

# *1st Unitarian Universalist Church of Detroit 2009-2010 Annual Report*



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## President, Marilyn Mitchell

### 1) What is working well in your committee or group (include accomplishments or other successes)

Unfortunately, the Board was unable to work productively this year because of a number of factors: the resignations of one Board member, the President and the Treasurer – all gone by October; appointment of a new Treasurer who became ill and was forced to resign; appointment of a third Treasurer who had to jump on board quickly in the midst of a change-over in accounting systems; the change-over itself and lengthy reconciliation of the books; an increasing atmosphere of hostility between the Minister and a majority of the Board; failure to train new Board members, of whom there were four, in the systems introduced by the Minister; the appointment of a Search Committee, continual criticism of the Search Committee by the Minister and the Committee's eventual withdrawal from search; and strong differences of opinion on the course that should be taken to address future ministerial leadership and management of the buildings.

What worked well was management of the office with the new office administrator, Jenn. Katie is also a valuable resource.

### 2) What would you like to change?

All of the above (except Jenn and Katie). The new Board must be trained in the systems introduced by the Minister because policy governance, logic modeling and other such techniques shouldn't be obscure and difficult to deal with if they are properly taught.

#### a. Added tasks?

Depending on what kind of ministerial leadership we have, the President will need to become more involved with overseeing and directing staff and dealing with building issues.

#### b. Discontinued tasks? (Shifted to someone else?)

### 3) How are communications working? Could you improve?

Most of the Board members have access to e-mail and the internet, which is crucial to our communication.

### 4) What changes do you suggest?

Anyone who wants to serve on the Board should find a way to be electronically connected.



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**5) What are your goals for the near future?**

To have a full-strength Board so that portfolios can be distributed more evenly and everyone will be able to contribute. To submit monthly reports in writing before each Board meeting so that any questions about a report can be discussed at the meeting and issues resolved. To initiate more working groups to contribute ideas for better management and growth of the congregation and then implement those ideas with concrete action at the direction of the Board.

**6) Comments on review process?**

None at present. Short reports are better at keeping the reader's attention.



## Senior Minister, Rev. Drew Johnston

This is my fourth and final annual report.

### **1) What is working well in your committee or group (include accomplishments or other successes)**

This has been a difficult year to find examples of things working well within the congregational system. Much of the progress of the past has been set aside by the current board, and the discovery of significant accounting errors has certainly caused some notable distress. Underneath that, however, is the great success of discovering hidden truths. In this context, "hidden" does not imply intent, but just something that has been difficult to see. In a systems approach we would refer to this as, "secret keeping." Again, this does not necessarily indicate intent to keep secrets, but very much a pattern of covering up, avoiding, or minimizing information that is difficult to acknowledge. Reducing the habit of "secret keeping" is a notable success and, if continued, can improve the long-term health of the congregation substantially. So let us celebrate the success of shining a bright light on some old, hidden information, and attempting to correct the errors of the past. By early June I will have a compilation of recent significant documents available to any church member as an example of what open communication can include. The disc will contain things such as contracts that have been publicly yet erroneously referenced so you can see what is real.

Staff changes have gone well. Reverend Lynda Smith has been a pleasure to work with and the completion of her time as assistant minister was quite appropriate. First UU can be pleased to say that she began her ministry here, and I will certainly follow her career with enthusiastic interest. Jenn Hurtt has continued to develop her skills in managing the office at church. I have enjoyed working with her and note her willingness to keep learning as a great model for all of us. I have also enjoyed having Katie Macintosh spread her enthusiasm around as she supports various publicity efforts as well as being a responsible and steady presence for children on Sundays.

### **2) What would you like to change?**

I have a deep hope that the work of the previous boards will not be discarded. Previous ways of doing the business of church have not worked well, but the actions of recent boards set a stage for new ways of running the church in a healthy, open, and the visible manner. I hope that the direction toward clearer delegation and accountability continues. The last few months, however, have been a struggle as the previous delegation of responsibility, methods of accountability, structure of meetings, as well as general governance development, have been set aside. After the congregation approved the plan in January it looked like the board would do the next step of creating ends statements as described at a February meeting, but that, too, is in abeyance. All of these aspects of leadership can begin again anytime the board is willing to take action.



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I hope that you will be able to stay in compliance with contractual obligations in the future. Due to ignoring such obligations we have lost voting status at district and UUA level meetings, as well as failed to pay the minister as agreed. In the interest of doing better in the future, I hope you will continue a good working relationship with a CPA as well as provide specific training to your treasurers. It seems like it would be a wise use of time to have an accountant train the board in financial reports as well. Maintaining accurate records and healthy practices can go a long way to preventing misunderstandings and set a tone of clear and open communication.

This was supposed to be a year of continued honesty and leadership development. Honesty took a hit in reaction to discovering hiring and accounting irregularities, which was a lot to happen all at once. When new volunteer leaders stepped forward hoping to pitch in and do their part, they were pushed to the side, which is a behavior worth reconsidering.

It would be nice to be able to leave this congregation with a sense of relationships well tended, however, relationships require at least two people to tend to them. Several of your leaders have not shown any interest in healthy partings, as many of you have told me. I cannot imagine any good reason for wanting to end things poorly, but I cannot fix that on my own. As I wrote last fall, one of this congregation's most crucial tasks is to accomplish a healthy letting go. I remain available to do my part in that process.

When I arrived here there was an interest in congregational training to improve communication. Perhaps because so many people were “on their best behavior” at that time, it did not seem a necessary use of funds. After experiencing the last year of unhealthy communication I want to say, for the record, that it would be a wise investment in your future. There is a communication pattern that seems to repeat on a regular basis and contributes directly to the unhealthy partings of staff as well as members of the church. The model under consideration three years ago is called “non-violent communication,” (NVC, also called compassionate communication) which has much to recommend it. The basis is honesty and empathy, and the techniques are not difficult to learn. An increase in honesty and empathy would go a long way toward reducing the secrecy and hostility that are key elements of the pattern mentioned above.

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Treasurer, Linda Darga

	<b>FY2006-2007 Actual</b>	<b>FY2007- 2008 Actual</b>	<b>FY 08-09 Projected</b>	<b>FY 09-10 Budget</b>	<b>FY 10-11 Budget</b>
<b>REVENUE</b>					
Members & Friends Contributions	\$99,531	\$101,622	\$117,916	\$118,000	\$59,184
Non-Pledge Income	2,319	3,863	1,958	2,000	2,000
Church Related Special Contributions	102	14,262	1,315	1,000	0
Trust Interest	38,500	42,050	33,333	30,000	10,000
Building Use	23,446	31,056	34,137	35,800	33,027
Fundraising	<u>6,620</u>	<u>13,728</u>	<u>8,707</u>	<u>7,500</u>	0
Trust Contribution					<u>75,000</u>
<b>Total REVENUE</b>	<b>\$170,517</b>	<b>\$206,580</b>	<b>\$197,367</b>	<b>\$194,300</b>	<b>\$179,211</b>
<b>EXPENSE</b>					
Ministerial Salary & Benefits	\$60,508	\$112,042	\$124,070	\$130,854	\$81,500
Staff Salaries & Benefits	56,254	68,019	53,417	59,856	51,340
Administration	21,509	25,609	24,075	24,394	32,341
Building & Grounds	41,671	49,434	40,129	42,100	65,660
Heat / air - \$30,000					
Electric - \$8,000					
Water - \$4,500					
Phone - \$2,100					
Contractors - \$12,050					
Maintenance & Repairs - \$10,000					
Music Expenses	3,175	3,692	2,722	4,020	14,820
Worship Expenses	6,831	3,731	1,014	900	3,000
Denominational Concerns	3,744	137	4,000	2,614	4,000
Congregational Events	1,406	6,877	3,945	4,000	1,000
R.E. Expenses	3,202	8,052	1,257	0	0
Debt Service	<u>9,097</u>	<u>8,774</u>	<u>6,568</u>	<u>3,550</u>	0
Annual Fees					<u>7,000</u>
<b>Total EXPENSE</b>	<b>\$207,396</b>	<b>\$286,366</b>	<b>\$261,197</b>	<b>\$272,289</b>	<b>\$260,661</b>
<b>Surplus/Deficit</b>	<b>(\$36,879)</b>	<b>(\$79,785)</b>	<b>(\$63,830)</b>	<b>(\$77,989)</b>	<b>(\$81,450)</b>



## Worship Committee

**1) What is working well in your committee or group (include accomplishments or other successes)**

Our meetings are both task-oriented and education-focused. We have a mentoring system for assimilating new members. We have created well-planned lay-lead worship services and stepped up on short notice when Drew was ill. More leaders have prepared and lead Vespers. We are enjoying our second year of sing-a-longs. We have noticed increased participation in the choir and improvement in congregational singing.

**2) What would you like to change?**

Changes will depend on the type of ministerial leadership we have. The committee will need to add new members as we have for the past two years.

**3) How are communications working? Could you improve?**

All of our members have internet access, so the Worship Committee listserv works very well. Almost all members are in church every Sunday, so we have informal face-to-face contact often.

**4) What changes do you suggest?**

None.

**5) What are your goals for the near future?**

To maintain the quality of worship to which we have become accustomed to.

**6) Comments on review process?**

As chairperson, I filled out the form. All members of the committee and professional staff had an opportunity to review and make improvements before submission.

*Submitted by Mary Lou Malone*



## Membership Committee

**1) What is working well in your committee or group (include accomplishments or other successes)**

Current committee members are Nora Holt and Sally Borden (co-chairs), Alma King, Maysel Brooks, Mary Neale, Danny Rebb, Art Gabhart, and Ed Collins.

Our members work well together and are honest with each other. We have had yearlong regular monthly meetings with the agenda distributed ahead of the meeting and Alma King takes excellent minutes.

During the past year we have provided or assisted in the following events: Sundae Sundays monthly after summer services, November, 2009 weekly coffee hour, called church members to remind them of the monthly potluck every month, provided several individual and several group orientations/new member gatherings which resulted in the addition of six new members to the church, provided several church tours after services, and hosted a new member holiday party in December, 2009. In addition, we maintain the visitors table, pamphlet holders, new member folders and for a time a visitor packet for Sunday visitors. Danny Rebb is finalizing a new church directory.

**2) What would you like to change?**

We need more members and newer and younger members for renewed energy and people with more technical skills.

**3) How are communications working? Could you improve?**

The committee feels that our communications are working well within the committee.

**4) What changes do you suggest?**

None at present

**5) What are your goals for the near future?**

To continue organizing more activities, finalize the directory, improve our visitor packet and find a committee co-chair.

**6) Comments on review process?**

We think this works fine.

*Submitted by Sally Borden*



## Music Department

**1) What is working well in your committee or group (include accomplishments or other successes)**

The 1<sup>st</sup> UU choir is my pride and joy this year! We have, improved vocal technique by (patiently) exploring the first 3 steps of a 5-step program I've absorbed from books, conferences, and colleagues. This has improved choir morale. The repertoire was carefully chosen to guarantee our success- most of the time.

**2) What would you like to change?**

The UU Choir Festival: This event is enjoyed tremendously by all participants, but I'm coming to understand that the event does not relate strongly to the mission of our choirs to provide music at Sunday Services. I'd like to seek a way to bring the "large choir collaboration" experience into the Sunday Service. 1<sup>st</sup> UU church hosting the next Festival in 2012 would be one way to create the opportunity for change.

- a. Added tasks? This year I provided monthly music discussions after Vespers (1<sup>st</sup> Wednesdays)
- b. Discontinued tasks? (Shifted to someone else?) None

**3) How are communications working? Could you improve?**

Could you improve? Informal communications with Rev Johnston occur regularly prior to service, which has been very successful. More formal communications will be required as I build a relationship with our next minister.

I would like to improve planning communication with Gwen in order to improve the quality of services.

Communication with the worship committee has been great, as I regularly attend meetings.

Communications with Jen in the office have been an improvement! It's hard to create a good order of service over and over again. We are getting better.

**4) What changes do you suggest?**

I plan a lot, and far in advance, but the benefits keep coming. I plan to do more of that, and try to involve Gwen more. Changes already suggested for Choir Festival.



**5) What are your goals for the near future?**

Reuse choir repertoire from this very successful year next year. This will allow us to expand our vocal technique, and musicality at a more advanced level. Work on choir confidence, and stage presence. This year I have started using a “theme” approach to programming music—such as an entire service of African Music, or all French music. I’d like to continue this approach for a while.

**6) Comments on review process?**

It seems fine to me.

*Submitted by Todd Ballou*



## The Alliance

**The Alliance** formerly known as the Women's Alliance.

**1) What is working well in your committee or group (include accomplishments or other successes)**

Ten luncheons were planned and carried out for church year 2009-2010 with a variety of topics and speakers. We kicked off the year with Rev. Drew's help as a planning meeting for considering organizational change. Other year's topics included Legislative Term Limits; Quilting; Christmas Musical; Urban Gardening-Wayne Seed; Travel in Ireland; Eldercare issues; and Planned Parenthood. The Alliance also sponsored the Christmas Eve Service reception.

Attendance averaged between 16 and 20 each 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month.

Excellent meals were lovingly prepared by our chef, Elayne Sikelianos.

**2) What would you like to change?**

New energy is needed by the group so they can transition to a different type of group to be more relevant to the present church membership while continuing some of their more traditional activities. The interest doesn't seem to be there either in or outside of the group.

- a. Added tasks? None
- b. Discontinued tasks? (Shifted to someone else?) If the organization fades away, perhaps a group of church members can volunteer to be of assistance when requested by a family holding a memorial service. Suggestion: Form church hospitality committee or connect with the Membership Committee. For this activity.

**3) How are communications working? Could you improve?**

Many members do not have email, so communication is by phone, Order of Service and Newsletter announcement. Each fall a Program/Membership Directory for the year is compiled and given to members.

**4) What changes do you suggest?**

See above comments. (2b.)



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**5) What are your goals for the near future?**

Planning needs to be done for the next Church Year and members will need to make tough decisions about the Alliance's future. Plans are not clear as of this writing.

**6) Comments on review process?**

Good questions!

*Submitted by Alma King*



## Social Justice Committee

**1) What is working well in your committee or group (include accomplishments or other successes)**

The committee has a chair, we had a few good meetings then schedules and individual causes took the lead.

**2) What would you like to change?**

Have committee members who will participate in projects, identify projects that are "church acknowledge" and know that the Church projects do not stop their individual causes.

- a. Added tasks? Committee members!!
- b. Discontinued tasks? (Shifted to someone else?) Discontinue the committee if there are no active members

**3) How are communications working? Could you improve?**

There is always room to improve. Having a committee to communicate with is a good start...and no, it is not the sole responsibility of the chair to recruit committee members.

**4) What changes do you suggest?**

Recruit members? Provide leadership training? Support the committee chairs to see what is working prior to annual meetings?

**5) What are your goals for the near future?**

Considering the role of the chair and if I will continue.

**6) Comments on review process?**

None.

*Submitted by Lee Gaddies*



## Community Outreach, Service, and Publicity

**1) What is working well in your committee or group (include accomplishments or other successes)**

We have successfully participated in annual outreach events like Dally in the Alley and Motor City Pride, using newly designed promotional materials to invite people to join the 1<sup>st</sup> UU community. We also participated in the annual Martin Luther King Day of Service with City Year Detroit. *Standing on the Side of Love* signs were displayed in the churchyard, and several new promotional materials have been developed. This year, we are preparing for a great opportunity- the US Social Forum in Detroit. We have submitted a workshop proposal (about UU social justice values and action) and are housing several hundred people at 1<sup>st</sup> UU during the USSF. This has built good relationships with other organizations and will raise us several thousand dollars.

**2) What would you like to change?**

Because Outreach, Service and Publicity are a combination of one board member's efforts and a part time staffer's efforts (meaning no committee), it is hard to accomplish things quickly or efficiently. The way these projects are overseen and approved has been difficult to navigate because they have been ambiguous. Creating more clarity in Katie's role and the board's interaction with her would be an excellent way to make more out of her efforts and better publicize 1<sup>st</sup> UU and serve our community.

- a. Added tasks? Intentional media, including free papers, online calendars, and social media that highlights our values and our events.
- b. Discontinued tasks? (Shifted to someone else?) N/A

**3) How are communications working? Could you improve?**

Clarity in Katie's oversight and role would help with communication between her, her supervisor, and the board. We have a lot of ideas and more clear expectations regarding timelines, budget, goals, and purview of Katie's job would help us accomplish more. If I better understood how Katie's supervised and what my role as a board member working with her is, I would be able to better guide her efforts and answer her questions. Monthly meeting would be helpful as well.

**4) What changes do you suggest?**

(See above)



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**5) What are your goals for the near future?**

We are in the middle of our efforts around the US Social Forum and our task force is doing well preparing for this large event. Motor City Pride is also right around the corner and we are gathering materials and volunteers for that. More importantly though, I am eager to clarify the process by which we can publicize our church and serve our community.

**6) Comments on review process?**

I am looking forward to implementation of new processes/strategies based on this review process.

*Submitted by Dessa Cosma*



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### Church Trust

**1) What is working well in your committee or group (include accomplishments or other successes)**

So far during the church year, since July 1, 2009, the Trust has supported operations of First UU Church by advancing \$137,500. Without this monetary infusion, the Church could not have met its obligations.

**2) What would you like to change?**

It would be good if Trust assets were greater. At the current time, Trust principle stands at \$232,000.

- a. Added tasks? None
- b. Discontinued tasks? (Shifted to someone else?) The recent congregational decision to establish an Endowment Fund will gradually transfer Trust assets to the Endowment, which will be controlled by a committee appointed by the Board, unlike the Trust, whose members are self-appointed. Until all remaining Trust assets have been transferred to the Endowment Fund, or directly advanced to the Church to fund operations, the Trust will continue to exist as a separate entity. The Trust will eventually be dissolved by action of its five members.

**3) How are communications working? Could you improve?**

Communications seem to be working OK between the Trust and the congregation and the Board. Communications within the Trust are also good.

**4) What changes do you suggest?**

See 2b above. Changes are already afoot.

**5) What are your goals for the near future?**

As always, maximize earnings and protect assets.

**6) Comments on review process?**

The process seems to be adequate.

*Submitted by Bill McKnight*



## Audio/Video and Information Technology

### 1) What is working well in your committee or group (include accomplishments or other successes)

- a) Sound
  - Sermon audio is continued to be placed on the web for the sermon's of our ministers by the office manager.
  - Quality of sound and recordings seems to have improved
  - Timeliness of CD availability is good
  - Sales of CDs are booming
  - We have changed our fifth Sunday to be covered by one of the regular sound people
- b) Church Office and Network
  - Finally got solid internet network operation after removing fax from internet line
  - Local wireless network seems to be working well. No complaints for months.
  - Sugar Law is no longer on our internet connection.
- c) Website and Related Communications
  - Website is being updated in a timely fashion

### 2) What would you like to change?

- a) Sound
  - Random pops and hums in sound system, needs review and overhaul
  - Obtain new wireless microphone
  - Ability to patch in MP3 player
  - New hearing devices for congregation and visitors
- b) Church Office and Network
  - See if we can reduce costs
- c) Website
  - New look and feel
  - Add pictures of people
  - Make it more friendly and inviting

### 3) How are communications working? Could you improve?

All communication is done over the web via email.



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### 4) What changes do you suggest?

#### a) Sound

- Get new people involved in sound
- Add some expertise in sound systems

#### b) Network

- Reduce costs

#### c) Website

Integrate social networks, possibly a FaceBook page for the church