reached out personally to 5 congregants. Each person was asked to increase their gift by a specific amount or percentage. The committee shared information about national UUA gift averages, encouraging as many people as possible to move up to the UUA’s average pledge of \$1200 or more.
- Prior to the start of the campaign, the Committee sponsored a Leadership drive and reception asking all who attended to make their pledge and to increase by 15%. We asked all vestry, committee chairs, visiting stewards and staff to also pledge early prior to kickoff. This enabled our campaign to be strong early in the campaign.
- Our campaign goal was \$420,000. We reached 98% in 5 weeks, for a total of \$410,838. We had 221 pledging units. Our average pledge is \$1,859, but 157 members are giving below that level. We lost 77 pledges this year, with an avg. pledge of \$466. These losses were due to some congregants moving, others who were concerned about their financial position, and others who are feeling unsure of the church in this period of transition.
- During the third week of campaign, church was closed due to the coronavirus outbreak. Considering the overwhelming economic impact on our congregation and the inability to meet in person, the committee was delighted that the campaign was as successful and is encouraged by the strong support the church enjoys.

**Goals/Action Plan for Next Year:**

- Add new members to the committee.
- A concerted effort in creating a year round effort of Stewardship education and awareness.

## Worship Services Committee

**Chair:** Amy Hudock

**Co-chair:** Paul Garbarini

**Members:** Jen Bennett, Kevin Eakes, Mark Farnham, Jeffrey Fleming, Paul Garbarini, Richard Hayes, and Allison Sterrett-Krause

**Purpose/Vision Statement:** The Worship Services Committee strives to create meaningful worship services that enlighten and inspire our congregation. Mission: Throughout the year, members of the Worship Services committee act as a sounding board for the Ministers and plan lay-led services with speakers from the congregation and the community. WSC's services bring diversity of voices and perspectives into the pulpit to support our congregational mission of building a welcoming home for spiritual freedom. WSC welcomes feedback from the congregation on sermons and services.

**Covenant:** As a committee, we covenant to engage in direct, respectful communications, to set and uphold healthy boundaries, and practice deep listening with each other in connection to understanding differing ideas of worship. We promise to care for one another, and practice mutual responsibility through shared ministry and leadership, and to honor and celebrate differences among us.

With respect to the Congregation, we covenant to create meaningful worship reflecting the seven Unitarian Universalist principles and illuminating ways to put these into practice for our congregants. To that end, our Church services will:

- Acknowledge the shared human journey, and value the commonalities between us over what separates and divides us.
  - Recognize and celebrate the dignity, diversity and gifts of our congregants.
  - Strive to envision a better world by supporting and encouraging our individual and common efforts towards its attainment.
  - Accept the mystery surrounding our ultimate destiny as a human race, our lives are worthy of praise, and will work to help each other engage the mystery with praise.

*Worship Services Committee Report (cont.)*

- Endeavor to cultivate and explore the religious response among us as a defining and enabling activity by acknowledging that religion is a human response to the mysterious otherness we encounter in our lives.

**Worship Service Committee Responsibilities:**

- Assist and support the Ministers in development of weekly church services for the Unitarian Church in Charleston.
- Serve as Worship Associates during Sunday services. Worship Associates typically oversee some logistical details and have a small speaking role in each service.
- Plan and implement worship services for the Church. WSC provides one service per month during the church year (September through May) and 10-12 services during the summer (June through August). WSC services usually are designed to complement the Ministers' services with varied spiritual and theological perspectives, service formats, and worship experiences.

**Membership:**

The Worship Services Committee invites inquiries about committee membership from any active church member with an affinity for the practice of worship in the Unitarian Universalist tradition. Most members of the WSC have been active members of the Church for at least one year, though we are also eager to hear from new Church members who have joined us following a period of membership in other UUA congregations.

**Activities and Accomplishments:**

- Helped to transition through Rev. Elaine Peresluha's ministry as well as used her guidance to revise some of the roles and responsibilities of the WSC Committee.
- Started booking two worship associates for each service, one leader, one back-up, so that each service would have back-up support.
- Handled all summer 2019 services and worked with new interim minister Rev. David Messner on regular lay-led services throughout fall 2019 and spring 2020.

*Worship Services Committee Report (cont.)*

- We have continued monthly theme-based worship based on Soul Matters material, and that is working well.
- Worked with committee and church staff via Google Documents for better shared communication.
- Helped to lead services on Zoom in spring 2020 and plan Zoom services for summer 2020.

**Goals/Action plan for Next Church Year:**

- Anticipate continuing working with the Interim Minister on the role of lay leaders.
- Amy Hudock will continue primary responsibility as Chair for committee leadership. Paul Garbarini will step down as Co-Chair. He was not expected to become Chair; he has only agreed to one year in this position. We will be recruiting a new Co-Chair.
- Continue to recruit new members.
- Continue to seek congregants to handle small parts of the service such as readings to introduce them to committee's work.