



First Unitarian-Universalist Church of Detroit 2013-2014 Annual Report

The 2013-2014 Annual Report is available on our website at
<http://1stuu.org/Governance/Governance.php>: 2014 Annual Report.



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Letter from the Minister

Congratulations on another strong year! I am very proud of the way that the First Church has come together this year, with strong growth across almost all of the areas of the church. It is a privilege to be part of the revival of this congregation, which has struggled through some truly difficult times and circumstances. And I am proud that our new members have been able to bring so many gifts and blessings, making this new flowering possible. Thank you all!

We have a strong worship service, and attendance has remained reasonably strong even through what was in fact the worst winter in recorded history. Likewise, our membership growth has been even stronger, year over year, a trend that shows every sign of continuing this year – we will very likely add our 100th member by the time this report is published. When I began with you, we reported 73 members, and have cleaned up the membership rolls a bit more each year, removing at least twenty or thirty names from that original list that have moved away or stopped participating. That means that about half of the current members have joined in the last three years. Growth is good, but what is really important is that the church has shown consistent growth for the last three years, and looks to be poised for yet another good year. That is not a fluke, but a sign of true renewal and rebirth. Well done!

Yet the real challenge this year probably was not around building membership and attendance. The biggest challenge this year was organizational. Creating healthier systems for developing and sustaining the church as an institution has been the more impressive achievement this year. We added at least half dozen new committees to cover the organizational needs of the church. While there is still plenty of room for improvement, all of our new committees are up and functional, with several initiatives to report and celebrate. That is extremely significant in the life of the church, as we must have basic systemic functioning to move on to the next phase of our renaissance. Thanks to our growing cadre of leaders, we have every reason to be thankful for what they have accomplished, and hopeful for yet more improvements next year. Make sure to share your appreciation for all the good work our new committees have done this year, with special gratitude to the chairs. Again, well done!

We do have some challenges to face as we close out this year and begin planning for next year. Yet we are privileged to have a highly competent and capable board to guide us through whatever difficulties we face. This is a truly blessed congregation. Know that I believe that we can and will overcome those challenges. I look forward to next year being even better. Keep the faith!

Reverend Roger Mohr
Developmental Minister



Letter from the President

To Members and Friends of First Church:

As the church year draws to a close, this is a good time to reflect on what we have accomplished together in making this a meaningful journey. I want to start by recognizing the outstanding work of the board and committee members whose commitment, vision, initiative, generosity, focus, support and just plain hard work have made this a particularly rewarding year for me. We're all the beneficiaries of their efforts.

You'll read about many of the accomplishments in this report. Here are some of year's highlights from my perspective:

- A steady growth in membership to where we now have over 100 members;
- A popular minister whose five-year commitment to his developmental ministry has meant stability after a time of uncertainty;
- Well planned and meaningful worship services;
- Inspiring, well-received messages from the pulpit;
- Uplifting music by our music director, cantor and choir;
- An expanded committee structure reflective of increased organizational capacity;
- Fundraising initiatives to support the budget and address specific needs;
- More realistic budget development and forecasting;
- Expanded programming for church members and friends;
- Structured canvass meetings in member homes;
- Increased visibility among other UU churches and in the community;
- Dedicated leadership from our many volunteers;
- A strategy for managing, improving and maintaining the Prentis parking lot;
- An increasing need for childcare services;
- Strong administrative support;
- Building maintenance and repairs.

This all bodes well for the future of First UU, but challenges remain. We are still struggling to produce a balanced budget that retains desired staff support and addresses past deficits and obligations. Our relationship with EMEAC is still developing within the framework of the Commons' concept and the intent of the Memorandum of Understanding relative to our use of the building.

I wish I could personally thank each and every one of you for the contributions you have made to our church this past year. Whether it's preparing the Sanctuary for church services, greeting visitors, making coffee, decorating for the holidays, participating in clean-ups, chairing committees, attending meetings, clearing snow...or simply attending services and fulfilling your pledge commitments...you are the life of this church. Thank you.

Marsha Bruhn



Activities

Accomplishments:

This was designed to encourage activities and to coordinate them so it wasn't a "feast or famine" on Sundays and at other times. It worked!

Of the four women, who volunteered to fill the two "crew" spots, one moved away but the other three have gone on to initiate activities and events and give us many, varied ways to join in and feel like we belong.

One Sunday, we had 4 or 5 activities going on simultaneously and everyone was happy so coordination may no longer be a concern

Currently, I compile most of the two-weeks' list that appears in Sunday's Order of Service calendar insert, from activities that you tell me about or that I glean from Midtown sources, such as the Detroit Institute of Arts and its Film Theatre, Charles Wright African-American Museum, Detroit Historical Society, MOSES, Midtown Alliance, etc. I also weekly email out Coming Up in and around First Church.

What you can do—email items to BOTH me and Tamara Halliburton in the office. We coordinate where they appear for the most effectiveness. Often, I will list the item and say "See reverse" if more information is needed and available than the calendar side can hold or she will put it on the reverse side if it's an advanced notice, calling for action on your parts.

Flyers or websites with activities you believe would be of interest can be forwarded to me but please also prepare the proposed calendar item about them. I can add more information from those sources if there's room.

Goals:

Linda Darga and I wanted to start a film series and we did show one film. A projector has been purchased – thanks to The New Alliance treasury balance and donors: Roger Zeigler, Dan Secrest and I. I have one film on the list and suggestions for others.

Sherry A Wells

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Tamara Halliburton: office@1stuu.org



Building and Grounds Committee

Accomplishments:

- Produced a summary of issues and potential issues that need to be addressed for the campus
- Improved/replaced exterior lighting for the Forest Lot, the Cass entrance to the Sanctuary, the entry to the mansion, and numerous hallway lighting fixtures. These fixtures will provide improved security lighting, reduce energy consumption, reduce light pollution, reduce maintenance cost and improve the appearance of the building.
- Improved and repaired lighting in the Sanctuary area.
- Organized three clean-up days for the fiscal year.
- Constructed railings for choir fest risers
- Performed maintenance for the Prentis lot including gravel leveling
- Performed snow removal for multiple Sundays
- Performed tree trimmings and gutter cleanings

Goals for Upcoming Year:

- Work with EMEAC and the Commons to organize quarterly clean-up days.
- Follow up with summary of issues created this fiscal year

Buildings and Grounds continue to perform despite limited resources to enact the necessary maintenance on an aging infrastructure. The committee looks forward to improving our relationship with EMEAC and the rest of the Commons members to help provide a home for our continued presence on the corner of Cass and Forest.

Submitted by

Dan Wiest



Canvass Committee

Accomplishments:

2014-2015 Pledge Campaign:

During March and April 2014, four canvass meetings were conducted at the homes of generous congregants. We thank Rev. Mohr, Board President Marsha Bruhn and Treasurer Dan Wiest for conducting professional and personal meetings.

The attendance at the meetings was as follows:

- Nancy Owen Nelson and Roger Zeigler's home: 5 attendees;
- Kathe Stevens and Glenn Maxwell's home: 11 attendees;
- Marilyn and Jerry Mitchell's home: 11 attendees;
- Sharlene Gage's home: 11 attendees.

Attendees at the meetings received

- A brochure, *Investing In The Future At First UU*, which
 - introduced the 2014-2015 Pledge Campaign,
 - presented a financial overview,
 - reviewed goals and challenges for the 2013-14 fiscal year,
 - explained why we have a deficit, and
 - the plan to handle an increase in expenses;
- An organizational chart showing new growth in committees;
- A pledge form.

Many of the individuals who did not attend the meetings received a pledge form on Sunday, April 6.

Letters were sent out to those members and friends who did not attend a canvass meeting.

Follow-up phone calls were made to 36 pledging units/individuals who did not attend canvass meetings or who had not submitted a pledge form for the 2014-15 Pledge Campaign.

Goals:

- Refine the system for recording pledges;
- Review and revise Committee member roles;
- Develop methods to capture pledges from nontraditional congregational members;
- Continually update congregation about canvassing progress during the fiscal year.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Smykowski & Kathe Stevens, Co-Chairs



Communications Committee

Accomplishments

- Rolled out Google account for more widespread church use, including email groups, document management, online signup sheets, calendar, and contacts.
- Migrated church email group from Yahoo to Google. We no longer use Yahoo.
- The consolidated email group on Google (1stuu@1stuu.org) is far more comprehensive and accurate than our old system.
- Worked with the membership team and Tamara Halliburton in the office in establishing simple procedures to get visitor email addresses into our system right away.
- Provided document, communication, and media (mp3 music) support for regional choir festival.
- Maintained church web site -- 1stuu.org.
- Maintained church Facebook site -- www.facebook.com/groups/firstuudetroit/
- Created worship web portal within 1stuu.org.
- Coordinated work involving office equipment, audio-video equipment, software for specific church applications and social media including Facebook.
- Upgraded church Internet access and Wi-Fi network, and converted phone service, to save approximately \$840/year.
- Made audio recordings of church services and special events. Edited and distributed recordings and posted on Internet.
- Maintained office computing and printing equipment.

Goals

- Migrate web site to a new platform, probably Google Sites.
- Continue expanding use of church's Google account for document management and communication.
- Implement online donation and pledging system.
- Recruit and train others to work on communication activities.
- Continue to introduce and implement more efficient processes for managing church related information. Try to get church leadership more involved with this.

Conclusion

The Communications Committee is not a real committee. We do have a group email address and use that to coordinate various work. Here is a list of people on ComCom@1stuu.org: Robert Johnson (audio-video, office and networking), Dan Wiest (financial), Glenn Maxwell (office and networking), Sean McAde, Sherry Wells, Roger Mohr, Roger Zeigler, Art Gabhart, Danny Rebb, Dale Adcock, Linda Darga, Joel Batterman, Kathe Stevens, Sydney Schaaf, Nancy Owen Nelson, and Tamara Halliburton.

Our motto: *Notify the group of what you want to do. Respond to any feedback. Then do it!*

Submitted by *Dan Secrest*, Acting Chair



Development Committee

Accomplishments:

On June 12, 2013, the Governing Board voted to form a development committee to raise funds immediately and develop a long-term plan for fundraising.

The newly-formed Development Committee had its inaugural meeting on August 25, 2013, setting goals to 1) raise funds to contribute to the church budget; 2) apportion 10% of each fundraiser to be invested back in the church trust; and 3) keep the congregation informed.

Fundraising activities were initiated immediately and a fundraising concert was organized. The *Jazz Vespers* concert on November 17 netted a profit of almost \$600 with \$60 going to the church trust.

A May 10, 2014 Hilberry Theater party netted a profit of \$307.49 and provided an evening of fun, food and conversation for everyone, a barometer of success.

To keep the congregation informed, information on fundraisers has been provided via the newsletter, the Sunday order of service and social media. A newsletter article describing the activities of the Committee and requesting fundraising ideas was published in the February 2014 newsletter.

In its first six months, the committee has refocused to think more strategically, targeting fundraising activities to attract our demographic and becoming more aware of cost-effectiveness, while planning to scale events both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Committee members are Kathe Stevens (Chair), Rev. Roger Mohr (*Ex Officio*), Matt Friedrichs, Marilyn Mitchell, Eric Rattan, Joan Smykowski and Corinne Streicher. We welcome others to join us to bring their creative thoughts and organizing skills to the table!

Goals:

The Committee has set a goal to raise \$2,000 in the 2014-15 fiscal year.

For 2014-15 the committee is focused on finding its target audience; publicizing events to reach an audience outside of church membership; and reaching out to the congregation to lend its talents and connections for future fundraising.

As of the date of this report the committee has several fundraisers in the planning stages.

We understand that our mission is critical to the future of First Church. We're excited about that future!

Respectfully submitted,

Kathe Stevens, Chair



Finance Committee

The Budget report (pp 13-14) layout is as follows for each line item:

- First Column: The budget amount for the current fiscal year July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014
- Second Column: The projected amount for the current fiscal year based on April month-end numbers
- Third Column: The percentage difference between the projected total and the budgeted amount
- Fourth Column: The proposed budget amount for the fiscal year July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015

Income Section

Donations

- Donations are funds that can be attributed individuals/groups who have not pledged.
- The large unexpected donation this year was the Eiko Takemoto house sale.
- The Hertz donation came from Helga Hertz's estate. No more donations from this are expected.
- Sunday donations turned out to be unrealistic.

Fundraising

- The Fundraising total for this budget year was made more on hope than any planned events. Those events that did occur were the result of spontaneous short-term efforts made when the opportunity arose. Although Fundraisers are expected next year, the budget includes only those most likely to be done.

Pledges

- The pledge amount was exceeded due to
 - Members who contributed above and beyond their pledges
 - New members who pledged and contributed
- 57 pledges have been recorded thus far.
- Please honor your pledges for this fiscal year so that we can make up our deficit.

Trust

- The income from the Trust is based on interest payments received
- Income received in the past has been dependent upon market conditions for each month. To get a more steady and predictable stream, an agreed amount of \$350/month will be received this year.



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Motor City Brewing (MCB) Rent

- This amount is a minimum of what is expected from renting the Prentis parking lot to the Motor City Brewery. Negotiations are still in progress but this is believed to be a safe amount.¹

Expenses

Contract Services

- These are payment made for any services performed by non-employees. They include the Music Director, Cantor, guest speakers and musicians.

Dues and Subscriptions

- These include dues for Midtown, Inc (\$200), Mid-America Region (\$1555) and the UUA (\$4060)

Fundraising

- In the last fiscal year, members donated their services and expenses and it was thought (unrealistically) that the same could happen this year. The reinstatement of the Development Committee should better manage these numbers
- Noel Night expenses should be lower next year since one-time only charges this year should not reoccur next year.

Health Insurance

- The discrepancy for the minister's health insurance was due to an increase in rates.
- The minister has agreed to accept a plan that will cost the church lower premiums this year but higher deductibles for him.

Social Hour

- It was hoped that there would be more donations from members to fund the social hour supplies to let more of the Sunday donations go to the general fund. Since this did not happen, reimbursements were necessary to lessen the burden on those who brought the beverages, food and supplies.

Insurance

- The discrepancy is attributable in part to payments made this year that were accrued in the prior fiscal year and because the church still did not have a handle on how much insurance would be needed without carrying the building.
- This year's budget amount is based on a firm amount received from Church Mutual.

¹ First UU has a lease agreement with EMEAC that provides them with 20 spaces in the Prentis parking lot free of charge. That agreement is in effect until August 15.



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Office Expenses

- First UU leases its printer from Ricoh. It covers toner and maintenance and charges for pages printed. The lease ends in August when a new one will be sought.
- Quickbooks is the software used to handle our accounting. The plans are to find a cheaper alternative that better handles member management.

Payroll Expenses

- Includes the expenses for the minister and the office administrator

Professional Expenses

- The minister is contractually allocated 10% of his salary to go to expenses related to continuing education, conferences, memberships etc... that benefit the church

Minister Retirement

- The minister is contractually allocated 10% of his salary to go to a retirement fund. The fund is in arrears for this year due to cash shortages. A plan is being developed to bring this to current status.

Rent or Lease

- Due to drops in grant income from their funding resources, EMEAC has presented First UU with a lease plan of \$1,000/month for use of the facilities. Nothing has been included in the budget as the matter is still under discussion.

Utilities

- Covers the Wi-Fi and telephone charges. A new deal has been negotiated that greatly reduces these charges for the next fiscal year.

As is noted at the top of the budget, this is a draft. It is important for all who have not pledged to do so to obtain a realistic picture of expected income. While membership continues to grow (and with it hopefully, more income) the Board is moving away from hoped-for income and to more definite amounts to avoid deficits. While Fundraising events will happen, unknown amounts will not be figured to avoid the current year's scenario.

If sufficient pledge income is not attained, reductions in expenses will need to be made. 80% of First UU expenses are attributable to Personnel. That is the category most likely to be reduced. The Sunday social hour help will be assumed by a church volunteer but that is already figured into this draft. That leaves the most likely category to be reduced to be Contract Services.



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Draft Budget

	2013-2014 Budget	Projected June 2014	Pct Difference	2014-2015 Budget
Income				
Donations-Other				
Audio CD Sales	375	260	69%	120
Social Hour	1,340	1,900	142%	1,900
Takemoto House Sale	0	10,019		0
EMEAC Donations	800	800	100%	0
Veolia	0	540		0
Church Mutual Rebate	0	1,531		0
Parking	800	793	99%	0
Noel Night	150	0		0
Water Escrow Refund		200		0
Directories		112		20
Hertz Donation		1,505		0
Sunday donations	<u>13,671</u>	<u>6,479</u>	47%	<u>6,500</u>
Total Donations	23,000	24,140	105%	8,540
Fundraising				
Jazz Vespers		1,547		0
Noel Night		1,621		1,600
Entertainment Books		120		0
Detroit Rep Theater Party		175		175
Hilberry Theater		735		735
Projector		150		0
Choir Fest		<u>2,240</u>		<u>0</u>
Total Fundraising	10,500	6,713	64%	2,510
Offerings	3,000	2,475	83%	2,500
Pledges	70,500	71,437	101%	72,853
Trust	4,629	4,173	90%	4,200
MCB Rent	<u>0</u>	<u>2,025</u>		<u>8,000</u>
Total Income	112,529	110,963	99%	98,603



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	2013-2014 Budget	Projected June 2014	Pct Difference	2014-2015 Budget
Expenses				
Commissions and Fees	20	78	390%	78
Community Event	500	137	27%	0
Contract Services	13,945	14,859	107%	17,795
Dues and Subscriptions	500	200	40%	5,815
Development				1,000
Fundraising Expenses				
Jazz Vespers		950		
Takemoto House Sale		342		
Noel Night		1,059		600
Projector		150		
Choir Fest		<u>2,221</u>		<u>0</u>
Total Fundraising Expenses	500	4,722	944%	600
Health Insurance & Benefits	9,688	10,172	105%	8,788
Social Hour	400	1,254	314%	1,200
Insurance	2,152	7,182	334%	3,653
Professional Fees	500	0	0%	
Office Expenses				
Office supplies		1,001		1,000
Ricoh's		1,372		1,372
Quickbooks		<u>1,006</u>		<u>480</u>
Total Office Expenses	3,000	3,378	113%	2,852
Payroll Expenses	62,301	60,707	97%	61,289
Professional Expenses	5,094	5,127	101%	5,094
Minister Retirement	5,094	0	0%	5,094
Membership	400	170	42%	667
Rent or Lease	1,629	0	0%	0
Repair & Maintenance				
Building & Grounds		367		
Organ Maintenance	<u>1,550</u>	<u>1,037</u>	67%	<u>550</u>
Total Repair & Maintenance	1,950	1,404	72%	550
Utilities	1,440	1,426	99%	480
Misc	100	<u>520</u>	520%	<u>480</u>
Total Expenses	110,763	111,336	101%	115,435
Net Income	1,766	-373		-16,832



Worship Committee

Worship committee was chaired by Robert and Kathleen Johnson, and made up of Rev. Roger Mohr, Music Director Todd Ballou, and members Dan Secrest, Danny Rebb, Mary Lou Malone, Nancy Owen Nelson, Rhonda Rogers, and Eric Cortright. Joel Batterman, Corinne Streicher, and Lee Thume attended a few of the meetings during the year as well. Worship met the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 7pm. Special thanks to Dan Secrest for keeping and distributing minutes, maintaining worship electronic documents and church website, and distributing a copy of minutes to the Church Board each month.

Meetings were held once a month, with the goal to put on a quality worship service 52 weeks a year plus Christmas Eve. Each service begins at 11:00am and ends between 12:00 and 12:15pm. Rev. Mohr for the most part, filled the pulpit the first three Sundays of each month, with the Worship Committee filling in the 4th and 5th Sundays. Committee members took turns being Coordinator for the month and either spoke in the pulpit themselves, or secured a guest speaker. Rev. Mohr has done well with New Member Sunday on 2nd Sundays during the service. What a terrific way to meet our new members and to socialize with potluck afterwards.

Worship Committee has been very aware of money issues this past year, and it has caused some concern in worship planning and sound system upgrades. A good part of our meetings this year have covered this topic. Most Sundays without Rev. Mohr were lay-led, and the Worship Committee was very conscientious of budget this year, and limited ourselves to only a couple of paid non-minister speakers.

Worship continued to be highly-functional rabble-rousers – all hard-working and ready to fill in and help each other out whenever someone needed help. No changes made this year to the order of service. Special thanks go to Roger Ziegler for making several chalice candles for us, including a pretty blue chalice candle, debuted at Easter. Many changes were made to Joys and Concerns and Announcements during the service, which have allowed for congregants to share important news to the church body during the service. This is a perfect solution to expressing Joys and Concerns while not taking the congregation out of the service. Thanks to the Greeters who in part of their duties is to distribute bags with paper and crayons to young children who attend our service. Hopefully as they return, they will be the start of our core group for a children's program. Worship has also smoothed out the Worship Leader role and sign-up process, which has been a big help.

Attendance this year has been a little lower over the winter (averaging 64-70), however, considering the long snowy cold winter, the attendance numbers are great. Attendance is starting to increase as the nicer spring weather arrives. For the year to come, Worship hopes to have a little larger budget for the next year so that we can bring in more guest speakers, in part for enriching our congregation and to also help extend a little rest to our very hard-working committee members. Putting on a service can be very involved and takes many hours of work, and so it would be good not to burn out our committee members or dissuade new members from



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joining. Worship also hopes to start implementing a few sound system upgrades that we've discussed in the next year. Worship rounds our goals out to continue improving service titles so as to bring in more visitors, and ultimately increase membership and Sunday attendance – perhaps so that we can extend our squircle comfortably by 2 pew rows.

Submitted by

Kathleen Jacobs Johnson, Co-Chair