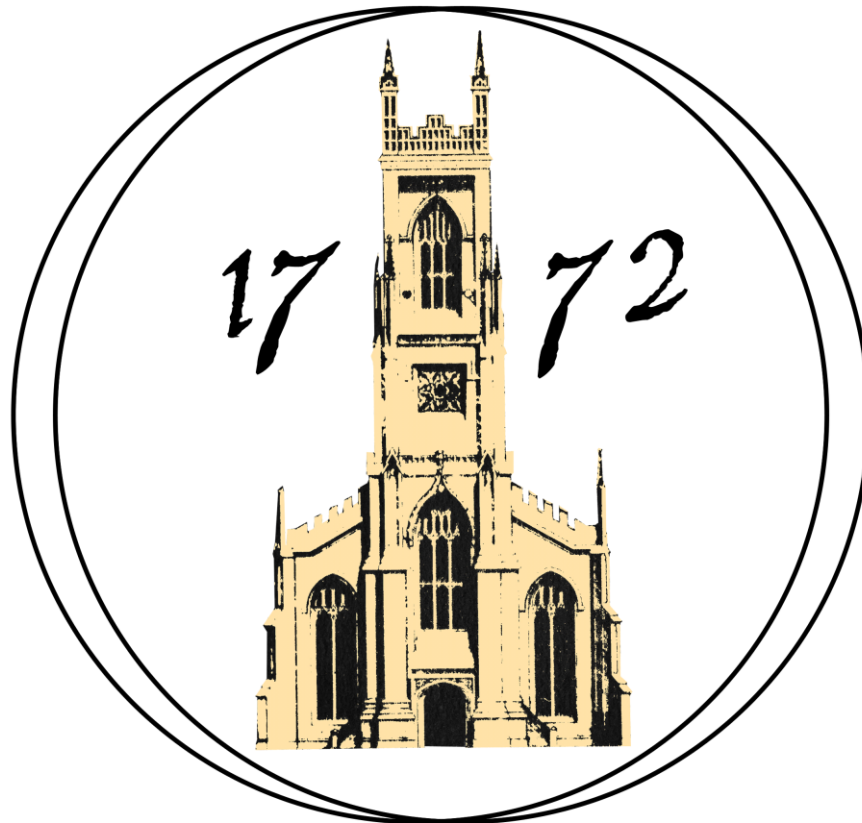


UNITARIAN CHURCH IN CHARLESTON  
ANNUAL REPORT  
2017-2018



May 20, 2018

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

**The Unitarian Church in Charleston**

**Church Year 2017-18**

**Membership 411**

**Friends 65**

**Vestry:**

Sue Weller, Chair  
Gail Schiffer, Vice-Chair  
John Hyatt, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-Chair  
Diane Narkunas, Secretary  
Zachariah Conover  
Erica Hattings  
Tommy Hughston  
Johnathan Lamb  
Mark Madden  
Nolan Prestwood, Treasurer  
Terry Walsh, Assistant Treasurer

**Staff:**

Rev. Danny R. Reed, Minister  
Rev. Nancy Pellegrini, Assistant Minister  
Sandra Selvitelli, Executive Director  
Susan Conant, Interim Music Director  
Megan Thornton, Director of Religious Education  
Carol Oates, Membership Coordinator  
Joe McCormack, Sexton  
Part-Time Staff:  
Amy Ball, Music Accompanist  
Patrick Roebuck, IT Office Assistant  
Melissa Zahler, Religious Education Assistant  
Deloris Crawford (Nursery)  
Amanda Gabriel & Evan Thornton (Preschool)  
Jule Lane & Rafael Martin-Navas  
(High School Youth Group Leaders)

With special thanks to member Susan Hartry for office assistant work this fiscal year.

## **Vestry**

**Members:** Sue Weller (Chair), Gail Schiffer (1st Vice-Chair), John Hyatt (2nd Vice-Chair), Diane Narkunas (Secretary), Zach Conover, Erica Hattings, Tommy L. Hughston, Jr., Jonathan Lamb, Mark Madden

**Ex Officio:** Rev. Danny Reed (Minister), Sandra Selvitelli (Executive Director), and Nolan Prestwood (Treasurer)

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

*The Vestry is the Board of Directors for the Unitarian Church in Charleston. The Vestry is made up of 9 elected members including the Chair, two Vice-Chairs and a Secretary.*

### **Activities and Accomplishments:**

- Celebrated our Bicentennial
- Moved administration to an Executive Director model
- Started research for capital campaign including hosting a professional consultant to conduct a Next Steps Weekend (April 13-15, 2018)
- Welcomed new RE Director, Megan Thornton
- Welcomed new Interim Music Director, Susan Conant
- Reviewed and streamlined several processes pertaining to Finance and Personnel
- Constitution change to redefine role and terms of the Treasurer position
- Reviewed ministerial agreement

Chairing the committee responsible for the growth, maintenance and oversight of the church has proven to be very similar to parenting a toddler. It has required much more patience, time, effort, energy and confrontation of conflict than I ever imagined. And the fruits of this labor have been just as ripe and sweet, in that I have developed a profound and unique love; people often say that the love of a mother is one that only a mother can understand, and my love of this church, the love that has grown within the light of this difficult work, has changed me.

The church year began with many of our much adored staff leaving the nest to begin new chapters in life. Janet Watts, our long-time Director of Religious Education (DRE), went on to lend her talents to People Against Rape (PAR). Our Music Director, Johanna Evenson, left to pursue world travels. And our Youth Coordinator, Marina Penna Morrison, moved with her family to California. The absence of these staff members was deeply felt this year.

We welcomed Susan Conant as our Interim Music Director and Megan Thornton as our new Director of Religious Education at the beginning of the church year. Both have made impressive changes that allow our church to shine in new ways.

*(Vestry Continued)*

The movement of people into new staff positions highlighted the need to update and streamline our business practices as an organization. As the church has grown, the staff has also grown and the amount of work to run the church has grown. To validate the increasing demands, the Office Administrator position was changed to an Executive Director position, allowing for clear communication between all the people doing the heavy lifting required as we grow in size and spirit. The role of Treasurer will now be a Vestry member, ensuring clear communication between the two financial guardians of the church, Vestry and Finance.

Like toddlerhood, one year brought forth rapid changes and the creation of many foundational groundworks. The church was gifted the seed money for a columbarium project that will allow for the interment of ashes and memorializing members who have gone before us in our churchyard. (look out for the opportunity to secure a memorial brick in the near future!) We hosted Barry Finkelstein of *Stewardship For Us* to consult with us about the timing and scope of a capital campaign. Our goal is to ensure the maintenance of our historic campus for another 200 years and beyond. We celebrated our Bicentennial in grand style, complete with a symbolic walk to Circular Congregation and an exchange of ministers for part of the service. Happy 200th birthday to us!

Amidst all the growing, nearing the end of the church year, more shifts have taken place with regards to roles and responsibilities to keep the church alive. Our minister, Rev. Danny Reed left for his sabbatical in April. I have watched as the staff and committees within the church have worked diligently to continue the ministerial duties of the church in his absence. And now, to close the church year, our Executive Director, Sandra Selvitelli, is leaving her position as Executive Director to spend more time with her family. This church just keeps growing and changing and I'm sure we will continue to look upon Sandra's service to this church fondly as her predecessor(s) benefit from her strong organization of church business.

People have shifted spots in one way or another in more of our staff positions than those that have stayed the same. Both staff and church membership alike have gracefully immersed themselves in these tides of change, and with them, the possibilities for new and different kinds of growth and learning. And just when I was starting to get the hang of this stage of development, the church grows swiftly out of it, reminiscent once more of parenting.

*(Vestry Continued)*

In raising my child, I learned quickly that the adage “It takes a village” was born of pure truth. In chairing this Vestry, I have only confirmed this truth. With the same heart-swelling magic of watching my child grow, I watch this congregation and our beautiful grounds grow. The members of this village that both comprise *and* raise our church are as dear (and crucial!) to me as the village that raises my child. I hope each of you who have shown up to raise the church with me this year will allow yourself this moment to take a step back and look on with pride of what we were able to grow. Thank you all for the chance to serve this church, and in so doing, give me the possibility experience this new, immense love.

*Respectfully submitted by Sue Weller, Vestry Chair*

**Minister**

I write while away on three-month sabbatical leave. Being away is both awkward and refreshing. I miss the daily flow of church life and feel inevitably behind on some news, but also appreciate the opportunity for reflection and renewal. A good deal of planning and preparation, and the leadership of the Vestry and other leaders have made the sabbatical time possible, and I am grateful for the privilege.

Vestry Chair Sue Weller and First-Vice Chair Gail Schiffer have led us through an eventful year of programming and discernment. The present and future needs of our facilities have been a prime focus this year and work is underway to continue this important consideration. The Vestry devoted time to reviewing our financial procedures for efficiency and best practices. The Vestry also began evaluation and study of our current plateau in growth and participation. Thanks to all Vestry members and families for their considerable investments of leadership and time.

In a year of transitions, we can once again be thankful for the commitment and skill of talented staff members. Susan Conant has led our music program through an interim period as Music Director, infusing our worship services with her eclectic style and creativity. Amy Ball, our Accompanist, has made wonderful music with us for some time and is stepping down this year as her other work commitments have increased. Thanks to both Susan and Amy for their contributions and gifts.

With a heavy and unpredictable workload, Joe McCormack, Sexton, prepares our rooms for varied weekly events and oversees our buildings with care and cheer. Working closely with other staff and church leaders, Joe regularly interacts with church members, neighbors, service professionals, tourists, and vendors. Thanks to Joe for all that he does.

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*(Minister Continued)*

Carol Oates, Membership Coordinator, is an essential early contact for guests and newcomers. She welcomes them into the church and helps match their interests with our opportunities, always with an invitation to deeper connection and engagement. Carol also looks for new avenues of participation and service for longer-term members seeking different ways to ply their gifts in the church and community. Thanks to Carol for the assistance and hospitality she models so very well.

Rev. Nancy Pellegrini, Assistant Minister, has developed a needed new outreach this year. Working closely with our Care Committee, she has recruited and trained volunteers to visit regularly with our members who are unable to join us in events and worship. This ministry to our home-bound friends reminds us that the church family is larger than we might first see and helps nurture a sense of belonging beyond our walls. Nancy also graces our worship life with sermons and liturgical support. In addition to all this, Nancy is Chaplain to the patients and staff of the Hollings Cancer Center of the Medical University of South Carolina. Thanks to Nancy for enhancing our spiritual growth in such vital ways.

Sandra Selvitelli has guided the church office since the summer of 2014. Over this time she has improved our operations and public presentation in many ways. She had devoted particular attention to the church webpage and in so doing has made our message and programming more accessible, within the church and beyond. I have considered Sandra a valued partner in ministry, so it is especially hard to say goodbye as she takes up new opportunities elsewhere. Her personality and presence will be greatly missed. I'm thankful for the chance to have worked with Sandra, and I add my gratitude to that of the congregation.

Megan Thornton joined us this year as Director of Religious Education. Megan brings a teacher's perspective to her work and took on a big challenge in a new educational role and setting. Her friendliness and openness to our children and families is gratefully noted. Thanks to Megan and our many volunteer teachers, helpers, and Religious Education Committee members who infuse our religious education program with affection for our children and respect for their development.

On Sunday, December 3, we celebrated our bicentennial as an independent congregation. John Newell led a great committee, and the team planned a series of anniversary events to remind us of our significant religious and social inheritance. Looking back, that day and all it represented, is particularly instructive right now. Change is hard, and so much at once is harder still. Constant variables, now and in years past, are the love and loyalty of the many members and friends who bring their curiosity, gifts, and passions to our enterprise on Archdale Street. Just as change is inevitable, so too is the future unknown. So looking forward, I conclude with a deep appreciation for another year in your service, with sincere thanks to the staff and volunteer leaders who fulfill the dreams of our congregation.

*(Minister Continued)*

I always acknowledge that I have likely forgotten or overlooked individuals and items that should be included here. Again this year, please pardon any lapses of gratitude or inclusion.

*Respectfully submitted by Reverend Danny Reed, Minister*

### **Assistant Minister**

It has been my privilege to complete my second year as Assistant Minister serving our congregation on a part-time basis 10 hours a week. In addition, I am continuing my job as the chaplain at the Hollings Cancer Center at the Medical University of South Carolina providing spiritual support to patients undergoing cancer treatment. This year I was honored to be asked to help lead memorial services for several of my patients. For personal rejuvenation and renewal, last summer I attended a spiritual retreat for health care professionals in Assisi, Italy with my husband.

For our Sunday church services, I preached and led worship five times and offered meditations/prayers and the story for all ages on numerous occasions. I continued my social justice activities participating in the Charleston Area Justice Ministry and helping to plan our Social Justice Sunday. I also organized our church's participation in the 2018 Charleston Women's March.

Over the past year I attended UU denominational events including Ministry Days, General Assembly, the fall Southeastern Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association retreat, and monthly coastal clergy meetings. I participated in installation services for ministerial colleagues in Beaufort and Augusta. I recently began mentoring a young minister in Nashville who is serving as a chaplain.

This year at our church I have focused my attention on expanding lay pastoral care for our congregation. As one of the staff liaisons to our wonderful Caring Committee, I worked with them to initiate our new Pastoral Visitors Committee. Pastoral Visitors provide regular home visits to church members who may not be able to attend church. Working in conjunction with membership coordinator Carol Oates, I recruited volunteers, conducted training, and set up the structure for this new committee. Jan Stanton, a new church member and retired chaplain, graciously offered to be the coordinator for the Pastoral Visitors.

I continue to be inspired and awed by the commitment and caring shown by members of our congregation. What a wonderful spirit we have in our church! I am proud to be a part of it.

*Respectfully submitted Reverend Nancy B. Pellegrini, Assistant Minister*

### **Treasurer**

The Church's fiscal year runs from July 1<sup>st</sup> through June 30<sup>th</sup> of the following year. We ended the last fiscal year on June 30, 2017 in a good financial position. The Operating Budget income was approximately \$18,257 over expenses. Approximately \$12,493 of this be used as income in the 2017/2018 fiscal year. At the start of the 2017/2018 fiscal year (July 1, 2017), the balance of the Endowment Fund was \$1,041,420, Churchyard/Garden of Remembrance fund was \$20,238, and the Landmark Fund was \$74,304 which included the organ (\$32,209). Our reserves total was \$48,573.

#### **As of March 31<sup>st</sup> 2018**

The Endowment Fund has increased to \$1,048,885.

The Churchyard/Garden of Remembrance is approximately \$16,044, decrease due to labor and material cost in the Garden of Remembrance.

The Landmark Fund is approximately \$76,108.

There is approximately \$48,573 in our Reserve accounts. Our reserves are divided into four different categories. The Operating Reserve, the Maintenance Reserve, the Emergency Reserve and the Auction Reserve.

1. The Operating Reserve is \$12,716 and is to insure the balance of the Operating Fund stays positive during the year.
2. Maintenance Reserve is \$3,944 and is used for major deferred maintenance projects
3. Emergency Reserve is \$26,517 and is set aside for circumstances that could not be foreseen that do not fall into the categories of major maintenance or regular operations.
4. Action Reserve is \$5,396.

A new fund 10 (Endowment Operating) was established in the chart of accounts this year. Establishment of this fund will make it easier audit and track funds disbursed by the Endowment Committee.

The current fiscal year has again been strong through the first 9 months, showing \$44,431 income over expenses. As long as we continue to have timely payments on our 2017/2018 church year annual pledges, I project that we will once again end the church year with income over expenses.

I appreciate the opportunity to serve and have enjoyed working with the Finance Committee, Vestry, Committee Chairs and congregation. Special thanks to Terry Walsh, Sandra Selvitelli, Richard Hayes, and Debbie Kirby.

*Respectfully submitted by Nolan Prestwood, Treasurer*



## **Executive Director**

### **Activities and Accomplishments:**

- Worked with Patrick Roebuck to create a new website following a template from the UUA
- Created a new format for the weekly email blast
- Worked with Susan Hartry on the Archives filing project
- Enjoyed a deeper working relationship with the Vestry
- Assisted, as needed, new employees Susan Conant and Megan Thornton
- Worked with the parking management company to continue using QR codes in the Order of Service for free parking on Sundays.
- Worked with Buildings and Grounds on many issues including termites, electricity and other repairs
- Worked closely with Bookkeeper, Treasurer, Vestry and others regarding the financial health of the church
- Secured two acts for Gage Hall rental for the Spoleto festival
- Continue to lead staff meetings, update the website, produce church publications and many other tasks.
- Continue working with multiple Committees, Vestry and Staff as needed.
- I am pleased to continue working closely with Joe McCormack. We are fortunate to have someone with his aptitude and good humor.

On a personal note, I am extremely grateful to all of you for your support over the fall. My mother was seriously ill and having the ability to be with her during the most difficult part of her journey was very meaningful to me. Thank you.

*Respectfully submitted by Sandra Selvitelli, Executive Director*

## **Music Director**

**Purpose/Vision Statement:** *The church music program strives to enhance the worship experience through music and to reach out to the church community and beyond through various music related events.*

### **Activities and Accomplishments:**

- Musicians from our congregation and from the community at large provided music during our regular Sunday services.
- The Adult Choir met for weekly rehearsals from September to early June. The Adult Choir sang for approximately two Sunday services per month and the Intergenerational Choir sang for approximately one Sunday per month. In March, the Intergenerational Choir

*(Music Director Activities and Accomplishments Continued)*

experience was changed to an “in service” experience and the Adult Choir resumed a three Sunday per month schedule.

- There were two short-term Adult Choir opportunities: The Cantata Choir performed the Christmas Cantata in December and the Easter Choir sang at the Easter Services.
- Activities of note for the Adult Choir include debuting the premier of the Bicentennial Anthem, “Standing on the Shoulders of Giants,” participating in the Transgender Memorial Service and providing a “Singing Telegram” at the Oyster Roast.
- Numerous instrumentalists and soloists again from our membership as well as hired specialists provided Sunday service music throughout the year. Of note was our magnificent and diverse “Pageant Band” which provided accompaniment to all of the Christmas Carols during the Christmas Pageant. Our garage band Late Model Children provided music for two full services this year. Other church members provided vocal solos, clarinet quartets, recorder ensembles, piano duets, guitar backup and drumming. We had a host of contracted musicians including a jazz trio, blues singer, harpist, hand drum player, classical guitar, lute, fiddle and vocalists.
- A call for qualified candidates to submit applications for the Martha Welsh Music Award was posted in the spring of 2018. One candidate applied.
- The Music Committee, together with the Fine Arts Committee, collaborated on three Candlelight Concerts followed by receptions. The concerts celebrated the church’s Bicentennial year with various themes. The proceeds from the Candlelight Concerts benefitted the Music Battery Program. The Music Committee is in the process of accepting and evaluating applications from non-profit music education organizations to receive funding from the 2018-2019 concert season.
- The Music office was moved and re-organized in December.
- In order to provide our Music Directors with proper working tools, I am in the process of completing a number of upgrades to our music technology systems including acquiring professional notation software, a midi-connected keyboard and proper sound equipment/connections for amplifying instruments in the Sanctuary.
- Amy Ball’s original agreement was to serve as pianist/organist for one interim year. She has accepted a promotion to head librarian at her work and has thus, submitted her resignation to us. Many, many thanks and kudos go out to Amy for serving over ten years as Choir Accompanist and for this past year in her increased capacity as pianist/organist. She has been a treasure to the church and will be sorely missed. We are in the process of finding a good solution for Amy’s replacement and expect to announce this soon.
- I have agreed to stay on for one more year as Music Director.

*Respectfully submitted by Susan Conant, Interim Music Director*

### **Religious Education Director**

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

**Staff:** Melissa Zahler, Religious Education Assistant, Deloris Crawford (Nursery), Amanda Gabriel and Evan Thornton (Preschool), Jule Lane and Rafael Martin-Navas (Youth Group Leaders)

**The Religious Education Committee:** Cindy Cooksey-Coale and Joe Krause (Co-Chairs), Kevin Eakes, Mary Ellen-Giess, Erica Hattings, John Hyatt, Danielle Lopez and Kris Rife (Social Justice Liason)

**Volunteers and Helpers:** We have had 24 volunteer Sunday School teachers this year and lots of gracious helpers at Holiday and Social Justice events. We presently have 58 children registered in Religious Education with Sunday attendance averaging 52 children on Sundays throughout the September through June school year.

### **Activities and Accomplishments:**

- Sunday School offerings beyond the classroom:
  - The middle school students attended the Youth Conference at the UUA's Mountain Retreat this year. The high school youth group went to Youth Conferences in Charlotte and The Mountain. They had numerous outings in addition to their Sunday meeting times; attending dinner, a movie, an overnight at the church, several bake sales and a "flamingo flocking" event. This year we will have three high school graduates recognized at our graduation recognition service on May 20.
- Social Justice:
  - Held a school supply drive for Hunley Park Elementary.
  - Held a Harvest Sunday food drive for the Lowcountry Food Bank.
  - Held a Christmas Book Drive for the Book Angels Organization.
  - Empty Bowls Soup fundraiser raised \$500 for One80 Place.
  - Outside of the church, the RE families supported:
    - Pride and Emancipation Day Parades.
    - Monthly Lowcountry Food Bank Backpack Buddies program.

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*(Director of Religious Education Activities and Accomplishments Continued)*

- Social and Holiday:
  - Planned the church-wide Halloween Party.
  - Helped coordinate the Thanksgiving Service.
  - Planned the Holiday Pageant.
  - Planned a Valentine Making Party in the new craft room.
  - Planned the Annual Oyster Roast at Bowen's Island which raises funds for RE scholarships which go towards youth conferences.
  - Helped coordinate the Mother's Day Service.
  - Helped coordinate the Graduation Service.
  - Planned the Easter children's activities.
  - Planned the end-of-the-year party for all RE children on the last day of classes.
  - Planned children's activities for the Father's Day picnic service.
  
- RE Outreach and Service
  - Organized and supervised childcare for church-wide events ranging from congregational meetings to concerts and auctions.
  - Hosting OWL elementary training in June to bring OWL curriculum to our elementary-aged students.
  - Attended Spirit Play Training in Greenville to bring the program to our elementary students during Sunday School lessons.
  - Helped plan the teacher recognition service in church.
  - Planned thank you events for volunteer teachers.
  - Participated in the church-wide fire drill.
  - Parenting groups hosted once a month to discuss parenting topics that support Unitarian Universalism values.

*Respectfully submitted by Megan Thornton, Director of Religious Education*

### **Membership Coordinator**

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

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

- This year I facilitated three Pathway Classes (Fall, Winter, Spring), with the support of the Membership Committee. I canceled the Summer Class due to low enrollment. 30 people participated in the classes. I am grateful to the Membership Committee for organizing and serving lunch and helping with facilities set-up and clean-up at each Pathways Class.
- As of this writing, 26 new Members have joined the church during this fiscal year; this does not include those (up to 7) who will join on May 6. New Member Sunday will be celebrated 3 times this year, welcoming these new Members. Thanks to the Membership Committee, the Vestry Chair and the Minister for their role in facilitating the Ceremony during the Sunday Service. Also, many thanks to George Castano for taking pictures of all participants in each New Member Sunday.
- 9 people filled the role of mentor for Pathway members in this year's Pathways Classes.
- Facilitated 5 Pathfinders classes for newcomers (July, September, December, February, & March). 30 people have participated in Pathfinders this year. I plan to continue a similar schedule of these classes in the coming year.
- I continue to work with the Ushers and Greeters and the Membership Committee to create a welcoming environment for all who attend worship services on Sunday mornings.
- I continue to collaborate directly with the Membership Committee and the Caring Committee. This year I have also sat in with the new Pastoral Visitors Committee.
- On Membership Sunday, May 6, we honored significant membership anniversaries (10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, and 40+ years).
- I submitted a comprehensive Membership Engagement Report to the Vestry in August, based on the previous fiscal year. The report reflects membership numbers, attrition, and participation in church activities.
- I continued the practice, that I began last year, of calling each church member during the month of their membership anniversary date. These calls were met with appreciation and provided me with a structured opportunity to check in with individuals. This Spring I offered this task to the Membership Committee, which they accepted.
- I continued working directly with the Connecting Circles program. My role is to keep track of annual participation, provide suggestions to groups for new members, start new circles, and provide general support where needed.

*Respectfully submitted by Carol Oates, Membership Coordinator*

## **Committee Reports**

### **Alliance**

**Members:** Susan Hartry (President), Susan Hutto Robinson (Vice-President), Diane Boyer (Treasurer), and Barbara Kelly (Secretary). This year the Alliance had 37 Members and Friends.

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

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

- Held 2 Rummage Sales and a Holiday Bazaar and Luncheon.
- Next year, we will combine the Fall Rummage Sale and Holiday Bazaar and Luncheon. Save the date of October 6, 2018 for this event.
- Additional income came from dues (which are \$1.00), UU cookbook sales, Sunday book sales and donations.
- We also started a relationship with Consign Charleston! and ReDo and are approaching receiving \$1,000 from these accounts.
- Sponsored the annual Cantata reception for the Choir on December 10. Will sponsor this reception again next year.
- Voted at our annual meeting on April 9, 2018 to make the following disbursements on Alliance Sunday, May 13 as follows: \$150 each to My Sisters House, People Against Rape, Pet Helpers and Planned Parenthood (501C3); \$1,000 to the Landmark Fund in the name of Sue and Jerry Prazak and various Buildings and Grounds projects.

#### **Additional Comments:**

As mentioned above, we raise these funds through our rummage sales and holiday bazaar. We could use more help with these fundraisers. You only need to commit to whatever time that you have to spare. We can offer child care. Setting up and pricing items the day before the sale is fun and working the sale the next day is even better.

The fellowship is priceless! If you can help, please send me your email and I can keep you informed of upcoming sales. My email address is: hartry.susan@gmail.com

*Respectfully submitted by Susan Hartry, President*

## Archives

**Members:** Susan Robinson (Co-Chair), Rose-Marie Williams (Co-Chair), Gail Schiffer, Randi Hoffman, and Kate Timbers. Nancy Waters recently retired from the committee.

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

The Archives Committee meets on Wednesdays. Our main focus is 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 archivally safe containers in cabinets in Gage Hall, Room 4. In addition, we answer queries, do research on church history, and prepare educational exhibits.

### Activities and Accomplishments:

- Much of our activity this year has been on providing information to the Congregation in the form of displays.
  - Both Carolyn Gilman and Samuel Gilman have been highlighted by displays in a cabinet next to the handicapped ramp in the rear of our Sanctuary.
  - We have hung two shows in Gage Hall in conjunction with the Fine Arts Committee, one on church structures over the years and the other on select ministers.
- In an effort to increase our researching skills, we have also visited the Charleston Museum, the South Carolina History Room at the main branch of the Charleston County Library, and the archives of the South Carolina Historical Society.
- We have also been researching the churchyard and its history as well as collaborating with the docents in revising the docent notebook.
- In addition, we have begun working with Karen and David Ruef on our ongoing oral history project.

*Respectfully submitted by Gail Schiffer, Member*

### **Bicentennial Committee**

**Members:** Diane Boyer, Paul Garbarini, Richard Hayes, Hillary Hutchinson, Cristy Landis, John Newell, Sally Newell, & Nancy Waters

**Purpose/Vision Statement:** *Commemorate 200 years of providing liberal religion in Charleston.*

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

- Each Sunday bulletin revisited what was happening in Charleston or elsewhere in the world that week in 1817, and each month's Gateway looked back at an important event in the two-hundred-year history of our church.
- On October 29<sup>th</sup> members of the congregation performed Alex Hild's play about the history of the Unitarian Church in Charleston. Cristy Landis was the director, with musical accompaniment by Amy Ball.
- The November 3<sup>rd</sup> Candlelight Concert in our Sanctuary featured Chamber Music Charleston and Sophia Zimmerman performing music that would have been heard in Charleston in 1817, with historical introductions by Dr. Nic Butler.
- On November 12<sup>th</sup> Dr. John A. Macaulay, the author of the definitive history of early nineteenth-century Unitarianism, spoke at the Forum on "Consensus and Conflict: Southern Unitarianism in the Nineteenth Century."
- The highlight of our Bicentennial Celebration occurred on Sunday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>. The choir performed the premiere of an anthem written by Susan Conant in commemoration of the bicentennial of Unitarianism in Charleston. This was followed by a Gala celebration, orchestrated by Diane Boyer with the help of other members of the committee, the Vestry, and the docents, in the Sanctuary, Gage Hall, and the Churchyard.
- We still have a few 2017's Holy City Christmas Ornament, which features the Unitarian Church in Charleston and our bicentennial. These will remain on sale through the congregational meeting in May at the original price of \$21. After that the price on any remaining ornaments will go up to \$25. Part of the proceeds goes to our Church!

*Respectfully submitted by John Newell, Chair*



## **Books & Coffee**

**Members:** Ray Setser (Chair), various members who enjoy reading and discussing books.

**Purpose/Vision Statement:** *The Unitarian Universalist Books & Coffee group has been a longterm “extracurricular” church activity; it is open to anyone who wishes to participate. Books are suggested and chosen by those who attend, and the person who leads the discussion is usually the one who recommended the book. Most books chosen are nonfiction, but we read a book of fiction over the summer. The Books & Coffee group offers a chance for both information and fellowship to those who like to read and discuss books.*

### **Activities and Achievements:**

- We meet in one another’s homes once a month, on the second Sunday of the month, 5:30p.m. - 8:30 p.m., to discuss a current book. We have snacks and coffee during a break in the discussion. We don’t meet during the summer.
- During the past church year, 2017 – 2018, we read and discussed the following books:
  - *Russia Revisited*, by Joanne Simson
  - *Main Street*, by Sinclair Lewis
  - *The Sixth Extinction*, by Elizabeth Kolbart
  - *A Foot in the River*, by Felipe Fernandez-Armesto
  - *The Silk Roads: A New History of the World*, by Peter Frankopan
  - *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*, by Yuval Harari

*Respectfully submitted by Ray Setser, Chair*

## **Caring**

**Members/Area Leaders:** Marcia Castano (Chair), Marcia Castano & Barbara Johnson (James Island, Johns Island, and Folly Beach area), Karen Abrams (Downtown), Mela Khedouri & Ellie Setser (West Ashley), Sarah Arnold (Mt. Pleasant), Aliix Plaxco (Summerville, Daniel Island, and North Charleston)

**Caring Network:** We have several “arms” reaching out to Downtown Charleston, West Ashley, Mt. Pleasant, North Charleston, Daniel Island, Summerville, Johns Island and James Island, Folly Beach, and Goose Creek. Our growing church membership is best served, we think, with this kind of division of helping labor. About 80 network volunteers who participate as volunteers and they are the key element in seeing that services are available as they are needed. The Caring Committee welcomes new volunteers.

*(Caring Committee Continued)*

**Ex Officio:** Rev. Danny Reed, Rev. Nancy Pellegrini, Carol Oates, and Sandra Selvitelli all of whom give invaluable advice and assistance.

**Purpose/Vision Statement:** *The Caring Committee supports each of our members and friends as they experience momentous and memorable events, stages, and transitions in their lives. The committee is apprised of a need for assistance by referrals from the minister, the membership coordinator, and our congregants. Always mindful of privacy concerns, we monitor and react in ways deemed appropriate to each situation. The Committee's Area Leaders meet once a month and communicate by phone and email many times between those meetings.*

**Activities and Accomplishments:**

- Sent many church-wide greetings in this past year.
- Checked and visited on those who have been ill or undergone operations.
- Grieved with those who have lost loved ones.
- Provided food when needed.
- Offered rides to appointments and to church.
- Helped new parents.
- Many more important services as requested/needed.
- Reaches out to homebound members and people who have moved from the Charleston area but want to remain closely affiliated with the church.

We depend on all of you out there to inform us of your needs and concerns. Please call the office or call Danny to let us know and we're right on it! Want to join us? Tell Marcia, Carol, Sandra or Nancy Pellegrini—you'll be added to the volunteer network for your own home-area.

*Respectfully submitted by Marcia Castaño, Chair*

## Churchyard

**Members:** **Bob Jontos (Chair)**, Sarah Cothran (Secretary), Fran Ennis (Gateway author), Laura Moses (Correspondance Coordinator). Stan Boyer, Jim Burke, Karen Del Porto, Suzie DeMerrill, Krystina Deren, Tamara Eberlein, Tom Hartry, Stan Hunton, Karen Ruef, and Tom Wiedemann

**Purpose/Vision Statement:** *The Churchyard Committee strives to be good stewards of the grave sites, pathways and grounds of the church. The committee pledges to maintain the beauty, character and safety of the churchyard while holding the utmost respect for those who rest therein.*

### Activities and Accomplishments:

- **Open Space** –The open space landscape and seating design was updated and revised to reflect input from committee members and the Vestry. The lack of availability of an AutoCADD operator has hampered the redrafting of the plan.
- **Gateway Walk** – A memorandum of understanding regarding the cooperative efforts of the Charleston Garden Club and our Churchyard Committee for maintenance of the walkway plants and hardscapes has been drafted and reviewed by the Vestry. The document was sent to the Charleston Garden Club for their consideration. This is done in an effort to clearly delineate the responsibilities of each group regarding walkway maintenance and operation, which has been passed down verbally in the past. This process continues. The Garden Club is reviewing the revised document.
- Power has been restored to the irrigation system and will be programed by the Churchyard Committee.
- **Churchyard Management Plan** - The plan will present the history of the garden and the philosophy that guides its care. The plan will also seek to educate Eden Keepers in botany and garden management using the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach.
- **“What’s Blooming in the Garden”** – In an effort to educate visitors to the churchyard/garden about the plants blooming there, a binder with photos of plants currently blooming in the garden will be displayed on a stand adjacent the walkway. The Church Docents have graciously agreed to put out the binder and stand while the sanctuary is open.

**Brick Wall Repair** -A segment of the brick wall separating the churchyard and the Annex yard has been righted and two steel braces installed to stabilize the wall.

*(Churchyard Committee Activities and Accomplishments Continued)*

- **Annex Gate** - The gate between the Annex and the churchyard has had the bricks of the support pillar reset and mortared, the lower hinge repaired, as well as a new wrought iron stop installed.
- **Tombstone Repair** - Two more headstones have been restored and reinstalled. Additional headstones will be repaired as funds are available.
- **Memorial Walkway** - Plans for the initial 50-foot segment of a memorial walkway have been approved by the Vestry and the Churchyard Committee. Thanks to a very generous donation by a church family, construction of the walkway has begun and is expected to be finished by the end of April. The initial segment will provide burial space for two urns per square foot along each side of the walkway. Management of the walkway will be under the direction of the Memorial Walkway Committee.

**Administration:**

- The Churchyard Committee meets after the monthly work party on the first Saturday of the month. All are welcome.
- Members of the churchyard work parties are referred to as “Eden Keepers.” Churchyard work parties are held the first Saturday morning of each month from 9 AM-12 PM and 8-11 AM during the summer. A potluck lunch is shared by all in Gage Hall following the work party.
- All are encouraged to join us regardless of gardening experience.

*Respectfully submitted by Bob Jontos, Chair*

### **Denominational Affairs**

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

**Purpose/Vision Statement:** *The Unitarian Church in Charleston's Denominational Affairs Committee seeks to enrich congregational life at our church and promote the strength of Unitarian Universalism by promoting awareness of the larger Unitarian Universalist faith community by communicating to the Congregation the programs sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), the Southern Region, and the Southern Cluster of SED Unitarian Universalist Churches, encouraging and promoting our financial and member support to the UUA (including the Southern Region) – UC-CHS is striving to be a Fair Share Congregation, encouraging support of and participation in denominational activities and staying connected with the larger Unitarian Universalist faith community.*

- The Denominational Affairs Committee was not active in 2017-2018; however, the members did work closely with the Bicentennial Committee to host the Southern Regional Spring Meeting
- In celebration of our 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary as a Unitarian church successfully hosted the Southern Region Spring Meeting, which included a debate/discussion led by the UUA Moderator Jim Keys with the three UU ministers running for President of the UUA. It was very exciting and rewarding to have the next President of the UUA (Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray) talking about her plans for the future of the UUA.
- In addition, the UUA does support the education and service of the ministers throughout the Unitarian Universalist Association. The Unitarian Church in Charleston was excited, happy and proud that at the General Assembly in New Orleans in June, our assistant minister, Reverend Nancy Pellegrini, was taken into “full fellowship” by the UUA.

*Respectfully submitted by Richard Hayes*

### **Docents**

**Members/Administration:** Abby Himmelein (Chair and Steering Committee), Erica Hattings (Steering Committee and Program Liason to Buildings and Grounds), Tom Hartry (Steering Committee), Paul Garbarini (Docent Educator), John Preston (Media Consultant)  
Susan Hutto Robinson (Scheduling Coordinator)

**Docents:** Linda Maxwell Allen, Sarah Arnold, Diane Boyer, Stan Boyer, Marcus Giddens, Tom Hartry, Erica Hattings, Marilyn Henderson, Abby Himmelein, Randi Hoffman, Mary Ann Hughston, Kathleen King, Paula Knecht, Joanne Milkereit, Alan Moore, Kathleen Mulroy, John Newell, Sally Newell, Gary Nichols, Aliix Plaxco, Karen Ruef, Gail Schiffer, Darragh Simon, Joanne Simson, Lisa Trysseoone, Timmy Van Parys, Floy Work

**Substitutes:** Kay Haun, Hillary Hutchinson, John Preston, Bill Thomas, and Jan Trysseoone

*(Docent Committee Continued)*

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

**Activities and Accomplishments:**

- Increased the number of visitors to the sanctuary from 8,242 in 2016 to 10,004 in 2017.
- Increase in donations from \$3,001 in 2016 to \$ \$3,501 in 2017.
- Increase in sales of postcards, and books from \$124.25 to \$134.84 in 2017.
- Increased tour dates during the Home and Garden tours and Spoleto, USA account for thirty percent of total church visitors every year.
- Provided churchyard tours for Bicentennial celebration.

*Respectfully Submitted by Abby Himmelein*

**Endowment**

**Members:** William Finn: 2017-2020, Chairman Richard Hayes: 2017-2020 Frank Hardee: 2017-2020 Karen Abrams: 2016-2019 Steve Wilson: 2015-2018 Ex officio: Nolan Presswood, Treasurer Terry Walsh: Consultant (Assistant Treasurer) John Warren/Conrad Zimmerman: Consultant (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 at least a majority of those voting at an officially-called meeting of the congregation: Portions of the Endowment Fund (including up to 10% of the protected principal) can be committed as security for loans, and in extreme conditions threatening the survival of the congregation, annually if more than 10% of the (Endowment Investment Board Continued)protected Principle or the entirety of the Endowment Fund (including protected principal) can be committed to help the congregation recover by a written vote of more than 50% of the corporate members. The Endowment Investment Board is formally established to oversee the investment of the Endowment Fund and to establish and maintain guidelines for acceptance of gifts.*

*(Endowment Investment Board Continued)*

**Activities and Accomplishments:**

- The EIB 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 2017 the Endowment funds experienced an investment gain of 19.20% ending the calendar year with a balance of \$1,072,890.00. The Endowment board following its policy to distribute 3%. There are three restricted funds within the endowment; social justice, churchyard and Music fund. There is also an unrestricted fund. The allocation amount is calculated using the value of the funds on December 31 and will be available on July 1, 2018. The distribution for unrestricted will be \$22,421 and the Vestry will decide how to use these funds however it is required that the funds be used for capital improvements not the operating budget. Social Justice will have \$4,828, the Churchyard \$3,064 and the Music \$1,882. These are all proportionate allocations.
- The Baird Company holds our Endowment funds and they are invested in the American General Group of Funds. The Endowment Board is considering the UUA guidelines for socially responsible investments for future funds received. The Endowment board met quarterly during 2017.

*Respectfully submitted by William Finn, Chair*

**Finance**

**Members:** Richard Hayes (Chair), Nolan Prestwood (Treasurer), Charles Everett, Fred Himmelein, Fe Houston, Terry Walsh, and staff support from Reverend Danny Reed and Executive Director Sandra Selvitelli.

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

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

Details of the budget and cash flow reports from the Treasurer are reviewed monthly by the Committee, and recommendations for actions sent to the Vestry.

*(Finance Committee Continued)*

The proposed budget for 2018-2019 (Fiscal year 2019) was submitted to the Vestry for consideration in March 2018 for the Annual Meeting. Working with Betsy Grund and Al Finch (Personnel Committee) this budget ensures continued fair remuneration for our outstanding staff. Ren Manning and Jack Hurley lead a superb Pledge Drive, ensuring continued growth for our Church. And for the sixth year in a row the Operating Budget includes no funds from the Endowment. However, in accordance with Church Endowment management policy, 2-5% of the Endowment interest is used for special projects each year to help achieve the Church's Strategic goals – this year continued to concentrate on Church Safety projects and developing a reserve for minister sabbaticals.

The Finance Team has a set a solid set of written church financial policies and procedures that will be audited by the end of 2018.

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

*Respectfully submitted by Richard Hayes, Chair*

### **Fine Arts**

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

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

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

- Conducted 11 art shows:
  - Claire Law & Ambra Morosi
  - Susant Trott & Karyn Healey
  - Jim & Joanna Innes: Prints and Poetry
  - Bicentennial Show I: Church History
  - Membership Show & Candlelight Concert
  - Bernadette Wladyka
  - Pedro Rodriguez
  - Richard Hagerty
  - Bicentennial Show II: UU Ministers' Portraits
  - Rick Schmiedt and Karen Kate Morter & Candlelight Concert
  - Private Collection Show
- Gage Hall Mini-Gallery (back entrance) features works by Cisco Lindsey and Friends.



*(Fine Arts Committee Activities and Accomplishments Continued)*

- The Fine Arts Committee worked cooperatively with the Music Committee to present benefit concerts/art shows that aid music programs in poverty-level schools in the area.

**Plans for 2018-19:**

- Continue to show the work of guest artists (mostly Cisco Lindsey's contacts)
- Continue to offer Solo Shows for the art work of our own members
- Continue the Private Collections Show (art work owned by UU members)
- Children's Art Show (in cooperation with the DRE)

*Respectfully submitted by Joanna Innes, Chair*

**Forum**

**Members:** Simon Lewis (Chair), Laura Moses

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

**Activities and Accomplishments:**

- This year's lineup of speakers covered a range of topics from current affairs (e.g. talks on the V.C. Summer nuclear plant debacle) through church business (e.g., financial state of the church) to health and social justice issues. Green Sanctuary co-sponsored a number of presentations. Two of the sessions were tied in to the Church's Bicentennial commemoration. We rely heavily on the College of Charleston faculty to provide speakers, but regularly tap congregation members, too (e.g., Nancy Simpson, John Preston, JoAnn Simson and the UU Authors). Sometimes these two groups overlap (e.g., John Newell, Matt Cressler)
- Audiences ranged in size from a low of 8 to 45. Factors attending attendance in addition to subject-matter include whether or not Choir has the day off, and weather. The lowest attendances seem to be for Forums promoting social justice or other non-profit groups.
- Audience satisfaction seems to have remained high based on feedback.

*(Forum Activities and Accomplishments Continued)*

- We have continued the practice of publishing Forum topics at least a month in advance so that people can see what's coming up. These are now available on a separate Forum tab on the church web-site as well as in the monthly Gateways, with reminders included in the weekly Thursday e-mail blast to members. We are also using the Church's Facebook page to make announcements.

*Respectfully submitted by Simon Lewis, Chair*

### **Landmark/Buildings and Grounds**

**Members:** Judy Manning (Chair), Erica Hattings (Co-Chair), assistance from other church members as well as Sandra Selvitelli and Joe McCormack.

**Purpose/Vision Statement:** *To maintain the Sanctuary, Gage Hall, Annex and grounds of the Unitarian Church in Charleston, and keep them in a good state of repair; to supervise any renovations, repairs and restorations; to care for furnishings and equipment. The Chairman of this Committee supervises, along with the Minister, the Sexton.*

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

##### **Projects Completed:**

- Minister's office ceiling replaced.
- Minister's office floor refinished.
- Music office / Classroom ceiling replaced.
- New ceiling lights installed in upstairs Gage Hall.
- New wayside pulpit installed at entrance to Gateway Walk from King Street.
- New Emergency Exit lights installed downstairs Gage Hall.
- One of two HV/AC units replaced in downstairs Gage Hall.
- Light panel replaced in the Sanctuary.
- Sewer drain from Gage Hall to alley repaired.

##### **Projects to be Addressed:**

- Recoat Sanctuary roof within the next year. (Have one estimate)
- Lime Wash Sanctuary exterior within the next two years. (Have one estimate)
- Change locks in Gage Hall.
- Treat termite damage in Annex and replace any damaged wood.
- Replace termite damaged wood in Gage Hall. (Have one estimate)
- Replace second toilet in Gage Hall.

*(Landmark Buildings and Grounds Projects to be Addressed Continued)*

- Stabilize Sanctuary painted and stained glass windows. (Have one estimate)
- List is long. Please ask Judy or Erica to see complete list...

*Respectfully submitted by Judy Manning, Chair*

### **Let's Do Lunch**

**Members:** Bob and Mary Graham (Coordinators), Church Point of Contact: Carol Oates

**Purpose/Vision Statement:** *In support of the Church's Mission Statement, Let's Do Lunch provides a venue for fellow members and friends of the Unitarian Church in Charleston to share a meal and conversation in an effort to strengthen ties and understanding among participants.*

**Activities and Accomplishments:** We meet at local restaurants in Charleston, Mt. Pleasant, North Charleston, James Island, Johns Island and Daniel Island on the second Tuesday of each month. We have some favorites and solicit new suggestions (where participants have enjoyed eating). We vary our choice of venue by location and type of cuisine. We ensure the restaurant provides handicapped access, sufficient parking and vegetarian options.

- Attendance fluctuates, but has been growing overall. Our group email list has also grown.
- Several restaurants have been especially enjoyed: Taziki's (Mt. P), Zia (James I), Vespa (Daniel I), and Rita's (Folly B).
- Let's Do Lunch may introduce participants to new types of food and places for them to eat in the future.

If you would like to be included in the Let's Do Lunch group email, contact Bob Graham at [rgraham343@gmail.com](mailto:rgraham343@gmail.com) or cell 703-915-1694

*Respectfully Submitted by Bob and Mary Graham*

## Membership

**Members:** Anne Lewis and Susan S. White (Co-Chairs), George Castaño, Marcia Castaño, Gabriel Gauthier, Ren Manning, Karen K. Ruef (Former Chair), Priscilla Shumway, Sue Weller, and Bernadette Wladyka

**Ex Officio:** Carol Oates (Membership Coordinator)

**Purpose/Vision Statement:** *The purpose of the Membership Committee is to welcome visitors and to facilitate the transition of interested persons with their membership and integration into the life of the Congregation.*

### Activities and Accomplishments:

- We held four committee meetings during the year:
  - August 29, hosted by Marcia and George Castaño
  - November 7, hosted by Anne Lewis
  - March 6, hosted by Anne Lewis
  - May 14, hosted by Susan White
- We assisted our Membership Coordinator with three sessions of Pathways classes:
  - October 22 and 29
  - January 21 and 28
  - April 15 and 22
  - Committee members provided lunch and setup/cleanup support for each session.
- We had “New Member Sundays” to welcome new members to our congregation on November 12; February 11; and May 6. The latter was also Membership Sunday to honor existing members’ anniversaries. Committee members provided cake and other snacks for coffee hour on these dates. We also assisted Joe with cleanup.
- We had a total of 29 new members this year.
- The Membership Coordinator sends out a new member newsletter, with photos of each provided by George Castaño and bios written by Ren Manning.
- George Castaño continues to orchestrate the signup of volunteers to serve as ushers and greeters for each Sunday service. Almost all members of the committee participate in this important task.
- Committee members also volunteer to serve at the Welcome Table during coffee hour after each service. Karen Ruef manages this schedule. We assisted with the sale of t-shirts at the Welcome Table this year.
- The Committee donated a basket to be auctioned off at the annual auction again this year.
- Committee members are now assisting the Membership Coordinator with follow up and anniversary calls to members of the congregation.

*Respectfully submitted, Susan White, Co-Chair*

## Music

**Members:** Claire Law (Chair), Sally Newell (Secretary), Amy Ball, Susan Earp, Kathy Guy Elaine Hunter, Joanna Innes, and Judy Warren

**Ex Officio:** Susan Conant (Interim Music Director)

**Purpose/Vision Statement:** *The church Music Committee assists the Music Director and enhances the worship experience through music, outreach to the community, and through various music-related events. The Music Committee organizes the Candlelight Concert series that raises funds for underserved music programs for kids in the Charleston-area. The Music Committee also sponsors the Martha Welch scholarship which is awarded to one student in our Religious Education program each year.*

### Activities and Accomplishments:

- The choir meets on Wednesdays from 6:45 p.m.-8:30 p.m. and sings on most Sundays, from September through the end of May, except when the Music Director hires outside musicians.
- The Interim Music Director for 2017-18 was Susan Conant. Her contract was extended for the 2018-19 program year as well.
- The part-time Music Accompanist for 2017-18 was Amy Ball.
- The Children's Choir was integrated with the Adult Choir. The new initiative was called the "Intergenerational Choir." However, it was difficult to get families to commit to Wednesday evening rehearsals so the Music Director has enlisted the help of adult choir members to work with kids after services on Sundays.
- We received one Martha Welch scholarship application from highland bagpipe player Oliver Lewis, one of our RE youth group members. He received positive acclaims from our outside judge, Ms. Andrea Quinn, Music Director at James Island Charter High School. Oliver has been awarded the \$500 scholarship to pursue his music education.
- In 2017-18, the Committee produced three (3) Candlelight Concerts to commemorate the Church's Bicentennial celebrations. \$1000 of the proceeds for the concerts will be donated to the Music Battery charitable organization.
  - The first was on November 3 and featured Chamber Music Charleston. The concert included salon music from the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century as it would have been performed around the Church's originating year of 1817. Nic Butler, Music Historian at the Charleston County Library, provided historical background.
  - The second concert was held on February 2 and was performed by the Low Country Voices Choir.
  - The last concert of the season was in April and showcased piano masterworks performed by member Rick Stanton and the readings of original poetry by his wife and member Jane Stanton.

*(Music Committee Continued)*

- The Committee initiated a new process for organizations for organizations to apply for funds from the 2018-19 concert series. Applications are being accepted through the summer.
- Each Candlelight Concert was followed by a reception with food, wine and an new art exhibit presented by our Fine Arts Committee.
- Candles are an important branding feature of the Candlelight Concerts. In 2018, Susan Conant, Susan Earp, Kathy Guy, Elaine Hunter, and Judy Warren researched, purchased and installed non-flammable candles for use in the Sanctuary.
- New Chair and members were selected for next year. The Chair will be Diane Boyer, Co-Chair Elaine Hunter, Secretary Sally Newell and Treasurer Kathy Guy. If you are interested in joining the Music Committee, please contact Diane Boyer.

*Respectfully submitted by C. Claire Law, Chair, Music Committee*

**Pastoral Visitors Committee**

**Members:** Linda Maxwell Allen, Kaye Finch, Randi Hoffman John Kelley, Barbara Kelly, Judy Manning, and Jan Stanton

**Staff Liaisons:** Rev. Nancy Pellegrini and Carol Oates.

**Purpose/Vision Statement:** *To extend the care of the church through one-to-one caring and helping activities by lay members of the congregation to those who are in special need. This is pastoral care—a ministry of presence and support, not pastoral counseling—which requires counseling certification.*

**Activities and Accomplishments:**

- Potential Pastoral Visitors were identified and invited to join this committee.
- A list of members who find it difficult to attend church was composed.
- The program was launched by two training sessions in October for Pastoral Visitors. Two new members, Linda Maxwell Allen and Barbara Kelly, will be trained in May.
- Each Pastoral Visitor was assigned to a member to visit on a monthly basis.
- Monthly meetings have been held for the purpose of support and accountability.

*Respectfully Submitted by Jan Stanton, Coordinator*

## **Personnel**

**Members:** Betsy Grund, Co-Chair; Al Finch, Co-Chair; Karen Abrams, Tony Brown, Frank Hardie, and Floy Work

**Ex Officio:** Rev. Danny and Sandra Selvitelli

**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, Office Administrator and the Vestry, works to ensure that the policies and procedures as described in the Personnel Manual are followed.*

### **Activities and Accomplishments:**

- Oriented new members of Personnel Committee;
- Implemented co-chair model and recruited new committee members
- Reviewed all job descriptions to ensure accuracy
- Reviewed and revised staff evaluation/goal setting procedures;
- Inventoried personnel files to ensure required information is being maintained for each staff member
- Collaborated with Vestry and lay leaders in Religious Education to recruit, hire and orient new DRE.
- Collaborated with Music leaders and staff to support interim Music Director
- Collaborated with Vestry and Staff to review and revise staffing configuration
- Collaborated with Vestry, Staff and Lay Leaders to implement Sabbatical for Minister
- Planned for Review and update of Personnel Policy Manual

*Respectfully submitted by Betsy Grund, Chair*

## **Planned Giving**

**Members:** Judy Bruce (Chair), Trip Banner, Ken Fickling, Prudence Finn, Hillary Hutchinson, Steve Wilson, and Floy Work

**Purpose/Vision:** *Planned Giving (PG) is a subcommittee of the Finance Group of the Unitarian Church in Charleston. Its purpose is to secure and enhance the long-term vitality of the Church through an on-going program of planned giving.*

*(Planned Giving Committee Continued)*

**Activities and Accomplishments:**

- Informed and educated the congregation about estate gifting
- Assisted potential donors to create legacy plans which meet their wishes
- Identified new gifting concepts of interest
- Assured that benefactors' intentions are met within Church endowment guidelines
- Appropriately thanked and recognized benefactors
- Arranged and held a Sunday morning Forum on tax implications of non-profit gifting. The guest was Heather Aydlette of Hyland, Ruddy & Garbett, CPA's in Mt Pleasant. Attendance was light.
- Continued conversations with potential benefactors, raising the number of benefactors to 44 by May 1. (The percentage has changed since church membership numbers have decreased).
- Launched the UUA's Wake Now Our Vision campaign, offering a 10% enticement for new legacy gifting, a program designed to enhance participation and enthusiasm of Unitarian Universalists nationwide
- Hosted a social gathering to create camaraderie and recognition among UUC benefactors.
- Plans for the coming year will focus on increasing interest in legacy giving using the energy of the WNOV effort.

*Respectfully submitted by Judy Bruce, Chair*

**Religious Education**

**Members:** Cindy Cooksey-Coale and Joe Krause (Co-Chairs), Kevin Eakes, Mary Ellen Giess, Erica Hattings, Alex Hild (Adult RE), John Hyatt (Vestry liaison), Joe Krause, Danielle Lopez, Jee Youn Fickling, and Kris Rife (Social Justice liaison)

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



*(Religious Education Committee Continued)*

**Activities and Accomplishments:**

- This has been a year of transition and development for the Religious Education ("RE") Program, as we bid a fond farewell to our former RE Director Janet Watts and looked toward a new era under Megan Thornton. The RE Committee has continued to work on the development and implementation of our committee's mandate, with an eye both on our successful past and a bright future.
- Over the last year, the work of the Religious Education Committee has been largely threefold:
  - Work towards a smooth transition between Janet and Megan, while maintaining continuity of programming and education for our children and congregants.
  - Provide needed updates to our RE facilities and curriculum, and plan for implementation of new and expanded curricula in the future.
  - Work to provide our religious education staff and volunteers with the resources and support to implement this plan, while attempting to expand our roster of volunteers.
- Please go the Director of Religious Education's report for details of the work carried out this past year. For the coming year, the committee will now be co-chaired by Cindy Cooksey-Coale and Danielle Lopez.

*Respectfully submitted by Cindy Cooksey-Coale and Joe Krause (Co-Chairs)*

**Safety Committee**

**Purpose/Vision Statement:** *The Safety Committee works to ensure the Church prepares, responds, and recovers from emergency or disaster incidents and provides the safest environment possible for congregants, visitors and staff.*

**Members:** Carol Tempel (Chair), Lisa Hajjar, Richard Hayes, Judy Manning, Alan Moore, John Narkunas, Danny Reed, David Ruff, Sheila Scarborough, Megan Thornton, and Ron Updike

*(Safety Committee Continued)*

**Activities and Accomplishments:**

- The safety team and the volunteer incident coordinator provided oversight of Sunday services, conducted a sanctuary evacuation drill, and periodically reminded the congregation of emergency evacuation procedures via announcements at services and in the bulletin.
- The safety team co-leaders provided basic safety training for the members of the team, staff, and interested ushers, greeters, docents, and program council leaders on CPR, the use of the AED and evacuation protocol.
- The safety committee met quarterly, monitored church facilities and safety equipment for compliance and repairs, prepared budgetary requests for repairs and staffing, and checked that recommendations were implemented.
- Four safety team members attended active shooter training and provided a report to the steering committee.
- Video cameras in the sanctuary, gage hall, the annex and parking lot were installed and made operational.

**Next Steps:**

- Repairs and push bars are needed for two sanctuary doors and one upstairs door in Gage Hall.
- It's recommended that once the church implements two services, the church should hire an incident coordinator to oversee safety team staffing and monitor safety equipment.
- Continue to meet quarterly to implement the EOP and consider improvements to
- the operation and needs of the church and the Safety Team.
- Continue to schedule safety presentations to the Program Council and its
- Subcommittees, hold evacuation drills and promote understanding of safety requirements and procedures.
- Continue to seek additional members of the safety team.

*Respectfully Submitted by David Ruef*

### **Service Auction**

**Members:** Donna Reyburn coordinator with Susan Garrison as event organizer, Nancy Simpson as donation organizer, and Terry Welsh as data organizer, Fran Ennis, Prudence Finn, Michael Griffith, Abby Himmelein, Ren Manning, Claudia Updike, Barbara Kelly, Gail Schiffer, and Randy Bjork

**Staff Liasons:** Joe McCormack and Sandra Selvitelli

**Purpose/Mission Statement:** *The mission of the Service Auction Committee is to raise funds for the church's annual operating budget by holding a Silent and a Live Auction on an annual basis as preset by the church calendar. The Vestry sets an amount that they anticipate will be raised each year.*

The auction is split into two weekends; the Silent Auction being held after church in the Charleston's Day School on the first Sunday in November and the Live Auction being held the next Saturday evening in November in Gage Hall. The auction is viewed as a social event and a fun way to give back to the church by all who participate. The committee works from September through November setting a theme, publicizing the auction in the Gateway and the Sunday bulletin, seeking donations of goods and services, arranging food, drink, and logistics for two events, and finalizing receipts and numbers after the event.

This year theme "Moon Pie over Charleston" came about because Charleston was a 2017 viewing spot for the total eclipse of the sun and guess what the Moon Pie turned 100<sup>th</sup> years old. To top it all off our new auctioneer was name Justin Pye. He brought new energy to the auction. His fast pace style was a factor in us collecting \$38,000 during the two auctions. That total topped last year. He was amazing at selling seating at the dinners which is our biggest money maker.

*Respectfully submitted by Susan Garrison, Event Organizer*

## **Social Justice**

**Purpose/Vision Statement:** *The committee serves as a coordinating and communication group with the Unitarian Church in Charleston congregation and the greater Charleston community. Our main focus has been to address issues related to social justice and social responsibility at the local and state level. The outreach and in reach activities are done by sub-committees/action groups who meet as necessary to achieve their objectives. They include: Arm in Arm (formerly Gun Sense SC), Book Angels, Civil Rights Action/Activities, Charleston Area Justice Ministry (CAJM), Coffee House Fundraising Concerts to support Mitchell School Science Curriculum based field trips, Community Outreach Giving, including the Social Justice Endowment Fund, Community Outreach Volunteering, Green Sanctuary, Refugee project collaboration with Lutheran Services Carolinas, collaboration with Religious Education Activities, and Welcoming Congregation Activities. Other church groups are active in Social Justice in our community, such as the Alliance, the Music Committee and the Religious Education Committee.*

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

### **Social Justice/Advocacy**

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

##### **Arm in Arm (Formerly Gun Sense SC)**

**Purpose/Vision Statement:** *To reduce the public health crisis of gun violence by supporting relevant legislation and educating and inspiring communities across South Carolina to work toward practical solutions.*

- An abridged Stand-Up Sunday was held in February 2018 at which about 50 members of our congregation signed letters to legislators.
- Photographs of our congregation standing up in the sanctuary to oppose lax gun laws were hand-delivered, along with a congregational letter, to local State Senator Chip Campsen and to Senate Judiciary Committee chairman Luke Rankin.

*Respectfully submitted by Gary Smith*

*(Social Justice Committee/Advocacy Continued)*

### **Book Angels**

**Members/Contributors:** Members/friends of the Unitarian Church in Charleston who have worked on book drives, book deliveries, book sorting and boxing and Facebook set-up include: Amy Ball, Colleen and Kent Griffin, Anita Harrison, John Kelley, Judy and Ren Manning, John and Wendy McGonagle, Alan Moore, Claudia and Ron Updike, and Sophia Zimmerman.

**Purpose/Vission Statement:** *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.*

### **Program Background:**

- Provide new and gently used recreational children's reading books for in-classroom Book Angels lending libraries for schools where a substantial portion of the students read below grade level and live in poverty. We provide 7-10 books per 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
  - **Students can select own books from Book Angels classroom libraries to take home and read.** Voluntary, students not required to take books home to read and no book reports are required -- we want kids to look upon books as recreational, fun reading
  - **Schools are to communicate to parents/caregivers to urge students to bring books home to read and turn off TV and read w/ kids 20-30 min. every night**
- Book Angels will return annually to replenish classroom libraries of participating schools.

### **Accomplishments:**

- Since beginning in the Charleston area in 201, Book Angels has collected and distributed almost 100,000 books to 17 elementary and middle Title I schools in Charleston and Dorchester counties.
- During 2016, book drives were held or are scheduled at the following schools: Ashley Hall, Porter Gaud, Christ Our King Stella Maris, Palmetto Scholars Academy, Charleston Day, Laing Middle, Cario Middle, Ashley River Creative Arts, First Baptist Lower, Mason Prep, Jennie Moore Elementary, Charles Pinkney and the Daily Vacation Bible School at First United Methodist Isle of Palms.

*(Social Justice Committee/Advocacy Book Angels Continued)*

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

*Respectfully Submitted by Ren Manning*

### **Civil Rights Related Activities**

- Participated and had a float in the Gay Pride Parade
- Participated and had a float in the Emancipation Parade
- Participated in the Martin Luther King Parade
  - UC-CHS participation was very good. We are proud to have participated in these important parades.

*Respectfully submitted by Social Justice Committee*

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

**Members:** Team Captain: Mike Griffith; Team Leaders: Frank Hardie, Suzanne Hardie, Kay Haun, Joanna Innes, Joe Krause, Diane Narkunas, Libby Smith, George Tempel, Bill Thomas, Jackie Thomas and over 100 network members and active participants.

**Purpose/Vision Statement:** *The Charleston Area Justice Ministry, CAJM, is a growing network of Faith Based Congregations who are culturally, economically, geographically and religiously diverse – coming together to make the Charleston area a more just place to live. Member congregations (currently 30) work together to empower marginalized people in our communities. We accomplish this by doing research, educating the public, and publically addressing the root causes of, and solutions to, poverty and injustice in our communities. CAJM is unique in its approach in that it transforms the systems that cause suffering by holding local officials accountable for resolving these inequities and injustices.*

### **Activities and Accomplishments:**

- Charleston County School District (CCSD) funded 280 new pre-K slots (2014) and continue every year. Over 1000 students have benefited.
- In a year and a half recently there were 1000 in-school arrests, for things like Disturbing School and Simple Assault. Black students were 6 times more likely to be arrested

*(Social Justice/Charleston Area Justice Ministry (CAJM) Continued)*

- CCSD agreed to implement new discipline policies (PBIS- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support) to reduce suspensions (2014). Suspension rates at some schools were 40-50%!
- At the 2017 Nehemiah Action, CCSD agreed to fund more support for PBIS, and adopt Restorative Practices, a program to reduce in-school arrests and suspensions (2017). A Restorative Practice Coordinator was hired and whole school training is happening at 5 schools.
- School Board members and the Superintendent's representative all said "It was a pleasure working with CAJM and we look forward to a continuation". All schools have been trained in PBIS, and 7 "School Climate Coaches" have been hired. Eight of ten schools implementing PBIS had suspension rates significantly reduced: A middle school from 42% to 15%; an elementary from 24% to 15%.
- CAJM's good relationship with CCSD prompted them to ask CAJM to co-sponsor a workshop on Restorative Practices for teachers, parents, and anyone else interested, held on March 24.
- Wage Theft is a huge problem. Several high-profile cases have been in the news (Hyams Deli). Although SC has laws to protect them typical workers can't afford an attorney. County Council funded Legal Services of SC to recover stolen wages (2015), but failed to renew in 2016. CAJM pushed for renewal. Negotiations continue. In the last two years over \$38,000 has been recovered as a direct or indirect result.
- Charleston and North Charleston lead the state in "Pretext" or "Investigatory" police stops, and blacks are stopped about 2.4 times more than whites. CAJM has heard countless stories from people stopped for minor reasons and then subjected to mental and sometimes physical abuse. CAJM decided to tackle this contentious issue in 2016 with requests of both departments for a police audit aimed at racial bias in pretext stops.
- North Charleston Mayor Summey's request for an audit of his Police Department by the Justice Department's Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) may have been influenced by CAJM's requests (2016). Sadly, the new Washington Administration stopped the audit (2017) and refuses to release the contents of the finished report.
- Several attempts to get Mayor Tecklenburg to do a racial-bias audit on the CPD failed, but four African-American City Council members were moved to take action. Their proposal was voted down, but CAJM continued to explain the audit's value to individual and groups of City Council people. 5 months later Council approved a plan to remove the Police Dept. from their efficiency audit for all departments, and issue an RFP for a racial-bias CPD audit. This win was a result of 2+ years of continued dedication and persistence, including over 50 meetings with public officials in large groups and small.

*(Social Justice Committee/Advocacy CAJM Continued)*

- A City Council committee has been created to ensure that the right scope of work is written and to select an auditor qualified to assess racial bias in police departments. Two strong supporters from City Council, Keith Waring and Dudley Gregorie, serve on the committee.
- CAJM was awarded the prestigious Harvey Gantt Triumph Award by the Charleston Area YWCA on January 14, 2018 for its “fight for equality and justice (which) is representative of Dr. King’s dream and Mr. Gantt’s determination.”

*Respectfully submitted by Michael Griffith*

**Social Justice/Coffeehouse Concert Fundraising/Mitchell School Programs**

**Members:** Mark Farnham, Richard Hayes and Bill Morris; Mitchell School: John Narkunas

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

**Activities and Accomplishments:**

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

- As of March 30, 2018, the net amount in revolving account that will carry over to next year was \$4,700. Additional invoices for April-May trips/activities are forthcoming so we anticipate having sufficient funds to support their activities for the next school year.
- All 375 students participate in the program in grades Pre-K through 5. The objective is to provide each student with 4 field trips during the school year or one trip every 9 weeks.
- Students were involved in science-based field trips to the following locations:
- **South Carolina Aquarium** where they were able to further study about fish and animals indigenous to South Carolina; **Children’s Museum** where they explored and experimented with various water machines, a mock shrimp boat and measurement items; **Birds of Prey** to view and study birds native to the area; **Isle of Palms** to visit the marsh area to learn about the natural habitat of local animals of the low country waterways; **Boeing** to observe engineering ideas and designs; **MUSC** in conjunction



*(Social Justice/Coffeehouse Concert Fundraising/Mitchell School Programs)*

with the school's Green Heart Project to learn about healthy choices in eating and life styles; **Magnolia Gardens** where they visited the slave houses and discussed the historical connection to Charleston – K students visited the petting zoo, nature center, and the swamp walk; **Legare Farms**-students looked at plant life and farm animals; **Charles Towne Landing** -students discussed the colonial period in the Charleston area and learned about habitats of many of our state's animals; **CAW CAW** – discussed the local environment and the rice fields that were an important part of the local 18<sup>th</sup> century economy; **Channel 2** – students learned about the elements of news casting and the different types of positions that support productions; **College Of Charleston Hollings Science Center** – students worked in the lab with college students and professors and completed experiments that connected to their grade level standards.

- Funds were used to pay for fees and transportation costs associated with the program.

*Respectfully submitted by John Narkunas*

### **Social Justice Endowment Fund**

#### **About:**

- In September 2011, the Unitarian Church received an endowment gift of \$100,000 that is targeted to support social justice activities in the greater Charleston community. Interest from this endowment is used to support individuals and organizations engaged in bringing equity to those in need. Accumulated interest is normally sufficient to award a mini-grant to a local non-profit that best exemplifies the principles of Unitarian-Universalism. Organizations are nominated by Congregational members. The organizations are requested to submit an application that address specific criteria after which the applications are reviewed and ranked by an objective review panel with the highest-ranking application receiving the funds.
- Presently, there is a total of \$4,500 available for an award to be made in September 2018. The award is normally presented to the grantee during the Social Justice Service in September.
- The request for nominations has been advertised and applications are to be submitted by May 20, 2018 with the review panel meeting in June.

*Respectfully submitted by John Narkunas*

### **Social Justice/Community Outreach Giving**

*Sub-committee members who review grant proposals are: Amber Allen, Suzanne Hardie, Kay Haun, Maureen Porter and Chair, Diane Narkunas*

- The 2017, YWCA's 'Girl's Who Code' program goal is to train teen aged minority women in technical skills to help them find jobs with good pay. The program runs the entire school year. Donations from the congregation were collected beginning mid September, and our goal of \$4,129 was awarded to the YWCA's Executive Director, Yolanda Brown, December 17, 2017.
- In the spring of 2017, members of the congregation submitted 11 nominations for the Social Justice grant program. After proposals were submitted, the SJ review group selected the YWCA "Girls Who Code" Program to receive donations from our church community.

### **Social Justice/Community Outreach Volunteering**

**Chair/Contact:** Kris Rife

**Purpose/Vision Statement:** *Community Outreach volunteering committee seeks to find areas in the community where UU-CHS congregants can gather and provide support on an ongoing or temporary basis.*

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

- **Rally for Electoral Justice:** A significant contingent of church members carried our banner and participated in the Rally for Electoral Justice at Riverfront Park in North Charleston. This rally was a nationwide outgrowth of the school shootings in Florida and was by and for the Generation Z students who are organizing to change America's relationship to guns.
- **Martin Luther King Day Parade:** on a VERY frigid day in January, UU Charleston and their float joyously participated in this parade. It was heartwarming morning and we shared the emotion of the morning particularly with our fellow citizens most effective by racial justice then and, unfortunately, still now.
- **Backpack Buddies (Krystina Deren)**
- Backpack Buddies (BPB) is a program of the Low Country Food Bank (LCFB) that provides supplemental food for schoolchildren for the weekend. The LCFB services the low country from Myrtle Beach to Beaufort and over the course of a month, the BPB program provides 16,000 bags of food to school children in need.
- The Unitarian Church community volunteers meet on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month of the school year beginning in August and ending in April. Between 15-22 members of our

*(Social Justice/Community Outreach Volunteering Backpack Buddies Continued)*

church community meet once a month to assemble individual bags (standard grocery store plastic bags) of 2 cartons of sterilized milk, 2 individual-sized cereal packages, 2 cans of protein lunch/dinner meals, 2 fruit containers, 1 can vegetables, 1 power/snack bar, and 1 fruit bar. Our volunteers set up an assembly line of all these items. We then collect a bag and fill each bag with these items which are then placed into shipping boxes, sealed and sent out to the schools. On Fridays, teachers will distribute the bags of food to the children in the program, usually by putting them into the children's backpack when the children are at recess or perhaps during lunch period. The BPB program and school personnel are sensitive to the possible stigma and harassing the children may experience, especially the youngest children.

- Our volunteers assemble an average of 2,000+ bags of food for the children each month which equates to between 18-20,000 bags assembled over the school year. Without volunteers the Backpack Buddies program would not exist! Just recently a LCFB Board member addressed our group in March re-affirming that volunteers are critical to the program. The Unitarian church has supported the Backpack Buddy program for many years. It is a most worthwhile and necessary activity. We do it for the children.....they depend upon us!

*Respectfully submitted by Kristina Rife and Krystina Deren*

### **Social Justice/Green Sanctuary**

**Members:** Lindsay Brunhouse, Emilie Carey, Erin Demory, Nina Fair, Bill Grayson, Mela Khedouri, Jonathan Lamb, Laura Moses (chair), Richard Moss, and Darragh Simon.

**Purpose/Vision Statement:** *The Green Sanctuary works to lead the church's effort to become more environmentally sustainable through capital improvements, education, and outreach. We are inspired by the seventh UUA principle, "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part."*

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

Green Sanctuary is a subcommittee of the UU Social Justice Committee. The Committee was formed in 2007 with Sharon Givens as chair. The Committee received the Green Sanctuary Sanctuary accreditation from the UUA in March 2009. The group meets monthly with a vegetarian potluck.

- Serves as a resource to the congregation for acting on environmental issues
- Promotes environmental education with forum speakers on green topics (2007 – present)
- Publishes Gateway articles on topics of environmental interest (2007- present)

*(Social Justice/Green Sanctuary Continued)*

- Presents the UU Earth Day Service (2008 – present)
- Helps implement and monitor our vestry policy of reusable or compostable utensils and plates, along with recycling and composting in Gage Hall for all events, including rentals
- Provides collection and recycling of printer cartridges, batteries and light bulbs in Gage Hall (2007 – present)
- Hosts an adult education discussion class in spring with readings from Northwest Earth Institute (NWEI) (2013 – present)
- Collaborates with local organizations, such as Circular Congregational and Charleston Vegetarians and Vegans, to present green films or speakers
- Encourages participation in volunteer events such as Beach Sweep – River Sweep
- Participates in the Charleston Green Business Challenge, a program for local organizations to promote health, sustainability and energy efficiency (2015-present).
- In July 2017, GS sponsored a summer service by Rev. Gail Collins-Ranadive, followed by a climate change workshop with Rev. Gail and Milt Hetrick.
- Green Forums this year included beekeeping by Nancy Simpson in March.
- We offered a Northwest Earth Institute (NWEI) discussion class in March called “Powering a Bright Future,” about energy use and sustainability.
- Earth Day Service Our guest speaker for April 22 is Heather Lyn Mann, a writer, mindfulness teacher, and environmental advocate.

**Social Justice/Refugee Program**

***Purpose:** To participate in collaboration with Lutheran Services Carolinas (LSC) in the resettlement of refugees in the Charleston area. LSC manages refugee resettlement as a non-profit designated by the Department of Homeland Security.*

- Our men are continuing to become acclimated to the United States. As of this meeting, it will be almost one year to the day that both arrived here in Charleston.
- Our men, Sabir Shah and Mustafa Hassani, continue to work two jobs: at Butcher and Bee and at a West Ashley Publix. Sabir has saved up enough money for a downpayment on a car and hopes to buy one soon. When he does have some free time, he hopes to earn extra money by driving for Uber. Mustafa was recently gifted a car from Lutheran Services Carolinas, and he is working on earning his driver’s permit so he can learn to drive in the car. Sabir is also saving his money for college.
- Mustafa is also continuing dental treatments with the donated funds from our generous church congregants. He is pursuing work at MUSC’s low-cost dental clinics.

*(Social Justice/Refugee Program Continued)*

- Both men should be receiving applications to get their green card. They'll be able to apply for U.S. citizenship in five years. Exciting stuff!

*Respectfully Submitted by Amber Allen*

### **Social Justice/Welcoming Congregation**

**Contact:** Richard Hayes

***Purpose/Mission Statement:*** *To ensure our congregation continues to welcome our LGBTQQI brothers and sisters in the church and concentrate on supporting community activities through strong community organizations, like Alliance for Full Acceptance (AFFA) and SC Equality Coalition.*

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

- Working to increase number of LGBTQQI members.
- LGBT discussion in the curriculum of the Our Whole Life (OWL) teen religious education program.
- Major sponsor of the Alliance For Full Acceptance (AFFA) Annual Dinner.
- Strong support for marriage equality and human rights in SC.
- Charleston Pride Parade Participation

*Respectfully submitted by Richard Hayes*

### **New Initiatives**

- **Environmental Justice:** The Social Justice Committee has voted to investigate building congregational involvement in Environmental Justice. This is a frequent area of community participation in many Unitarian Congregations and the Unitarian Universalist Organization. We intend to sponsor brain storming sessions to find interested church members. We will be starting out by offering Higher Ground's "Stop, What Do We Do Now" in the fall. These small group meeting (4 sessions) work with individual responsibility of carbon footprint. Gary Smith will be leading this effort
- **Electoral Justice:** We are beginning an Electoral Justice program the fall of 2018, with Amber Allen heading this up this activity. Electoral Justice will be highlighted in the September Social Justice Sunday Service Sunday and there will be a forum. Partnering

*(Social Justice Committee New Initiatives Continued)*

with The League of Women Voters, we will be looking for opportunities to support voter registration and help voters to vote.

- **Racial Justice:** Richard Hayes and Karen Morgan will be exploring further efforts on racial justice – particularly congregational learning and sharing about issues like white privilege.
- **Adult Education:** Some small efforts could begin this summer. When Danny Reed returns from his sabbatical, he will begin working on a program. Diane Narkunas will provide support.

*Respectfully Submitted by Diane Narkunas*

### **Stewardship**

**Members:** Karen Abrams, Bob Graham, Jack Hurley (Chair), Tony Isaac, and Ren Manning

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

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

- The Stewardship drive kicked off on February 18 with announcements and testimonials. Stewardship Sunday was March 4.
- As of May 13, 253 pledges had been received for an aggregate of \$426,103. Our goal was \$432,500 on account of increased staff benefits, promotion of Sandra as Executive Director, the need for an administrative assistant and higher Buildings and Grounds expenses due to deferred maintenance.
  - Results were adversely affected by the loss of members due to death, relocations, financial hardship, resignations or unexplained but apparent loss of interest in the Church. We had many non-responses after repeated attempts to contact all members who had not pledged. We also experienced several significant reductions in amount of past pledges. 253 pledges were received, down from 274 the previous year.

*(Stewardship Committee Continued)*

- Of the pledges received, 33% were increases (same as last year), 21% were decreases (vs. 13% last year), 34% were flat (vs 35% last year) and 12% were new pledges (vs. 19% last year).
- Old member pledges decreased 0.4%, year-over-year, vs. an increase of 5% over the previous two years.
- Pledges were boosted by \$40,622 in supplemental and matching pledges committed at the end of the campaign.
- The Stewardship Committee has realized that as members drop away, the success of pledge drives will increasingly depend on new members. New member pledges are at a substantially lower level this year, as Pathways classes are smaller than in previous years.
- I would like to thank the members of the Committee and all those who assisted us in calling, texting and emailing for pledges! It was a long, hard pull, as pledges were slower to come than in years past for some reason and lost pledges were substantial.

*Respectfully submitted by Jack Hurley, Chair*

### **Worship Services**

**Members:** Hillary Hutchinson and Bernadette Victor (Co-Chairs), Jen Bennett, Mary Ellen Geiss, Richard Hayes, Elaine Hunter, Allison Sterrett-Krause, Priscilla Shumway

**Ex Officio:** Danny Reed, Minister

**Purpose/Vision Statement:** *The Worship Committee enhances the Sunday services throughout the year, in the spirit of enlightenment, to nurture the body, mind, soul and spirit of our congregation. The Worship Committee partners with both the congregation and the minister to provide the best possible services, to get feedback on the services, and to act as a sounding board for the minister's own services. Each week, a Worship Associate helps coordinate the service with the minister or an outside speaker. One monthly service during the church year and all summer services are coordinated by the Worship Services Committee.*

*(Worship Services Committee Continued)*

**Activities and Accomplishments:**

- Arranged at least one service each month not conducted by the minister; currently overseeing services from April 1-June 17 while Minister Danny Reed on sabbatical.
- A church picnic in June 2017 provided a fun social beginning to the summer season. Summer services were conducted for audiences averaging 104 in attendance. Helped in overseeing the smooth running of Church services. We are currently organizing 2018 summer services with the starting date of June 17 (picnic).
- We are currently putting together a brochure which will include the topic, date and guest speakers for all summer services. We are currently making plans for the June 17 summer picnic at James Island County Park.
- We recruited three new younger members: Allison, Mary Ellen, and Jen

*Respectfully submitted by Hillary Hutchinson and Bernadette Victor, Co-Chairs*