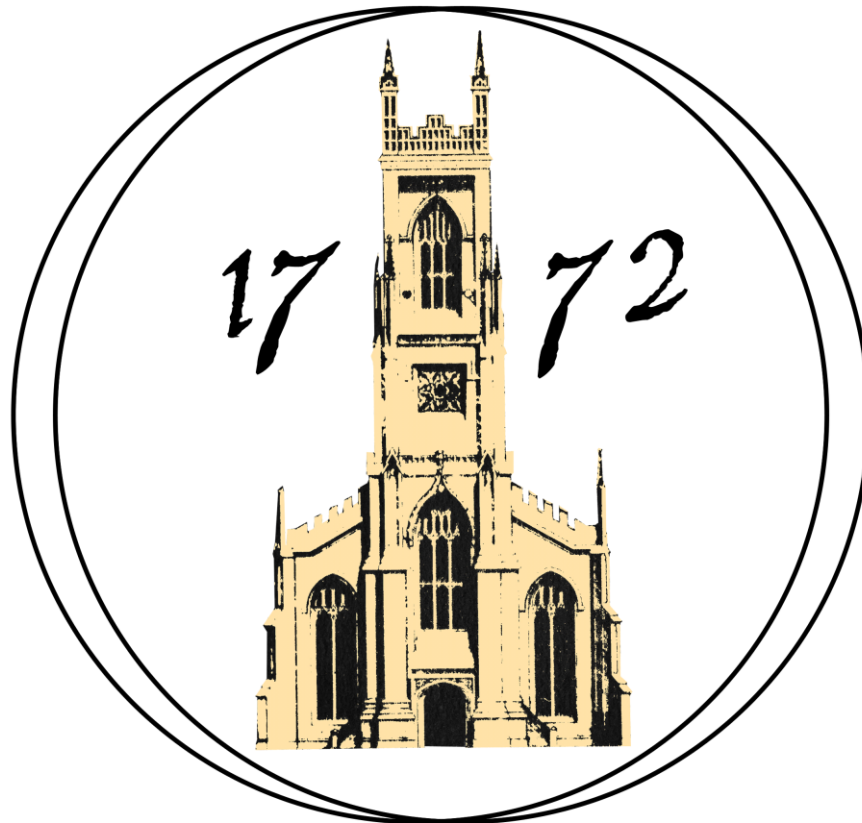


UNITARIAN CHURCH IN CHARLESTON
ANNUAL REPORT
2016-2017



May 21, 2017

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

The Unitarian Church in Charleston

Church Year 2016-17

Membership 433

Friends 82

Vestry:

Maureen Porter, Chair

Sue Weller, Vice Chair

Tommy Hughston, 2nd Vice Chair

Gail Schiffer, Secretary

Erica Hattings

Frank Hardie

John Hyatt

(February 2017-current)

John Klintworth

Johnathan Lamb

Richard Nelson (July 2016-January 2017)

Nolan Prestwood, Treasurer

Terry Walsh, Assistant Treasurer

Staff:

Rev. Danny R. Reed, Minister

Rev. Nancy Pellegrini, Assistant Minister

William Epes, Intern Minister

Sandra Selvitelli, Administrator

Johanna Evenson, Music Director

Janet Watts, Religious Education Director

Carol Oates, Membership Coordinator

Joe McCormack, Sexton

Part-Time Staff:

Amy Ball, Music Accompanist

Melissa Zahler, Religious Education Assistant

Deloris Crawford & Nicholas Lavergne (Nursery)

Amanda Gabriel & Rafael Martin-Navas
(Preschool)

Marina Penna-Morrison & Jule Lane
(High School Youth Group Leaders)

Vestry

The Annual Meeting comes halfway through the Bicentennial Year. It seems like a good time to be capturing the moment and looking ahead, just as we are looking back and celebrating the past. This is the year the Vestry made the decision to focus a discussion on our future growth and set a timeline for moving to two services. I see this year as one in which the Vestry continued the work of ensuring that we have a strong foundation. Here are some of the ways this is happening:

- The church has purchased equipment and put in place systems and procedures that make us safer.
- The Finance Committee is working to get us ready for an internal audit.
- The Personnel Committee has been overseeing a multi-year process that moves full and part-time staff closer to the midpoint of the salary range recommended by UUA guidelines.
- Reverend Nancy is now serving as our part-time Assistant Minister.
- Our financial status is stable and for the first time in years, the proposed budget adds money to a savings account for big ticket maintenance items.

At the midyear congregational meeting, we discussed the fact that we've been growing in numbers. If we want to continue growing, we should be intentional about sharing our mission and values in the community. There are many ways we can accomplish this. One way is certainly through our social justice programs. These programs give members the opportunity to grow in spirit and make a difference in the community. Another way we can increase our visibility is through social media and other forms of public relations. The Vestry has proposed a small budget for next year to form a Public Relations Committee whose first task will be to increase church income from the rental of our properties. This is a necessary step in the right direction of expanding this source of income.

At the Vestry retreat last August, we looked at all the projects, plans and decisions that were before us. As the church year draws to a close, we're revisiting these items one by one to see where things stand. I think we've done well in moving a number of items along towards completion. One item hasn't gotten the attention it deserves. I know many of you share my belief that we need a fresh approach for helping members become engaged in the activities of the church and take on leadership roles. Participation builds connection, which in turn makes us stronger as a community. This is an issue near and dear to my heart and now that I will be stepping down as Chair, I'll have more time to devote to getting a leadership development project off the ground.

The Vestry used the Four Bold Steps, our strategic plan from 2013, as the guide in making decisions throughout this year. Recently, we took another look at Step Three: "Ensure that the sanctuary and other buildings and grounds meet current and future needs." We had drawings made by architect Glenn Keyes to give us a vision of how our buildings could be upgraded and expanded. As we talk about growth and imagine our future, I believe the time is right to appoint

(Vestry Continued)

a new Long Range Planning Committee that will begin developing a strategic plan that will carry us into the next five years.

The main task of the Vestry is to set policies and plan ahead wisely so that the work and mission of the church can be done well. I hope you'll take time to read over the annual committee reports so that you will have a full picture of how this "church work" is being done. Did you know there is a new social justice opportunity developed by church members to provide support for refugees moving into our community? This is just one of the many ways in which our church members turn our shared values into action.

As Vestry Chair, I've had the opportunity to see the congregation from many perspectives. I've had a bird's eye view and a view from behind the scenes. In my role, I've witnessed the devotion of our wonderful staff and I've learned just how much love it takes for our community to operate for the benefit of all. It takes a lot of love to put together a budget, set up for a reception, practice an anthem, display items for auction, read stories to little children and greet strangers at the door. I'm so grateful for having the opportunity to experience the congregation in this way. My love and appreciation for this church has grown during my three years on the Vestry. Finally, I want to thank my fellow Vestry members for their hard work and companionship. It's been an honor serving with you.

Respectfully submitted by Maureen Porter, Vestry Chair

Minister

I sit to write while also monitoring the dishwasher cycle. You see, our fourteen newest members and some wiggly children I lost count of, were at my house last night for a dinner honoring their new affiliation with our congregation. Three mentors from the Membership Committee, our intrepid Membership Coordinator, and the teenage host and hostess I bribed, rounded out the celebrants. It was a pleasant feast that generated a lot of conversation, laughter, and dishes.

The New Member Dinner reminded me of the wonderful people who are attracted to our way of faith and the way our church connects us one to another socially and spiritually. The gatherings leave me with much more than flatware and wine glasses to clean. I am also left grateful for the chance to become acquainted with interesting men and women who enter the fellowship of our congregation trusting that they will be respected, find opportunities to serve in meaningful ways, and join ritual observances and a calendar of events that gives life a reflective order and a spirit of thankfulness.

What I am describing is but one of the gifts of our congregational life. This report is the annual challenge to capture a year's worth of such activity and achievement. Every year I know I can only offer snapshots when I wish I could offer a panorama. So here goes:

(Minister Continued)

Maureen Porter has done a great job as Vestry Chair this year, as have Vestry members Frank Hardie, Erica Hattings, Tommy Hughston, John Hyatt, John Klintworth, Jonathan Lamb, Richard Nelson, Nolan Prestwood, Gail Schiffer, and Sue Weller. Our Vestry oversees our fiduciary responsibilities, sets and monitors governing policies, and supports staff members in their various areas. Their role as elected volunteer leaders exemplifies not only their individual dedication to our mission but also our history of significant lay leadership and congregational polity.

I could comment on each of our hard-working committees, but you will find their detailed reports elsewhere in this document. I will highlight a few particularly consequential endeavors of the past year.

The ad hoc Bicentennial Committee has exciting plans for our ongoing observance of our bicentennial as an independent congregation. History notes, new music, a commemorative ornament depicting the sanctuary, are among the ways we will honor this special anniversary. The creativity of this group is noted, and is appreciated.

Our Docent Program has been reinvigorated and we are doing better and better at welcoming tourists and curious locals onto our grounds and into our sanctuary. Our loyal Docents are expected to speak authoritatively to our guests, and as informed ambassadors, they do a fine job telling the story of our buildings and grounds, and explaining our rich history in Charleston.

I appreciate the ongoing leadership of our Safety Committee whose members continue to help us best evaluate our safety needs. With new technology and enhanced practices, our Safety Committee has done a great job addressing difficult scenarios and possibilities.

Our Social Justice Committee members keep us apprised of timely social issues and help us amplify our outreach into the community. The CAJM subcommittee keeps us up-to-date and engaged within this vital organization and tracks our participation and progress. A new outreach to local refugees has been formed this year, and in short order, ninety-day support for two young men who fled Afghanistan for Charleston has been lined up. This is a new outreach but one that has attracted the attention and passion of a good many church members. Stay tuned on this front as our program is developing each week.

The ad hoc Two Worship Services Committee had led us patiently through a series of considerations and guided us toward a decision point. We still have to plan staffing and the flow of Sunday morning activities, but the process thus far has been sound and enlightening.

(Minister Continued)

The Caring Committee, Coffeehouse, Building and Grounds, Eden Keepers, Finance, Music, Religious Education, Worship,... all contribute mightily to our institutional success. The Committee on Shared Ministry has been especially helpful to me personally. I also work closely with the Personnel Committee, whose members are always quietly in the background providing valuable staff support and discernment.

The church is blessed with the energy and talent of our dedicated staff. We are a busy team with plenty to do but the workload and the rewards are shared among so many outstanding volunteers. We are your partners in the work of the church and our progress is reciprocal.

In his second, and last year as Intern Minister, Bill Epes has served us honorably over his long term. He has contributed to many areas of the church and has benefitted from the feedback and support of a strong committee. As we have helped Bill consider what it means to be a minister, we have received the parallel chance to remember what it means to be a congregation. We are a part of Bill's ministerial formation, and his imprint will inevitably be left upon us as he pursues his calling wherever it leads.

Johanna Evenson, Music Director, will take leave of us at the close of the church year. She and her husband plan an exciting year of world travel. I am immensely grateful to Johanna for her considerable talent, her grace under pressure, and seemingly endless good cheer. Our future together is uncertain, but we know that Johanna has been an exceptional presence among us, bringing joyous song and tune to our worship life. Godspeed Johanna, and thank you.

Joe McCormack, Sexton, tends to our facilities with great care and stewardship. He arranges our room set-ups before events and meetings, and takes it all down afterward. Joe bears significant responsibility and is often our first representative with our guests, members, and vendors.

Carol Oates, Membership Coordinator, has a gift of curiosity and hospitality that helps her reach out to guests, newcomers, and established members alike. She has brought renewed intentionality to our "welcoming process," and helps ensure that it is much warmer than that description.

Rev. Nancy Pellegrini, made the shift from Affiliated Community Minister to Assistant Minister during this church year. In this role, she works closely with the Caring Committee and helps provide quality pastoral care to members in need. She participates in Sunday services and occasional adult religious education offerings. In addition, as Chaplain, Nancy continues her ministry to the patients and staff of the Hollings Cancer Center of the Medical University of South Carolina.

(Minister Continued)

Sandra Selvitelli manages our busy office with a professional approach and always friendly tone. As Administrator she is expected to be multi-tasker extraordinaire, and she does not disappoint. Sandra is central to the church's general functioning, financial management, communications and site management. She works closely with all other staff members, the Vestry, and every committee chair. The absent-minded minister would be even more so without her.

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

Remember the new members I mentioned at the top of the report? When I address newcomers, I like to tell them that should they choose to join us in committed membership, that their new presence among us will change us. This is true, because each new addition of questing and participating souls, has an influence on the larger congregation. I also tell them that they should be prepared to be changed by us, too. This is also true, because the legacy of our congregation has the power to subtly, and perhaps dramatically, change those who join its flow. Witnessing this exchange is among the many pleasures of my job.

This report is always insufficient and I have likely forgotten individuals and items that should be included here. Please pardon any inevitable lapses herein. In closing, thank you for all that you bring to the life we share through our church. Thank you for the positive change you facilitate and for your openness to being changed by the influence of our message and mission. Thank you for (most) of the ways you challenge me, and truly, for all that you overlook. I continue to be honored to be your minister and to share the journey with you.

Respectfully submitted by Reverend Danny Reed, Minister

Assistant Minister

I was excited to become part of the church staff as part-time Assistant Minister this year. I served ten hours a week focusing on pastoral care as well as preaching quarterly, participating in Sunday services, and teaching an adult education class. My job as chaplain at the Hollings Cancer Center at the Medical University of South Carolina continues with all of its inspiration and challenges. At Hollings this year in addition to providing support to patients and staff, I spoke at several community events for cancer survivors.

For our Sunday church services, I preached and led worship four times, organized the readings for the choir Christmas Cantata, prepared the Ruby Bridges story script for our Martin Luther

(Assistant Minister Continued)

King Jr. Sunday, and offered meditations/prayers and the story for all ages on numerous occasions. I continued my social justice activities participating in Charleston Area Justice Ministry and other community events. I gave testimony at the public hearing for the State Senate Gun Issues Special Committee last October. The Book of Job class that I taught in April for adult education engendered lively discussions.

It has been a pleasure to work with our wonderful Caring Committee led by the dedicated team of Kay Haun and Marcia Castano. As some of the area coordinators move on, there are new opportunities for others in our congregation to become involved coordinating support for fellow church members. I have been privileged to make pastoral care visits to church members in the hospital and in their homes. I have also done short-term pastoral counseling for church members facing difficulties in their lives and have conducted pre-marital counseling sessions for wedding couples.

I received good news from the Ministerial Fellowship Committee of the Unitarian Universalist Association in February—I was granted Final Fellowship as a minister! I am eternally grateful to my Committee on Ministry for doing the required evaluations of me during my first three years of ordained ministry. I want to thank committee members Diane Aghapour (from Hollings), Al and Kaye Finch, Sally Flynn, and Nancy Simpson as well as previous members Emily Carey, Bruce Evenson, and John Massey for their wise council and support. I also am indebted to Reverend Danny Reed for his mentorship. I will be recognized in a special ceremony during The Service of the Living Tradition at the UUA General Assembly in New Orleans this June. I hope some of you will be there to cheer me on.

Respectfully submitted Reverend Nancy B. Pellegrini, Assistant Minister

Intern Minister

In this second and final year of internship, your Intern Minister finally settled fully into the rhythm of clergy service to the congregation. As of April, I had preached four sermons and two homilies, the last homily as part of my first Vespers service. I took two sermons on the road, connecting with UU congregations in Bluffton and Waccamaw.

When not in the pulpit, your Intern offered Opening Words, Story for All Ages, and Meditation. When not participating in worship, I observed or presented to RE classes. Observations included Lee Westbrook's adult RE class. Presentation to youth a facilitated discussion of dignity and respect around gender non-conformity; and a spiritual practice called *lectio divina* I learned in early March at a silent retreat at Mepkin Abbey.

Your intern's further exploration of congregational life included extended commitments to the Men's Group, as well as the honor of an invitation to participate in an established Connecting

(Intern Minister Continued)

Circle. With Rev. Nancy Pellegrini hired last fall as Assistant Minister, I stepped down from regular service to the Caring Committee, engaging pastoral care as directed by the new Assistant Minister.

This was also a year of experiential learning and advocacy as independent clergy outside of the church. Last fall, I joined a diverse group of pastors helping to present Rev. William Barber's and James A. Forbes' "Charleston Revival" at Mt. Zion AME Church. In preparation, I hosted a number of meetings in Gage Hall for this interdenominational group of clergy, academics, and activists.

Even more independently, your Intern joined a planned Fight for \$15 "living wage" strike action, offering prayer and then visiting a congregant in jail after the planned civil disobedience led to several arrests. In clerical collar and UU pins, I joined the counter protest of the "flaggers" outside the Bree Newsome lecture at College of Charleston. In April, I attended a meeting of Standing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ).

Building on insight from my 2015-16 "listening year," I also designed a specific project for the church: a multi-pronged initiative for strengthening outreach and church in-reach to transgender and non-gender conforming adults and youth. Following a collaborative service on gender last August with members John Hyatt and Jen Bennett, and with the encouragement of my Lay Committee, I preached twice explicitly on TNGC issues, and kept that community clearly in the frame of other sermons. All year, I continued to hold some new language for welcoming and honoring Others, in Mediation and Opening Words. In November, I was again invited to speak at The Transgender Day of Remembrance, an event our church has hosted for several years. Four diversely identified speakers also joined worship at my request, including a couple deeply in love.

In April, I led book discussions on TNGC issues with the Parenting Group and with the Youth Group, and was scheduled to co-facilitate a discussion of gender in the Men's Group in May.

With my internship wrapped up in May, I consider with gratitude all the gifts I have been given, most of all to a new understanding of the depth and breadth of possibilities in ministry, possibilities unimagined two years ago. To my supervisor, colleague and esteemed internship professor, Rev. Danny; to my new colleague Rev. Nancy, to the always remarkable Johanna, Janet, and Sandra; and finally, to my steadfast and insightful Lay Committee – Kevin Eakes, Suzanne Hardie, Priscilla Shumway, Gale Simmons, Sue Weller, and Lee Westbrook– I owe more than these few words of gratitude can express.

As I leave, I hold you, the many congregants who have shared themselves with me, in my heart, and wish for all of you satisfaction and new curiosity in those critical searches for truth and meaning. Blessings on a community that could never be what it is today without you. Health, wholeness, and open hearts always.

Respectfully submitted by William Epes, Intern Minister

Treasurer

The Church's fiscal year runs from July 1st through June 30th of the following year. We ended the last fiscal year on June 30, 2016. The Operating Budget income was approximately \$5,765 over expenses. This overage was used as income in the 2016/2017 fiscal year. At the start of the 2016/2017 fiscal year (July 1, 2016), the balances of the Endowment Fund was \$954,458, Churchyard Fund was \$11,681 and the Landmark Fund was \$71,488. Our reserves totaled \$44,786.

As of March 31st 2017:

- The Endowment is \$988,738
- The Churchyard Fund is \$8,959
- The Landmark Fund is \$41,566
- Our Reserve Accounts equal \$48,998, Reserve Accounts are divided into four different categories.
 1. Operating Reserve \$13,142, and is held 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 have been foreseen that do not fall into the categories of major maintenance or regular operations.
 4. Auction Reserve is \$5,396
- The HVAC system was installed in the sanctuary and was financed through donations from the Congregation, \$75,000 from the Endowment Fund (transferred from the Endowment during the 13/14 year), \$50,000 from the Smart Bequest, and a loan from South State Bank. This loan is scheduled to be paid off 23 July 2017, 26 months ahead of the original date of 23 Sept 2019.
- The current fiscal year has again been strong through the first 9 months showing \$40,440 income over expenses. As long as we continue to have timely payments on our 2016/2017 church year annual pledges, I project that we will once again end the year with our income over expenses.
- This has been my second year as Treasurer. I appreciate the opportunity to serve and have enjoyed working with the Finance Committee, Vestry, Committee Chairs and congregation the past year. Special thanks to Terry Walsh, Sandra Selvitelli, Richard Hayes and Debbie Kirby for all their help throughout the year.

Respectfully submitted by Nolan Prestwood, Treasurer

Administrator

Activities and Accomplishments:

- I was enthused to see Gage Hall and the Nursery painted and the beautiful plantation shutters installed over the summer. In addition to updating the space it should also help with adding appeal to outside renters.
- Created a new handbook for Vestry members which includes budget, calendars, Constitution, policies and other important documents for the year.
- Created new Committee Handbooks that give more information than previous years, including budget information.
- Completed the updating and reformatting of the Vestry policies. They are published on the website.
- Worked with the parking management company to start using QR codes in the Order of Service for free parking on Sundays.
- Recognizing a void for Coffee Hour coordination, I started a program where Committees provide snacks on Sunday mornings. The larger goal is for the focus to be less on the food and more on sharing information and getting volunteers for our various committees.
- Enjoyed meeting with Glen Keyes on a number of occasions and seeing what dreams are possible for our potential expansion.
- Currently working with Judy Manning and Carol Oates to start a Public Relations Committee aimed at building the rental revenue stream for our buildings and eventually branching out to more social media and other advertising.
- Working on new pricing for outside rentals.
- Continued a strong and healthy relationship with the Charleston Day School. Their headmaster, Brendan O'Shea will step down after this school year. I am so thankful for his leadership and look forward to meeting his replacement.
- 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.

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Selvitelli, Administrator

Music Director

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

Activities and Accomplishments:

- Musicians both from our congregation as well as musicians from the community at large provided music during our regular Sunday services.
- The adult choir met for weekly rehearsals from September to the end of May. The choir sung for approximately three out of four Sunday services per month.
- The adult choir, in addition to visiting musicians, presented their annual Christmas Cantata in December.
- The Children's Choir practiced the majority of the Sundays between September through April and performed during the services approximately once a month.
- A call for qualified candidates to submit applications for the Martha Welsh Music Award was posted in the spring of 2017. Three candidates applied.
- In November the choir met at one of the choir member's home for a day-long choir retreat to practice for the Christmas Cantata and to socialize.
- The Music Committee, together with the Fine Arts Committee, collaborated on two Candlelight Concerts followed by receptions, one in the fall and one in the spring. The proceeds from the Candlelight Concerts benefitted the Music Battery Program.
- I announced in January that I will be leaving my position as Director of Music as of mid-June 2017. Susan Conant, with the assistance of Amy Ball, has agreed to serve as the Director of Music during the fall of 2017-spring 2018.

Respectfully submitted by Johanna Evenson, Music Director

Religious Education Director

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

Staff: Melissa Zahler, Religious Education Assistant, Deloris Crawford and Nicholas Lavergne (Nursery), Amanda Gabriel and Rafael Martin-Navas (Preschool), Jule Lane and Marina Penna-Morrison (Youth Group Leaders)

Nic Lavergne and Marina Penna-Morrison are both leaving us after this year. We thank them for their wonderful leadership and support.

The Religious Education Committee John Massey (Chair), Downing Child, Kevin Eakes, Mary Ellen Giess, Erica Hattings, Alex Hild, John Hyatt, Joe Krause, Danielle Lopez, Marina Penna-Morrison, and Kris Rife. John Massey will be stepping down after three years as Chair and will be replaced by Co-Chairs Cindy Cooksey-Coale and Joe Krause.

Volunteers and Helpers: We have had 32 volunteer Sunday School teachers this year and scores of helpers at Holiday and Social Justice events. We presently have 130 children registered in Religious Education with Sunday attendance averaging 60-80 children on Sundays throughout the September through June school year.

Activities and Accomplishments:

- **Adult Religious Education**

- Offered six classes of a *Listener's Guide to the Charleston Symphony Orchestra's Masterwork Series* led by member Fred Himmelein.
- Offered six classes of the *Study of Religion* led by member Lee Westbrook.
- Offered two classes on the *Book of Job* led by Reverend Nancy Pellegrini.
- Held monthly UU Parenting evenings.
- Supported weekly Sunday Forums and Meditation.
- Supported weekly Wu Tai Chi classes as well as two Tai Chi outdoor events in the community.
- Worked with the Green Sanctuary Committee to offer this year's annual spring class. The six sessions this year were called *A Different Way: Living Simply in a Complex World*.
- Currently working with the Green Sanctuary to offer a series of classes by Rev. Gail Collins-Ranadive this summer.

(Religious Education Director Continued)

- **Sunday School offerings beyond the usual age-appropriate curricular**
 - Our Whole Lives (Comprehensive Sexuality Education) for our 7th-9th graders; an OWL parents orientation; OWL overnight, field trips and guest panelist. Three volunteer teachers were trained in NC for the Elementary level OWL curriculum.
 - The Middle school students attended one Youth Conference in NC this year. The High School Youth Group went to Youth Conferences in Charlotte and the two at the Mountain. They had numerous outings in addition to their Sunday meeting times, attending dinners, movies, and overnights, and organizing fundraising Flamingo Bombing in the evenings. The teens also raised funds specifically for their General Assembly trip to New Orleans with bake sales and by volunteering for the annual Oyster Roast. This year we will have eight High School graduates who will be recognized during the annual meeting on May 21.

- **Social Justice**
 - Held a school supplies drive for My Sister's House.
 - Held a Halloween Party warm children's clothes drive.
 - Held a Harvest Sunday food drive for the Lowcountry Food Bank.
 - Held a Holiday collection of personal hygiene and warm items for the homeless adults at One80 Place.
 - Made Christmas ornaments and delivered them to our neighbors at Canterbury House (Grades 1-6).
 - Made Gingerbread Homes and sold them to raise funds for One80 Place.
 - Held a Children's clothes drive during the Christmas Holiday Party.
 - Had a family craft night to make hats and fun items for the Pride Parade.
 - "Empty Bowls" painting and ice cream fundraiser for One80 Place.
 - Held a book drive for Book Worms Angels.
 - Summer food drive to re-stock the Lowcountry Food Bank.
 - Outside of the church, the RE families supported:
 - Pride and Emancipation Day parades.
 - Charleston County Teen Pregnancy Prevention class in Gage Hall titled "Be a Sexual Health Warrior."
 - The People Against Rape "Take Back the Night" rally, march and speak-out.
 - Monthly Lowcountry Food Bank Backpack Buddies program.

(Religious Education Director Continued)

- **Social and Holiday**

- Planned the church-wide Halloween party.
- Planned the Winter Holiday party.
- Planned the annual oyster roast at Bowen's Island which raises funds for RE scholarships Which go towards trips to the UUA Mountain camp, youth conferences, and this year's summer trip to the UUA General Assembly.
- Planned the Easter children's activities.
- Organized Earth Day celebrations.
- Planned the end-of-the-year OWL graduation party.
- 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.
- Organized the High School Graduation recognition.

- **RE outreach and service**

- This year Religious Education has worked closely with the Safety Committee, Caring Committee, Archives, Social Justice, Program Council, the Bicentennial Committee, Membership, and the church music program. We have also organized and supervised childcare for church-wide events ranging from congregational meetings to the auction.
- RE ran two teacher trainings; had three teachers trained in NC for Elementary level OWL; supported the teacher recognition ceremony in church; ran the teacher appreciation "thank you" evening out for volunteers; organized the RE group photo; RE-wide fire drill; hosted Emory University students for their alternative spring break; and hosted a Christian Jewish Council gathering.
- RE supported the High Schoolers' many fundraisers to attend General Assembly this summer; the 2016 summer services were supported with more RE staff to accommodate the growing number of families attending summer services; the RE Director and the head of the Youth Group took monthly webinar classes from the UUA for professional development; and the Director of RE also worked closely with local LGBT and developmental specialists to better serve the growing diversity of our congregational families.

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

Membership Coordinator

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

Activities and Accomplishments:

- **Maintaining the Established Core Functions of the Position**
 - **Pathways Classes:** This year I facilitated four Classes (Summer, Fall, Winter, Spring), with the support of the Membership Committee. I added the Summer Class to eliminate the long wait between the Spring and Fall classes. The result is that the class sizes are smaller, facilitating more connection and easier manageability. 48 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.
 - **Membership:** 44 new Members have joined the church during this fiscal year. New Member Sunday was celebrated 4 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.
 - **Mentors for Pathways:** 11 people filled the role of Mentor in this year's Pathways Classes, including 4 new Mentors.
 - **Pathfinders:** Facilitated 7 classes (1 more than last year) for newcomers (July, September, October, December, February, March and May). As of this writing, 45 people have participated in Pathfinders this year, with one class remaining. I plan to continue this schedule of more frequent classes in the coming year.
 - **Welcoming Sunday Mornings:** I continue to work with the Ushers and Greeters and the Membership Committee to create a welcoming environment for all who attend worship services.
 - **Committees:** I continue to collaborate directly with the Membership Committee and the Caring Committee.
 - **Membership Sunday:** An annual Sunday honoring significant membership anniversaries (10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, and 40+ years) was celebrated.
 - **Professional Development:** I continue to take part in professional development opportunities through the Unitarian Universalist Association of Membership Professionals (UUAMP). I attended the UUAMP Pro Days in Milwaukee in March. I have also taken a role on UUAMP's new Certification Advisory Team.

(Membership Coordinator Continued)

- **New This Year**

- 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 plan to continue this practice.
- In March, I began the practice of calling each church Member during the month of their membership anniversary date. So far, these calls have been met with appreciation and provide me with a structured opportunity to check in with individuals.
- I began 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. Two new groups were started and another is on the way.

Respectfully submitted by Carol Oates, Membership Coordinator

Committee Reports

Alliance

Members: Susan Hartry (President), Susan Hutto Robinson (Vice-President), Diane Boyer (Treasurer), Secretary will be on rotation. This year the Alliance had 21 Members and Friends.

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

Activities and Accomplishments:

- Held 3 Rummage Sales and a November Holiday Bazaar and Luncheon.
- Additional income came from dues (which are \$1.00), UU cookbook sales, Sunday book sales and donations.
- Sponsored the annual Cantata reception for the Choir on December 11.
- Voted at our annual meeting on April 10, 2017 to make the following disbursements on Alliance Sunday, May 14 as follows: \$150 each to My Sisters House, People Against Rape, Pet Helpers and Planned Parenthood (501C3).
- Voted to contribute \$1,500 toward the Bicentennial Gala.

Additional Comments:

As mentioned above, we raise these funds through our rummage sales and holiday bazaar. We opened an account with *Consign Charleston!* and could use additional help after the sales to sort what is “consignment worthy.” You only need to commit to whatever time you have available. Pricing items the day before the sale is fun and working the sale the next day is even more fun. The fellowship is priceless! We offer child care if given advanced notice. If you can help, please send me your email and I can keep you informed of upcoming sales. My email is hartry.susan@gmail.com.

Respectfully submitted by Susan Hartry, President

Archives

Members: Susan Robinson (Co-chair), Rose-Marie Williams (Co-chair), Gail Schiffer, and Nancy Waters. We are saddened by the death of Honorary Member, Rosemary Hutto, long-time archivist and church historian, who died this year.

Purpose/Mission Statement: *The mission of the Archives Committee is to preserve the history of the church and educate the congregation and community about its heritage. To foster the institutional memory of the Unitarian Church in Charleston, the Archives Committee collects and catalogs materials pertaining to the church and maintains the files and objects entrusted to its*

(Archives Continued)

care. The Archives Committee assists those who wish to access its files and materials for historical research.

The Archives Committee meets twice most months. 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, College of Charleston. The balance are kept in archivally safe containers in cabinets in Gage Hall, Room 4.

Activities and Accomplishments:

- Last year, the Archives Committee reported that we were in the process of preparing taped interviews of church members for donation to the South Carolina Historical Society. The interviews were created in the 1980s and 1990s and have been transferred to CDs. This project turned out to be more labor-intensive, time-consuming, and technologically advanced than we understood and projected. Therefore, we have tabled this project until we can recruit additional volunteer staff to undertake it; thus far, we have had no success.
- We continue identifying and preserving photographs of church activities and events. We also continue to seek leadership for re-starting the oral history project with our current members.
- In conjunction with it being the church's Bicentennial Year, we turned our attention to displaying some of our collection of important documents, books, and objects for the enjoyment and education of church members and visitors. We are being assisted by staff at the Charleston Museum. We will display objects in a cabinet in the handicapped entrance to the church, as well as in the Fine Arts Committee exhibit space in Gage Hall.
- During the month of March, a time line of the life of the church was exhibited in Gage Hall every Sunday, and members were invited to add their memories.
- We are documenting some of the work of Eden Keepers since Hurricane Hugo, and we are working with Sandra and Danny on updating and keeping current Mrs. Gilman's, and later, lists of those buried or otherwise memorialized in the churchyard. In addition, we are researching the social justice and other outreach efforts of the Unitarian Church in Charleston, especially in the 20th Century.

Respectfully submitted by Rose-Marie Williams, Co-Chair

Bicentennial Committee

Members: John Newell (Chair), Diane Boyer, Paul Garbarini, Richard Hayes, Hillary Hutchinson, Cristy Landis, and Sally Newell

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

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

Activities and Accomplishments:

- This Spring the Bicentennial Committee has hosted or co-hosted a number of activities in celebration of the Church's Bicentennial:
 - Notes in the Sunday bulletin of what was happening in Charleston (and in rest of the US and the world) in 1817.
 - Notes in the *Gateway* about crucial events in the 200-year history of the Unitarian Church in Charleston.
 - A Stewardship/Bicentennial Kick-Off Celebration in Gage Hall on March 4th, co-hosted by the Stewardship Committee and attended by over 75 members and friends.
 - The Southeastern Regional Meeting on April 8 with approximately 60 Unitarians from across the Southeast and presentations by the three candidates for UUA President, co-hosted by the Denominational Affairs Committee.
- In the Fall we have additional events planned:
 - Continuation of Notes in the Sunday bulletin and in *Gateway*.
 - Performance on October 7th in Gage Hall of Alex Hild's play about the Unitarian Church in Charleston, directed by Cristy Landis.
 - Candlelight Concert with professional musicians with music that would have been performed in Charleston in early 19th century, possibly introduced by Dr. Nic Butler.
 - The Official Charleston Christmas ornament for 2017 will feature the Unitarian Church in Charleston. We can purchase these and sell them for \$21.00 to members, friends, and visitors.

(Bicentennial Committee Continued)

- On Sunday, December 3rd, several activities celebrating the separation between the First and Second Independent Churches in Charleston and the chartering of our church as an institution:
 - Commissioning an anthem by Susan Conant celebrating the Unitarian Church in Charleston
 - Premiere of that work during the Dec. 3rd Sunday service
 - After the Church service, a walk from our church to Circular Congregational and back, followed by a major reception including both congregations.

Respectfully submitted by John Newell, Chair

Books & Coffee

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

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

Activities and Achievements:

- We meet in one another’s homes once a month, on the second Sunday of the month, 5:30 p.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, 2016 – 2017, we read and discussed the
- following books:
 - *Daughter of Persia*, Sattareh Farmaian
 - *The Two State Delusion*, Padraig O’Malley
 - *Just Mercy*, Bryan Stevenson
 - *Dawn*, Elie Wiesel
 - *Lab Girl*, Hope Jahren
 - *American Amnesia*, Hacker and Pierson
 - *Hillbilly Elegy*, J.D. Vance

Respectfully submitted by Ray Setser

Caring

Members: Marcia Castano (Chair), Kay Haun (Co-Chair), Sally Flynn, Ralph Haller, Mela Khedouri, Paula Knecht, Myrtle Staples, and Mary Ann Terry

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 75 network volunteers have made themselves available in many different situations this year. This is a big endeavor and without all, it could not succeed.

Ex Officio: In addition to the volunteers on the Caring Committee, Danny Reed, Bill Epes, Nancy Pellegrini, Carol Oates, and Sandra Selvitelli are on hand giving invaluable advice and assistance.

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

Activities and Accomplishments:

- 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.

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 or Kay or Sandra or Nancy Pellegrini—you’ll be added to the volunteer network for your own home area.

Respectfully submitted by Kay Haun, Co-Chair

Churchyard

Members: Bob Jontos (Chair), Sarah Cothran (Recording Secretary), Laura Moses (e-mail Correspondence) Stan Boyer, Karen DelPorto, Suzy DeMerell, Krystina Deren, Fran Ennis, Tom Hartry, Stan Hunton, Karen Ruef, Ed Stephens, Lisa Trysseoone, and Tim Van Parys

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

Activities and Accomplishments:

- **Open Space:** The open space landscape and seating design was updated and revised to reflect input from committee members and the Vestry. Upon completion, the revised plan is being drafted and will be presented to the Churchyard Committee and the Vestry for further review.
- **Gateway Walk:** A memorandum of understanding regarding the cooperative efforts of the Charleston Garden Club and the 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 Churchyard Committee has just received a response from the Garden Club and is reviewing the document.
- **Irrigation System:** The irrigation system damaged by the construction on the adjacent property has been repaired and paid for by the former owner of the adjacent property. A new control panel has been installed and the system reprogrammed.
- **Churchyard Management Plan** - Preparation of the first draft of the plan has been completed. The plan will present the history of the garden and the philosophy that guides its care. The plan will also seek to educate Eden Keepers in botany and garden management using the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach.
- **“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.

Administration:

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

(Churchyard Committee Continued)

- 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 a.m.-12 p.m. and 8:00-11:00 a.m. during the summer. A potluck lunch is shared 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/Mission Statement: *The Unitarian Church in Charleston’s Denominational Affairs Committee seeks to enrich congregational life at our church and promote the strength of Unitarian Universalism by promoting awareness of the larger 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.*

Activities and Accomplishments:

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

- Promoting awareness of the larger UU faith community by communicating to the Congregation the programs sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), the Southern Region, and the Southern Cluster of SED UU Churches.
- Encouraging and promoting our financial and member support to the UUA (including the Southern Region) -- UCC is striving to be a Fair Share Congregation.
- Encouraging support of and participation in denominational activities
- Staying connected with the larger UU faith community.

Your Denominational Affairs Committee in 2016-2017 has concentrated on three goals:

- Keeping the congregation up to date on the activities of the UUA and the Southern Region.

(Denominational Affairs Continued)

- Emphasized attending General Assembly, supporting attendance of our professional staff.
- Support to our Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council (UUPCC) to provide scholarships to TWO students from Küküllődombó that want to attend a Unitarian boarding high school in Cluj (lead by Hillary Hutchinson).

In celebration of our 200th Anniversary as a Unitarian church we successfully hosted the Southern Region Spring Meeting, which included a debate/discussion led by the UUA Moderator Jim Keys with the three ministers running for President of the UUA. The Meeting included our Church's Mike Griffith giving a talk/workshop on our Church's participation in the Charleston Area Justice Ministry.

Respectfully submitted by Richard Hayes, Chair

Docents

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

Docents: Linda Maxwell Allen, Sarah Arnold, Diane Boyer, Stan Boyer, Bruce Evenson, Robert Furtwangler, Marcus Giddens, Tom Hartry, Erica Hattings, Marilyn Henderson, Abby Himmelein, Maryann Hughston, Joanne Milkereit, Alan Moore, John Newell, Sally Newell, Gary Nichols, Aliix Plaxco, Karen Ruef, Gail Schiffer, Joanne Simson, Anna Stephens, Colin Thomas, Lisa Tryssesoone-Van Parys, Timmy Van Parys, and Floy Work

Substitute Docents: Kay Haun, Hillary Hutchinson, Toni Johnson, John Preston, and Bill Thomas

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

Activities and Accomplishments:

- In 2016 the number of visitors to the sanctuary increased from 3,065 in 2015 to 8,242.
- We saw an increase in donations from \$1,525.72 in 2015 to \$3,001.00 in 2016.
- Sales of postcards and books dropped from \$127.61 to \$124.25.
- While we increased tours from one to three days a week, we also added 14 days for Home and Garden tours and 8 days for Spoleto for a total of 142 tour days at an average of 20 visitors per hour (406 hours).

(Docents Continued)

- From January 1, 2017 to April 16, 2017 we have had 3,526 visitors compared 2,156 visitors in 2016 for the same period.
- Donations increased from \$913.12 in 2016 to \$1,416.65 for the same period in 2017.
- We are well on our way to exceeding our goal of 10,000 visitors in 2017 with an expected increase in donations to over \$4000. We have just started a new seeding program to increase the size of the average donation.
- To increase traffic flow from the Churchyard to the sanctuary, we have added 4 all-weather sign posts announcing visitor hours.
- We are also adding a permanent enclosed sign case at the King Street entrance to replace the temporary banner announcing our hours.
- Erica Hattings is working on a brief handout about the churchyard on “Why do we look this way?” based upon the writings of Caroline Gilman.
- On February 2, we learned that the painted glass on the south wall of the chancel was made by Henry E. Sharp who had a workshop in New York City from 1850 to 1898. We were informed of this by Dr. Virginia Chieffo Raguin, a professor of Art History at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, MA. She has written many books on stained glass. Paul Garbarini followed through with a fascinating lecture on the painted glass panel section by section in mid-February.

Respectfully submitted by Abby Himmelein

Endowment

Members: Ellie Setser (Chair), Karen Abrams, Michael Griffith (resigned in March 2017), Frank Hardie (Vestry), Richard Hayes (Finance Committee), Nolan Prestwood (Treasurer), Stuart Terry, Terry Walsh (Advisor), John Warren (ex-officio, Baird Investments), Steve Wilson

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

(Endowment Continued)

Activities and Accomplishments:

- The EIB is tasked with overseeing the investment of the endowment funds using a formula that calculates the protected principal so that the endowment funds will be maintained for generations to come.
- There are three restricted funds within the endowment; social justice, churchyard and music. There is also an unrestricted fund. This year the board voted to allocate 3% from each fund for the work of the church. The allocation amount is calculated using the value of the funds on December 31 and will be available on July 1, 2017. The distribution for unrestricted will be \$20,165 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 \$4,031, the Churchyard \$2,558 and the Music \$1,571. 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.

Respectfully submitted by Ellie Setser, Chair

Finance

Members: Richard Hayes (Chair), Nolan Prestwood (Treasurer), Terry Walsh (Assistant Treasurer), Charles Everett, Fred Himmelein, Fe Houston, Stuart Terry, and Paige Wisotzki, with staff support from Rev. Danny Reed and Sandra Selvitelli

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

Activities and Achievements:

- The financial status of the congregation is good. The Finance Committee continues to:
 - Review the Church's finances through open monthly meetings with the Treasurer.
 - Provide recommendations and counsel to the Vestry on all financial matters.
 - Develop and manage Church budgets for the Vestry review and congregation approval every May at the Annual Congregational Meeting.
- Details of the budget and cash flow are reviewed monthly by the Committee, and recommendations for actions sent to the Vestry.

(Finance Continued)

- The proposed budget for 2017-2018 (Fiscal year 2018) was submitted to the Vestry for consideration at the annual meeting. Working with Betsy Grund (Personnel Chair) this budget ensures continued fair remuneration for our outstanding staff. Ren Manning and Tony Isaac led a superb Pledge Drive, ensuring continued growth for our Church. And for the fifth 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 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.
- This year the Finance Committee has started an exciting effort, led by Fred Himmelein, to ensure that we have strong internal controls within our church financial management. We are developing a set a solid set of written church financial policies and procedures, that will be audited by the end of 2017.
- Nolan Prestwood and Terry Walsh gets our highest praise and thanks as our Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer.
- The Finance Committee lost its longest serving member in February – Dr. Paige Wisotski. We dedicate our efforts for strong church financial management in honor of her legacy on honorable service to our congregation.

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/Mission 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 seven art shows:
 - Fall Show: Private Collection Show
 - Candlelight Concert/Art Show: Solo Show of Lucy Burten- Stephens' Paintings
 - Winter Show: Solo show of Jack Hurley's Photography
 - Candlelight Concert/Art Show: Solo Show of Guest Artist, Demsey Hookers' Paintings

(Fine Arts Continued)

- Spring Show I: Members and Friends' Art Show (Kathy Hale, Jim Innes, Cisco Lindsey, John Milkereit, Tobias Van Buren, Lee Westbrook)
- Spring Show II: Solo show of Guest Artist, Debra Howard's Paintings
- Summer Show: Solo show of Guest Artist, Anna Trojanowska's Photography
- The back entrance of Gage Hall Mini-Gallery features works by Cisco Lindsey and Friends.
- The Fine Arts Committee worked cooperatively with the Music Committee to present benefit concerts/art shows that aid music programs in poverty-level schools in the area.
- All of the art shows were successful. The show featuring works from members and friends' private collections continues to be a favorite. It increases the opportunity for members' participation.

2017-18 Plans:

- Continue to show the work of guest artists (mostly Cisco Lindsey's contacts).
- One show for the work of our own members.
- Private Collection Show.
- Solo Shows for members or guests.
- Long Range Plans: Children's Shows based on Art Workshops conducted by a paid artist.

Joanna Innes will continue to chair, and Amy Ball will co-chair for the next year.

Respectfully submitted by Joanna Innes, Chair

Forum

Members: Simon Lewis (Chair), Laura Moses

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

Activities and Achievements:

- Lineup of speakers covered a range of topics from current affairs (e.g. talks on the recent election and the Middle East) through church business (e.g. financial state of the church) to health and social justice issues. Green Sanctuary co-sponsored a number of presentations.

(Forum Continued)

- Audience size is generally in the 15-50 range. Factors attending attendance in addition to subject-matter include whether or not Choir has the day off, and weather.
- Audience satisfaction seems to have remained high based on feedback.
- 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.

Respectfully submitted by Simon Lewis, Chair

Landmark/Buildings and Grounds

Members: Ron Updike (Chair), Erica Hattings (Co-Chair), Judy Manning (Co-Chair), Cisco Lindsey, Alan Moore, Richard Moss, James Selvitelli, and Ed Stephens

Purpose/Mission 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:

- New security system installed.
- Installed new iron railings in sanctuary.
- Repaired the damaged floor tiles in Gage Hall's upstairs bathroom.
- Repaired wrought iron gate leading to Churchyard.
- New locks installed for the sanctuary.
- Repaired the Wayside Pulpit on King Street.

Projects to be Addressed:

- New ceiling lights are required in Gage Hall; Upstairs seating area and Sandra's office. (Work in progress)
- Minister's office stucco ceiling needs repair. (Have two estimates)
- Sanctuary roof needs to be refinished within the next year. (Have one estimate)
- Sanctuary of exterior needs lime wash treatment within the next two years. (Have one estimate)
- Replace termite damaged wood in Gage Hall. (Have one estimate)
- Change locks in Gage Hall. (No estimate)

Respectfully submitted by Ron Updike, Chair

Let's Do Lunch

Members: Susan Hartry (Coordinator) Let's Do Lunch is open to all church members and friends.

Purpose/Mission Statement: *Let's Do Lunch is a time to share a meal with fellow members and friends of the Unitarian Church in Charleston.*

Activities/Accomplishments: We meet at local restaurants in Charleston, Mt. Pleasant, North Charleston, James Island, Johns Island, Daniel Island on the second Tuesday of each month. We have some favorites and are open to new suggestions. We vary our choice of venue by type of cuisine including vegetarian friendly options.

Additional Comments:

If you would like to be included in the Let's Do Lunch group email, contact Susan Hartry at hartry.susan@gmail.com or my cell phone 843-302-1779.

Respectfully Submitted by Susan Hartry

Membership

Members: Karen Ruef (Chair), Rhoda Sterling (Co-Chair), Susan White (Secretary), George Castano, Marcia Castano, Anne Lewis, Ren Manning, Priscilla Shumway, and Sue Weller

Ex Officio: Carol Oates

Since last year, Claudia Updike, Kris Rife and Marjorie Beecher have left the committee due to other commitments.

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

Activities and Accomplishments:

- Three committee meetings were held: August 22, March 2 and May 22.
- Committee continued to support Carol Oates, Membership Coordinator, with both Pathways and Pathfinders classes.
- Committee provided food for three Membership Sundays, recognizing long time as well as new members.
- Committee has obtained ribbons for their name tags to assist new members to identify them.
- Committee worked with Church Administrator on the photo directory, particularly in providing volunteers to assist during the actual photo sessions.

(Membership Continued)

- Committee continues to ensure that there are greeters and ushers every week and that the Welcome Table is staffed.
- Old Welcome tables were replaced with an armoire to store material in, augmented by folding tables. Ability to lock the armoire has helped reduce the amount of irrelevant material left in the table drawers.
- Committee members reviewed a variety of UUA publications with a view toward purchasing a limited selection for use at the Welcome Table and in the sanctuary.

Respectfully submitted, Karen Ruef, Chair

Music

Members: Claire Law (Chair), Amy Ball, Frank Hardie, Joanna Innes, Richard Nelson, Sally Newell, Claudia Updike, Emelle Wade, Judy Warren

Mission Statement: *The mission of the church music program is to enhance the worship experience through music and to reach out to the church community and beyond through various music related events. The music program raises funds for The Music Battery Program- an afterschool program for kids-at risk-through Candlelight Concerts. The Music Committee also sponsors the Martha Welsh scholarship to be awarded to an RE student each year.*

Activities and Accomplishments:

- The choir meets on Wednesdays from 6:45p.m. to 8:30 p.m. and sings on most Sundays, from September to the end of May, except when the Music Director occasionally invites professionals from outside the Church, and this gives the choir a Sunday off.
- The biggest change in 2017 is that our beloved music director, Johanna Evenson, will leave us at the end of May. Her last day will be Sunday, June 11. Luckily, our member Susan Conant, experienced musician who has performed on flute in church many times, has come forth and offered to lead as “Interim Music Director.” Amy Ball will take on a larger role accompanying Susan on the piano and organ.
- The Children’s Choir practice with Johanna Evenson every week until the end of April and sang in church about once a month.
- Our music director, Johanna Evenson has received three scholarship applications from our RE youths for the Martha Welsh scholarship!
- The Music Committee offered one Candlelight Concert in the fall and one in the spring. Thanks to Sally Newell, we were able to get Charleston’s own famous Jazz composer Charlton Singleton to be the spring performer. Although a third concert was planned for the spring, the group “The Charlestons” from the adjacent Lutheran Church had a change

(Music Continued)

of schedule and could not perform. Candlelight Concerts support the North Charleston Music Battery, and afterschool program for Middle School aged children who receive assistance with homework and music education.

- Candlelight concerts provide a Fine Art exhibit, in collaboration with the Fine Arts Committee, and a reception with food and wine after each Candlelight Concert.
- Judy Warren manned our Facebook site to announce our Church's 200th Anniversary and that there will be more Candlelight Concerts in the fall, possibly featuring Chamber music that would have been playing 200 years ago or music that would chronicle the ages. The site is getting regular hits so it's worth keeping it updated.

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

Personnel

Members: Betsy Grund (Chair), Tony Brown, Frank Hardie, Al Finch, Floy Work

Ex Officio: Danny Reed and Sandra Selvitelli

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

Activities and Accomplishments:

- I want to thank Nancy Waters, who stepped off the committee this year, for her years of contributions and expertise. I am pleased to report that Al Finch, Frank Hardie, and Floy Work have all joined the committee this year and we are grateful for the experiences and attention they each bring to this important team.
- As always, we are grateful for the commitment and investments of each of our staff members. We have an awesome, established, professional staff and the Personnel Committee seeks to support them as they support every aspect of church life. On a daily basis, they are prioritizing and balancing many tasks and although they make it look easy, we know each of them is overcoming many challenges to get it all done! While they carry out multiple tasks, they are carrying our vision and mission and we are fortunate beyond words to have such competence and caring at our service.
- The Personnel Committee remains committed to serving our dynamic, dedicated staff in a manner that honors their commitment to the work and mission of this church.

Respectfully submitted by Betsy Grund, Chair

Planned Giving

Members: Hillary Hutchinson (Chair), Judy Bruce, Ken Fickling, Kay Haun, Steve Simon and Steve Wilson with Ex officio members: Myrtle Staples, Stuart Terry, and Bill Walsh

Purpose/Mission Statement: *To secure and enhance the long-term vitality of the Church through an on-going program of planned giving.*

Activities and Accomplishments:

- Created a form that allows benefactors to communicate their wishes for a bequest clearly to the church.
- Arranged with 14 individuals and couples to communicate their wishes to the Church using the new written verification process. There are several more in the “pipeline.”
- In collaboration with several other committees, and the guidance of Sandra Selvitelli, purchased a locked file cabinet for the office. (one drawer each for Personnel, Stewardship and Planned Giving – and one for Sandra!)
- Held a reception in October to honor current and potential legacy givers. Thanks to Myrtle Staples for her expert help in coordinating.
- Provided several biographies of deceased benefactors to the Gateway, beautifully written by Kay Haun.

Plans for 2017-18:

- Continue talking with select members about their interest in making a bequest to the Church.
- Develop Planned Giving Committee policies for Vestry approval.
- Host a seminar for interested members about ways to transfer equities to the church, before and after death.
- Continue publicizing the availability of the General Endowment and Restricted Endowments of the Unitarian Church in Charleston for bequests.

Respectfully submitted by Hillary Hurchinson, Chair

Religious Education

Members: John Massey (Chair), Downing Child, Kevin Eakes, Mary Ellen Giess, Erica Hattings (Vestry liaison), Alex Hild (Adult RE), John Hyatt, Joe Krause, Danielle Lopez, Marina Penna-Morrison (Youth liaison), and Kris Rife (Social Justice liaison)

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

Activities and Accomplishments:

- Janet Watts has been the driving force in maintaining the standard of excellence that our members (new and old) have come to treasure as a pillar of our church community. The Religious Education Committee has continued to work on the development and implementation of our committee's mandate, and this has resulted in the growth and improvement of our Religious Education program.
- Over my tenure of the last three years, the work of the Religious Education Committee and the Director of Religious Education has been largely threefold:
 - Seek input from, and assess the needs of, our fellow congregates regarding the religious education mission of our church.
 - Work alongside the Vestry and our Senior Minister to develop a manageable plan for the implementation of a coherent and inclusive religious education program that meets the needs of our church.
 - Work to provide our religious education staff and volunteers with the resources and support to implement this plan. Within this, of course, has been our work with our fellow church committees to play our part in the church's larger challenge of managing change and growth.
- 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 Joe Krause.

Respectfully submitted by John Massey, Chair

Safety Committee

Members: Carol Tempel (Chair), Lisa Hajjar, Richard Hayes, Judy Manning, Alan Moore, John Narkunas, Maureen Porter, Danny Reed, David Ruef, Sheila Scarborough, Ron Updike, and Janet Watts

Activities and Accomplishments:

- Reviewed our facilities using a comprehensive self-inspection safety checklist, and made recommendations for facility repairs and safety/security upgrades to staff, the vestry, and buildings and grounds.
- Approved an Emergency Operation Plan (EOP) with a full range of safety and security issues. The EOP is posted on the church website.
- Met with the Program Council and other committees to review the EOP and emphasize the use of the safety tips for events, meetings, and docent tours.
- Installed an updated the fire alarm system along with strategically placed video cameras and panic alarms for security.
- Installed railings in the chancel area to assist congregants during an evacuation.
- Monitor the resources for safety including the AED's (defibrillators), first aid kits, walkie-talkies, fire extinguishers and other supplies for use in the sanctuary and Gage Hall.
- Staffed every church service with volunteers serving either as the Volunteer Incident Coordinator (VIC) or as the Safety Team (ST) to assist with emergencies and evacuation. We clarified the role of the VIC and ST for safety. ST leaders (e.g. David Ruef and Sheila Scarborough) recruit, train, and oversee the online sign-up of volunteers.
- Provide safety training, as needed to staff, ushers and greeters, event coordinators, docents, and Program Council leaders on safety practices as recommended in the EOP.
- Practiced an announced and unannounced evacuation protocol with the congregation and the children.
- Keep evacuation instructions in the pews and on the wall of our facilities.
- Remodeled a closet in the North Room for storing and securing essential safety equipment.

(Safety Committee Continued)

Next Steps:

- Continue to meet quarterly to implement the EOP and consider improvements to the operation and needs of the church and the Safety Team.
- Review of facility needs such as budgeting for the re-keying of doors, the installation of push bar doors on sanctuary (chancel) and Gage Hall doors and cameras for other areas of our facilities.
- We are aware of the need for increasing the number of ST and VIC volunteers for two church services.
- We will continue to schedule safety presentations to the Program Council and its subcommittees. In accordance with church-related FEMA recommendations, the congregation will be informed of actions they need to personally take should there be a weather event (duck-roll-cover), a distracter, or an active shooter (run-hide-fight) emergency. The congregation and children will practice the evacuation protocol twice a year.

Service Auction

Members: Susan Garrison and Nancy Simpson (Co-Chairs), Fran Ennis, Prudence Finn, Michael Griffith, Abby Himmelein, Ren Manning, Donna Reyburn, David Ruef, Karen Ruef, Gail Schiffer, Ellis Setser, George Tempel, Terry Walsh, Joe McCormack and Sandra Selvitelli (Staff Support)

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 "Chocolate is the Answer" celebrated Roald Dahl's (author of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*) 100th birthday and 75th Anniversary of the wonderful M&M. It must have put everyone in a good mood since the two auctions brought in over \$35,000 which is over last year's amount. That is even with a shaky start due to Hurricane Matthews coming to Charleston in

(Service Auction Continued)

October and ending with our auctioneer forgetting to show up. Mike Griffith stepped in as auctioneer and did an amazing job.

Also new this year, 17 church committees created some fabulous baskets to auction off that brought in \$883 addition funds and made an awesome two table display at the Silent Auction. Our biggest money maker is still the dinner type events with fellow church members. These are very popular and sought-after seats.

For the 2017 Service Auction we are changing the management style of co-chairs to Donna Reyburn as coordinator and Susan Garrison as event organizer, Nancy Simpson as donation organizer, and Terry Welsh as data organizer.

Respectfully submitted by Susan Garrison, Co-Chair

Social Justice

Purpose/Mission 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 Continued)

Social Justice/Advocacy

Activities and Accomplishments:

Arm in Arm (Formerly Gun Sense SC)

Purpose/Mission 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.*

- A successful Unitarian Stand Up Sunday service was held January 29. The Sunday service was focused on the importance of background checks for the purchase of guns in South Carolina.
- A letter was distributed and signed by 140 people attending the service.
- Over 280 letters have been forwarded to our State Legislators in the House and Senate.
- A church collection took place on Feb. 5. All donations went to Arm in Arm. Over \$1,200 was collected.

Respectfully submitted by Gary Smith

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, Alan Moore, Catherine Rhea, Ron and Claudia Updike, and Sophie Zimmerman

Purpose/Mission 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.
- Provide a simple-to-administer program

(Social Justice Book Angels Continued)

- Students can select own books from Book Angels classroom libraries to take home and read. Students are 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
- Books must be allowed to go home; no penalty for lost or damaged books
- Schools are to communicate to parents/caregivers to urge students to bring books home to read and turn off TV and read with kids 20-30 min. every night.
- Teachers are asked to provide annual feedback via survey.
- Book Angels will return annually to replenish classroom libraries of participating schools.

Activities and Accomplishments:

- Since beginning in the Charleston area in 2011 Book Angels has collected and distributed over 80,000 books to 16 elementary and middle Title I schools in Charleston and Dorchester counties.
- During 2016, Book Angels donated 8,698 books to the following schools: Sanders-Clyde Elementary and Middle, Zucker Middle, Clay Hill Elementary, James Simons Elementary, Memminger Elementary, Chicora Elementary, Burns Elementary, Harleyville Elementary, Mary Ford Elementary, Baptist Hill Middle, E.B. Ellington and Edith Frierson Elementary.
- During 2016, book drives were held or are scheduled at the following schools: Bishop England, Ashley Hall, James Island Charter, Moultrie Middle, Porter Gaud, Christ Our King Stella Maris, Buist, Palmetto Scholars Academy, Charleston Day, Laing Middle, Cario Middle, Ashley River Creative Arts, First Baptist Lower, Mt. Pleasant Academy and the Daily Vacation Bible School at First United Methodist Isle of Palms.
- A student from Cario Middle School volunteered 50 hours to Book Angels during 2017 to establish a Facebook page for Book Angels as her Girl Scout project. Anita Harrison referred her to Book Angels and facilitated and supervised the project.
- During the spring of 2017, Book Angels was formally incorporated under South Carolina law in order to protect its name; it also filed for service mark protection and is in the process of obtaining tax-exemption under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Respectfully Submitted by Ren Manning

(Social Justice/Advocacy Continued)

Civil Rights Related Activities

- Participated and had a float in the Gay Pride Parade in August.
- Participated and had a float in the Emancipation Parade in January.
 - UC-CHS participation was very good. We are proud to have participated in these two important parades for several years.
- In 2018, we are contemplating participating in the Martin Luther King Parade, instead of the Emancipation Parade. It is a larger event. Also, we are hoping to have some speakers before the MLK Parade to speak on racial discrimination.

Respectfully submitted by Richard Hayes & John Narkunas

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.

Mission: *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:

- The decision was made to continue pressing forward with last year's incomplete issue: Racial Discrimination in Police Practices.
- Many of our Church's members participated in CAJM's several activities:
 - Serving on Research Committees
 - Conducting House Meetings and meetings with teams
 - Advising CAJM leadership, participating in meetings with authorities and press conferences
 - Attending key CAJM meetings to participate in information sharing and gathering, and investing in CAJM's work.
- A potluck dinner with two African-American churches, Morris Street Baptist and Morris Brown AME, gave us the chance to get to know our brothers and sisters while breaking

(Social Justice CAJM Continued)

bread and discussing issues. This gave us a different perspective from what we experience in the white community.

- Our Church led the way in CAJM with investments over \$16,000 which exceeded our goal.
- The Church's CAJM members continue to be dedicated to help correct systemic issues which cause social injustices. We have to continually remind ourselves that sometimes the work is hard, the barriers are great and it takes time and perseverance, particularly with an issue like racial discrimination. It can be especially hard for us to deal with the tension that standing up to public officials creates. We must remember that a few minutes of feeling uncomfortable pales in comparison to the discomfort those subjected to injustice feel all the time, often with consequences that go far beyond discomfort.
- Preparations are now underway for the culmination of a year's work, the Nehemiah Action, April 24. UC-CHS continues to be a major participant in the Action. Last year we had 300 attendees, meeting our goal, and plan to do well again this year.

Respectfully submitted by Michael Griffith

Social Justice/Coffeehouse Concert Fundraising/Mitchell School Programs

Members: Mark Farnham and Bill Morris (Co-Chairs), John Narkunas contact for Mitchell Math and Science Elementary School staff

Purpose/Mission Statement: *To promote educational equity for children living in poverty in the Charleston Tri-County area. Funds generated through monthly Gage Hall Coffee House concerts are used for academic enrichment activities at Mitchell Elementary School. Enrichment activities include enhanced math and science programs as well as field trips for children in grades Pre K-6.*

Activities and Accomplishments:

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

- As of April 19 the Mitchell School expenditures for enrichment activities for the 2016-17 school year was \$3,500. Net amount in revolving account that will carry over to next year is currently \$3,526. Additional invoices for April-May trips/activities are forthcoming so we have adequate funds to support their activities for the next school year.
- All 375 students participate in the program in grades Pre K-5. The objective is to provide each student with 4 field trips during the school year or one trip every 9 weeks.

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

- Students were involved in science-based field trips to the following locations:
 - South Carolina Aquarium where they were able to further study about fish and animals indigenous to South Carolina.
 - Children's Museum where they explored and experimented with various water machines, a mock shrimp boat and measurement items.
 - Birds of Prey to view and study birds native to the area.
 - Fort Sumter to experience the history of the civil war in Charleston.
 - Isle of Palms to visit the marsh area to learn about the natural habitat of local animals of the low country waterways.
 - Boeing to observe engineering ideas and designs.
 - MUSC in conjunction with the school's Green Heart Project to learn about healthy choices in eating and lifestyles.
 - Magnolia Gardens where they visited the slave houses and discussed the historical connection to Charleston. Kindergarten students visited the petting zoo, nature center, and the swamp walk.
 - Legare Farms where students looked at plant life and farm animals.
 - Charles Towne Landing where students discussed the colonial period in the Charleston area and learned about habitats of many of our state's animals.
 - CAW CAW where students discussed the local environment and the rice fields that were an important part of the local 18th century economy.
 - Channel 2 where students learned about the elements of news casting and the different types of positions that support productions.
 - College Of Charleston Hollings Science Center where students worked in the lab with college students and professors and completed experiments that connected to their grade level standards.
- Funds were used to pay for fees and transportation costs associated with the program.
- Members of the congregation participated in this program as chaperones on trips.

Respectfully submitted by John Narkunas

(Social Justice Continued)

Social Justice Endowment Fund

Members: John Narkunas (Chair), Stan Boyer, and George Tempel (Grant Reviewers)

About:

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

- In September 2014, our first mini-grant was awarded to We Are Family utilizing \$4,800 in interest earned from the endowment investments. The funds were awarded to support activities and leadership development opportunities for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex (LGBTQQI) and straight ally youth ages 7-23 in Charleston, Berkeley and Dorchester counties.
- In September 2016 we awarded grants of \$2,000 to each of two organizations:
 - **Clap Your Hands:** This organization provides free therapeutic products, not covered by insurance, to lowcountry children with special needs. Products such as weighted blankets, vests, lap and neck pads, dressing vests, sensory pads and other items to children who are diagnosed with Autism, ADHD, Cerebral Palsy, Down Syndrome, pediatric stroke and other conditions. These items help children relax and self soothe on their own accord, leading to better sleep, improved focus in home and school, and general well being.
 - **Lowcountry Alliance for Model Communities:** LAMC represents seven of the poorest communities in North Charleston in addressing such areas as affordable housing, economic development, education and the environment. They are attempting to empower residents to actively participate in initiatives to improve the quality of life in the community. They are identifying neighborhood historic sites that tell the story of African-American culture and develop a tourism plan directed at African-Americans, preserve the local historical sites, and encourage a greater sense of pride and ownership among residents. This effort is being conducted in conjunction with the College of Charleston Office of Tourism and Analysis and the South Carolina Historic Preservation Office.
- A total of 12 organizations were nominated by members of the Congregation. All applications were ranked by an objective review panel according to how well they addressed the application criteria. These two applications received the highest scores and were awarded funds at our Social Justice Sunday Service in September.

(Social Justice Endowment Fund Continued)

- Donations from two Christmas Eve Collections amounted to approximately \$2,700. The donations went to the Children Crisis Fund, a group that works closely with the Charleston County School District. These children are coping with the most difficult circumstances, such as being homeless.

Respectfully submitted by John Narkunas

Social Justice/Community Outreach Volunteering

Chair/Contact: Kris Rife

Purpose/Mission 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

- The long-term project has been the Backpack Buddies program at Low Country Food Bank in North Charleston. This provides bags of weekend food for nutritionally challenged elementary school children along the entire coastal communities of South Carolina. There are about 15-25 people participating for 3 hours, one Saturday per month during the school year. This is a good program for newcomers to participate in congregational activities. Next year the age to participate has dropped to age 9 with parental supervision and age 16 without a parent. Occasionally other jobs are requested of us at the Food Bank in place of Backpack Buddies. Their volunteer coordinator may occasionally request weekday help and that info is sent by email on the Social Justice Email list.
- The COV committee has occasionally sent email request for participation in events such as marches to the state house to support social justice topics. In fall of 2016 there has been participation in a multi-state project known as Moral Movement led by Rev. William Barber of North Carolina and others. Volunteers participated in a Revival with Rev. Barber in Charleston. There have been meetings in Columbia for forward movement across the state and one coming in the spring.
- We have done seasonal support to One80 Place shelter and Family Services by gathering items needed by tenants. Ellie Setser arranged one of these drives in late summer.
- A request to place a Black Lives Matter Flag was presented to the Vestry and voted down. Rev. Reed presented a compromise of a positive Social Justice message placed on the King Street entrance and we are grateful for his facilitating that.

(Social Justice/Community Outreach Volunteering Continued)

- We have a wish list of other known needs in the community such as homelessness, feeding stations, racial justice, Black Lives Matter, Standing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) that we hope to address in the future as a congregation. The recent community energy for expression and change is high and many opportunities exist for participation.
- I would like to start a UUSJ Facebook page for quick announcements for these events and other SJ committee topics which are often planned at the spur of the moment and difficult to present in UUSJ email.
- The COV chairperson acts as a liaison of the Social Justice Committee to the Religious Education Committee to facilitate family volunteering. The RE committee has annual projects that support One80 Place shelter, Charleston County Schools, and Low Country Food Bank.
- Projects recognized are first approved by the Social Justice Committee and Minister.

Respectfully submitted by Kristina Rife

Social Justice/Green Sanctuary

Members: Laura Moses (Chair), Lindsay Brunhouse, Emilie Carey, Erin Demory, Nina Fair, Bill Grayson, Kathy Hale, Mela Khedouri, Jonathan Lamb, Judy Manning, Richard Moss

Purpose/Mission Statement: *Green Sanctuary's mission is 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:

- Committee meets monthly in members' homes with a vegetarian potluck. Vegetarianism is promoted by GS for health and environmental benefits.
- Worked with the Religious Education program to promote sustainability awareness and green educational activities.
- Earth Day Service (2008 – present) GS coordinates the Earth Day service each year. Our guest speaker for the April 23 was Germaine Jenkins of Fresh Future Farms.
- Green Forums (2007 – present) GS forums this year included Cynthia Hall, Director of the Lowcountry Hall of Science and Math at College of Charleston; Mike Seekings, City Council member and CARTA Chair; and Savannah Brennan, program director of Charleston Moves.
- Summer Service - GS has arranged a service on July 2 with Rev. Gail Collins-Ranadive, our former interim minister, to speak about "climate truth" and her passionate work on

(Social Justice/Green Sanctuary Continued)

this issue. The service will be followed by a group discussion and workshop in Gage Hall based on her book *Nature's Calling, the Grace of Place*, which includes a chapter on her time in Charleston.

- Northwest Earth Institute Discussion Series (2013-present) - These popular reading and discussion classes are open to the congregation, and run by GS. Our 5th class in the NWEI series was "A Different Way: Living Simply in a Complex World."
- Recycling of e-waste, printer cartridges, batteries and light bulbs (2007 – present) Sexton Joe McCormack constructed a new shelf with bins next to the back door of Gage Hall. Lee Westbrook, not on GS, kindly picks up the items for recycling.
- Gateway articles - GS contributes a monthly column to the Gateway in support of environmental education.
- Composting/Recycling/Landfill bins in Gage Hall – GS members often volunteer at the composting, recycling and landfill bins in Gage Hall to give guidance to event attendees. For calendar year 2016, the Unitarian Church diverted approximately 1,500 pounds of organic material from the landfill into the compost pile (as reported to Nina Fair by Wayne Koeckeritz of Food Waste Disposal).
- Charleston Green Business Challenge - GS, on behalf of the Church, participates in the Charleston Green Business Challenge, a City of Charleston program for local organizations to promote health, sustainability and energy efficiency. UC-CHS achieved GBC Palmetto tier with 42 points the first year (2015). In 2016 we made it to 77 points, which puts us in Live Oak, the highest tier! Nina Fair initiated UU participation, and Jonathan Lamb finalized our GBC scorecard, including sending them our year-end energy and water usage data.

Respectfully submitted by Laura Moses

Social Justice/Religious Education

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

Activities and Accomplishments:

- Held a school supplies drive for My Sister's House.
- Held a Halloween Party warm children's clothes drive.
- Held a Harvest Sunday food drive for the Lowcountry Food Bank.
- Held a Holiday collection of personal hygiene and warm items for the homeless adults at One80 Place.

(Social Justice/Religious Education Continued)

- Made Christmas ornaments and delivered them to our neighbors at Canterbury House (Grades 1-6).
- Made Gingerbread Homes and sold them to raise funds for One80 Place.
- Held a Children's clothes drive during the Christmas Holiday Party.
- Had a family craft night to make hats and fun items for the Pride Parade.
- "Empty Bowls" painting and ice cream fundraiser for One80 Place.
- Held a book drive for Book Worms Angels.
- Summer food drive to re-stock the Lowcountry Food Bank.
- Outside of the church, the RE families supported:
 - Pride and Emancipation Day parades.
 - Charleston County Teen Pregnancy Prevention class in Gage Hall titled "Be a Sexual Health Warrior."
 - The People Against Rape "Take Back the Night" rally, march and speak-out.
 - Monthly Lowcountry Food Bank Backpack Buddies program.

Respectfully submitted by Janet Watts, Director of Religious Education

Refugee Program at the Unitarian Church in Charleston

Core Team: Amber Allen, Chair; Kay Haun, Co Chair, Diane Boyer, Nina Fair, Michael Griffith, Marilyn Henderson, Nancy Hild, Donna Reyburn, and Regina Ruopoli

Supportive Outlying Team: Ariel Adams, Kathryn Arden, Ellen Brandwein, Kevin Gainey, Michael Griffith, Jill Jones, Christy Landis, Judy Manning, Ren Manning, Diane Narkunas, Donna Reyburn, Nikki Tremann, Chris Williamson.

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.*

- The LSC project was introduced to our congregation on January 30 by Lloyd White, Refugee Project Director. This meeting is profiled in the SJ Committee Meeting Minutes available on line or upon request. About 35 members of our congregation attended this meeting.
- We were asked to pull together a core team and supportive outlying team to prepare for the end of the three month ban by Trump administration on vetted refugees. Our role as a congregation is to sponsor refugees, which includes either hosting them for a short time

(Social Justice Refugee Program at the Unitarian Church in Charleston Continued)

in a member of the core team's home, helping them move to an apartment, which we help furnish and stock the kitchen with cooking utensils and food, helping them with cultural adjustments, transportation, clothing. The goal is to make the refugees self sufficient with a job in the Charleston. To accomplish this goal we need numerous volunteers, organization and provision of supplies and a fundraising strategy.

- We welcomed two men from Afghanistan on April 27 and May 3. The core and outlying teams have begun acclimating them to their new city, helping them receive social services, aiding in language education, job training and more. The men are moving into their apartment on May 6.

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 – August 2016. Over 50 church members marching and riding a float in the 6th Annual Gay Pride Parade.

Respectfully submitted by Richard Hayes

Stewardship

Members: Ren Manning (Chair), Jack Hurley (Co-Chair), Judy Bruce, Stan Goldberg, Tony Isaac, and Ellie Setser.

Purpose/Mission 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 March 4 with an all-Church celebration in Gage Hall, jointly with the Bicentennial Committee, with the theme “Two Centuries – Just the Beginning.”
- Stewardship Sunday was March 5.
- As of May 1, 2017, 264 pledges had been received for an aggregate of \$384,301, an increase of 2% over the 2016 pledge drive, despite 2% fewer pledges this year. As of May 1, we have exceeded (101%) our pledge goal! Results were adversely affected by the loss of members due to death, relocations or non-responses. We also experienced several significant reductions in amount of past pledges. These factors resulted in reductions of about \$36,000 in pledges that were not renewed (vs \$14,000 in 2015 and \$25,000 in 2016).
- 36% of renewed pledges were increased over last year (vs. 40% in 2016 and 27% in 2015), while the percentage of pledges that were decreased rose to 14%, compared to 10% in 2016. Overall, renewed pledges increased slightly in amount by an average of 3% and averaged \$1,513, up from \$1,303 in 2016 and \$1,488 per pledge in 2015. However, to put the 3% increase in the amount of renewed pledges in context, renewed pledges were raised by 5.7% in 2016 and 5.2% in 2015.
- The Stewardship Committee has realized that as members drop away, the success of pledge drives will increasingly depend on new members. In 2012, we received only three new member pledges; this number has increased to 37 in 2016 and 38 in 2017, and this year the aggregate amount of pledges equated to 11% of total pledges! New members’ pledges averaged \$1,120, up from \$791 in 2016 and \$463 in 2015. Obviously, the success of this year’s pledge drive is due to the generosity of our newest members.
- 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 Ren Manning, Chair*

Worship

Members: Priscilla Shumway and Bernadette Victor (Co-Chairs), Ralph Haller, Richard Hayes, Roy Hiller, Elaine Hunter, Hillary Hutchinson, Allison Sterrett-Krause, and Jerry Prazak

Purpose/Mission 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.*

Activities and Accomplishments:

- Arranged at least one service each month not conducted by the Minister.
- Organized a church picnic in June which provided a fun social beginning of summer.
- Summer services were conducted to large audiences.
- Helped in overseeing the smooth running of Church services.
- The move to two services will be studied next year by the vestry. They will be seeking more input from the congregation and make a decision one year from now.
- We are currently organizing 2017 summer services with the starting date of June 18th and ending September 3th.
- We are currently making plans for the June 18th summer picnic.
- We are currently putting together a brochure which will include the topic, date and guest speakers for all summer services.
- Bill Epes will be leaving us and has been a wonderful addition to our monthly services. We have valued his enthusiasm and creative input.

Respectfully submitted by Bernadette Victor, Co-Chair