



First Unitarian-Universalist Church of Detroit

Annual Report 2014 – 2015 Church Year

The 2014-2015 Annual Report is available on our website at
<http://1stuu.org/Governance/2015AnnualReport.pdf>



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A SNAPSHOT OF OUR GROWING CHURCH

OUR CONGREGATION IS GROWING:

- 🕯 In February 2014 we reported a congregational census of 89 to the UUA; in February 2015 we reported 96. And we have had more new members join in the last few months.

OUR FINANCES ARE GROWING:

- 🕯 Our pledging income as reported to the UUA in February 2014 was \$59,049; in February 2015 we reported pledging income of \$73,608.

OUR ATTENDANCE ON SUNDAYS IS GROWING:

- 🕯 In 2014-15 our average attendance was up, from 61 the previous year, to 65.
- 🕯 Six services had over 75 attendees.
- 🕯 Two services had over 100 attendees, including 123 at the special service featuring the children of civil rights martyr and First Church member Viola Liuzzo – which garnered the highest attendance for a worship service since February 2002.

OUR COMMITTEES ARE GROWING:

- 🕯 Our Worship Committee continues to thrive and to organize impressive and inspiring services.
- 🕯 We now have a vital and active Planning Committee, which produced a Strategic Plan for 2015, along with measurable outcomes.
- 🕯 A Policies and Procedure *ad hoc* committee has begun to work with the board and committee chairs to review policies and procedures, which will be compiled into a whole-church manual, to be published in the summer of 2015.
- 🕯 The Welcoming Task Force has made considerable achievements in the areas of education, congregational life, and community outreach.
- 🕯 The Social Justice Committee is growing and helping the congregation fulfill its longstanding mission as an urban center for spiritual renewal and social justice.
- 🕯 The Finance Committee is stronger and focused on meeting our obligations head-on so we may be prepared to call a settled minister in a couple of years.
- 🕯 The committee testing the UUA outreach program worked diligently from August 2014 to February 2015 to successfully complete its work.

OUR EVENTS ARE GROWING:

- 🕯 The first-ever UU regional picnic on Belle Isle with over 120 picnickers from churches as close as Detroit and as far away as Brighton.
- 🕯 Forum on water issues.
- 🕯 Screening of “Home of the Brave” documentary on Viola Liuzzo.
- 🕯 Community conversation on marriage equality.
- 🕯 Congregational book read and discussions.



OUR OUTREACH TO THE COMMUNITY IS GROWING:

- 🕯 The Young Adults have formed a relationship with and done service projects for the Ruth Ellis Center.
- 🕯 We were among more than 80 UU congregations and groups who sent a photo with “Blessings From Our House To Yours!” for the September 2014 building dedication of the new Unitarian Universalist Association headquarters in Boston.
- 🕯 The Dally in the Alley once again found First UU Detroiters staffing a table to spread the word about our faith and our presence in Midtown Detroit.
- 🕯 Our Discovering UU’re Midtown Scavenger Hunt not only raised money but brought in folks from the community.
- 🕯 We had another great collaboration with EMEAC on Noel Night to host hundreds of visitors, who also became customers for the Young Adults-organized coffee house.
- 🕯 We joined over 200 congregations and faith communities participating in Freedom to Marry’s National Weekend of Prayer, incorporating a reflection and a reading into our worship service.
- 🕯 This year, for the first time, our church was the starting point for the Mother’s Day Peace Walk: Women Walking Woodward for Peace.
- 🕯 We have established a relationship with Affirmations, metro Detroit’s community center for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and their allies. As a result, First UU has been invited to membership in Affirmations’ Faith Alliance.
- 🕯 We have had an increase of hits on our sermons posted on our website.



LETTER FROM THE MINISTER

It is a pleasure to congratulate First Church on yet another excellent year. We have experienced continued growth in terms of membership, of course, just missing our goal of 100 members for this year. You are on track to continue your renaissance, rebuilding and evolving together as part of a renewed Detroit.

However, the principle success this year has been more organizational evolution than membership growth. It has been remarkable how much the growth in membership has entailed a significant growth in available organizational skills and experiences. We have been especially successful in attracting capable and competent leaders into positions of responsibility, sharing their gifts with the congregation as a whole. Both our existing membership and our new members are strengthened and nourished by this additional potential. And even more importantly, there has been real success in finding roles and projects for our leaders as they have had additional resources to offer. We have been blessed by a growing sense of structure and direction, thanks to this fundamental achievement.

Building on the strength of our leadership has resulted in exactly the sort of development that was anticipated as the central challenge of this church year: organization. Our committee structure has become much more effective and efficient, and many new projects and improvements have evolved out of those developments. The church is up and running, prepared for new challenges in a new year.

Alas, this has been my last year with First UU Detroit. After consulting with the denominational and congregational leadership, we have decided that it is time for me to make room for new leadership. I will be moving to a new ministry this summer. I am very proud of the progress we have made together, and hope that First Church will continue on the path of evolution we have found together. This has been a wonderful experience for me. I wish you all the best.

Namaste,

Rev. Roger Mohr



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE GOVERNING BOARD

I can't believe that two years have passed since I was elected president, and how much I've learned in the interim about the congregation and the inner workings of the church! Kathe Stevens has done a wonderful job in her "Snapshot of Our Growing Church" in this report – so I'm not going to focus too much on the many ways in which we have grown together as a congregation as evidenced by our membership, finances, attendance, committees, events and outreach. I can feel the energy and am energized by it!

It's the people, of course, who make us who we are. It's the person who greets you at the church door, who sits next to you on the pew, who holds your hand in the closing "squircle", who chats with you in the social hour. It's those of you—and that's everyone—who in ways large and small contribute to being a member of this church. I wish there was time in the Annual Congregational Meeting to recognize each and every one of you and personally thank you for your contribution to our church community. From John Angry's 8:00 AM arrival to set up the Chancel for Sunday service, to 2:00 PM when Sean McAde has washed coffee hour's last cup, to Mark Schwing updating the Cass/Forest Street sign for next week's service, a flurry of activity has gone on behind the scenes to provide the worship experience.

Given our limited staff, the work of the church falls on all of us, and how fortunate we are to have so many committed members to step into what are really big shoes. I'm grateful for the privilege to have worked with an exceptional board the past two years--Danny Rebb, Kathe Stevens, Dan Wiest, Sally Borden, Joan Smykowski, Matt Friedrichs, Paul Chislett, and Joel Batterman. I was able to call upon them at any time for advice and support. The same can be said for our committee chairs, of which we now have many.

I have felt connected to First Church since joining 40 years ago, but no more so than now, in part because of the connections the church has made in the past year with social justice issues—water shut-offs, the Montgomery bus boycott, same sex marriage, LGBTQ, Women Walking Woodward for Peace. I've felt more connected to our roots as Unitarian Universalists. Thank you to everyone who has brought these out of the media and into our space.

I must say that the role of president can be a daunting one, especially for a Type A personality like me, but we are in good hands with the incoming board. We're once again in a time of change. I'm grateful to Rev. Mohr for his contributions to our development the past several years and his recognition that we're ready to move ahead under new leadership. I wish him well. I wish us well. And thank you.

Marsha Bruhn



CANVASS COMMITTEE REPORT

Accomplishments:

The 2015-2016 Canvass Campaign, Give With A Loving Heart, Love With A Giving Hand, was kicked off on Sunday, March 8, 2015. During March and April, four home canvass meetings were conducted. Board President Marsha Bruhn, Treasurers Bob Lauer and Dan Wiest, and Canvass Chair Kathe Stevens conducted the meetings.

We are grateful to the congregants who opened their homes for the meetings: Ken Meyer, Dave and Katherine Vaillencourt, Aletha and Matt Oberdier, and Al and Lencha Acker. We were able to meet personally with 32 congregants at the home meetings.

Participants filled out a survey to answer these questions:

- 🕯 What are the three greatest strengths of this congregation?
- 🕯 What are the three most important challenges this congregation needs to address in the next five years?
- 🕯 What do you think the congregation's annual growth rate should be?

Tallied responses follow this report.

Participants were also provided with an organizational chart showing new growth in committees, a brochure which introduced the pledge campaign, presented a financial overview, and reviewed goals and challenges for the past fiscal year, and a UUA fair share guide.

Many of the individuals who did not attend the meetings were able to pick up and complete a pledge form which was available during social on Sundays in April. Letters were sent out to those members and friends who did not attend a canvass meeting.

Follow-up phone calls were made to pledging units/individuals who did not attend or who did not submit a pledge form.

Goals:

- 🕯 Find new members, especially a new chair
- 🕯 Work with the Finance Committee to refine the system for recording pledges
- 🕯 Develop methods to capture pledges from nontraditional congregational members
- 🕯 Continually update congregation about canvassing progress during the fiscal year

Respectfully submitted,

Kathe Stevens, *Chair*



RESPONSES TO THE 2015-16 CANVASS CAMPAIGN SURVEY

<i>Church's Greatest Strengths</i>		
Responses	General Category	Comments
13	Congregation	Lay leadership; long-term, stable, core members who keep things rolling; dedicated, caring, friendly and knowledgeable people who are talented and capable and can lead; amazing resources and resourcefulness among our members; complete ignorance of the word "quit"; skills and interests of members; employed members who are able to pledge and claim donations; small size; flexible – recognize and solve problems (new ministers, moving coffee hour)
13	Spiritual renewal and community	Strong interconnectedness of the people; group of involved searchers who pull together; exchange of ideas and thoughts; open-mindedness; message to love yourself and being together; welcoming to new members and all others; works hard to make something (good) happen – social justice, equality; addressing injustice; friendly, open-hearted people; common goals – justice for all; working for justice; reaffirms our worth as individuals, caring for ourselves and others; religious tolerance; compassion; programs
11	Location	Central location in Detroit; urban church; placement in the community – with Detroit growing and a "happening" community where we need to "plug in" to the social justice opportunities
7	History	Proud history, esp. of supporting social justice; historical gravitas
6	Diversity	Age, race, etc; genuine
5	Music	Organ; choir director; Motown medley
3	Young Adults	Growth group
3	UUism	Our principles; diversity of opinions; ability to co-exist, listen to each other; being part of the UUA
3	Building	Architecture; sanctuary

<i>Greatest Challenges in Next Five Years</i>		
Responses	General Category	Comments
15	Ministry	Establish stable ministry with a minister who is right for us, who recognizes the value of our membership and appreciates the opportunity to work here; minister with a healthy head and heart, high IQ, who is dynamic and reinforces the UU message; complete ministry; message follows sermon, programs; finding good speakers until we get a new minister
10	Finances	Adjusting finances to size; financial stability/responsibility for programming, unexpected budgetary items, and building security; increase offerings; right-sizing ministerial function (ability to afford minister)
10	Membership/growth	Increase membership; maintain our growth; young families with children; better accommodations for children; bring back RE program; adapt to electronic age; balancing programs with volunteers (capacity); growth in 20-50 demographic; pushing young people too fast into leadership positions



Greatest Challenges in Next Five Years

Responses	General Category	Comments
7	Spiritual renewal and community	Living the mission; more welcoming to visitors and those with ethnic backgrounds; membership interconnectedness – not just numbers, need more programming and a nurturing environment; change service to appeal more to young people and where they are; firming up identity – focus, be effective; keeping our congregation cohesive – more now than we’ve ever been; learn to work from generosity and abundance (not the way it is now: “don’t have the money”)
5	Communication	Both internal (e.g., calendar) and external; includes EMEAC; need access to their calendar; create identity in Detroit’s regrowth, need for advertising, infrastructure to achieve this; be better listeners, too many egos; educate the speakers to speak more clearly, better diction; getting our message out to the larger community – who we are
3	Building	Physical structure; maintenance; building condition
3	UUism	Be more part of the UUA, especially spirituality; be part of something better; perception as a problem church
3	EMEAC	Continuing relationship with EMEAC; we’re doing more but need to address the space issue; new member concerns—they need to understand the space/relationship issue; what will happen to them and to us?; make peace
2	Location	Midtown/EMEAC; be more a part of Midtown; have more influence

Desired Growth?

Percentage	Meeting #1	Meeting #2	Meeting #3	Meeting #4
0%	0	0	0	0
5%	2	1	0	3
10%	1	2	1 (+1 at 12.5%)	2
15%	1	0	3 (but net 15%)	
Greater than 15%	1	1	2	2
Other (describe)	2 Build and they will come; don’t focus on numbers, focus on programs	2 Develop a growth plan and work on it	1 Get people who stay engaged, don’t just show up 1 Maintain a good mix; diversity 1 Limited by lack of RE	No comments



CHURCH TRUST REPORT

The First Unitarian Church Trust was established in 1934, and became the First Unitarian-Universalist Church Trust in 1964. First UU Church is the only beneficiary of the Trust; no monies are distributed to any other party. Trust by-laws call for 5 Trustees, who vote within the group to fill vacancies. Current Trustees are Marilyn Mitchell, Sharlene Gage, James Robinson, Al Acker and Bill McKnight. The Trust has appointed the Raymond James firm to invest funds in various assets.

Current assets are \$163,000. The Trust provides the church \$4,200 annually, disbursed monthly.

Several church members have included the Trust in their wills. The Trust encourages Church members and friends who wish to ensure the continuation of liberal religion in Detroit to remember the Trust as they carry out estate planning.

Submitted by,

Bill McKnight, Trustee



COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

VISION:

First UU in Detroit will be a healthy and active community, featuring efficient, respectful, interesting, and consistent electronic communication throughout the week. Electronic communication will support our face-to-face gatherings, and vice versa. We will be a caring community with well-coordinated means of keeping people without computers and smart phones in the loop. Smaller groups will prosper within our larger community, with many using niche communication technologies, yet also staying connected with the mother ship. With regard to the larger community, we will be accessible and well organized in collaborating on larger goals, and in sharing experiences and ideas.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:

Office computer, Office printer / copier, Telephone service, Sound system and related audio-video technology, Internet service, Wi-Fi network, Email accounts, Website, Calendar, Newsletter, Document storage and management, Facebook sites. Other Internet accounts -- e.g. Twitter, Eventbrite, PayPal, Press releases.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Expanded use of Google Apps account for church document management, adding more documents and training more users.
- Converted additional processes to interactive spreadsheets (e.g. chancel flower donation).
- Drafted roles, responsibilities, and procedures for the Communication Committee, addressing previously ad hoc and inconsistent practices.
 - Clearer identification of roles and responsibilities.
 - Better internal documentation.
- Supported other church committees including Worship, Strategic Planning, Board, Membership, Canvass, and special events.

GOALS:

- Improve our electronic “listening” habits.
- Reach out more consistently via a variety of communications channels.
- Get more people involved and working together.
- Work with other areas to better manage and coordinate our various membership data stores.

Where to Find More Information

There are 21 members of our email group ComCom@1stuu.org. We do not have regular meetings, but rather communicate electronically via email and document sharing. Send an email to webmaster@1stuu.org or ComCom@1stuu.org if you would like to learn more. Visit our website at <http://1stuu.org>, and our Facebook site at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/firstuudetroit/>.

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

Submitted by Dan Secrest, Acting Chair



FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Finances stayed within budget; no funds were drawn from the Trust.
- Helped set up background check system for board members and officers.
- Kept on schedule with repayment owed on minister's retirement fund.
- A policy concerning minister expense reimbursement was instituted.
- A refund was received regarding charges levied by IRS for missed 2010 W2 filing. (The filing was missed due to flux in personnel.) The forgiveness by the IRS is deeply appreciated.
- A repayment plan was worked out with the City concerning amount owed on withholding tax that avoided penalties and interest.
- Savings were achieved by switching from a lease to purchase of a new copier.
- The accounting software was switched from QuickBooks to Power Church, which will provide monetary savings as well as added value for member information and pledge analysis.

GOALS:

- Repay prior obligations and have cash balances in line with operating budget as soon as possible.
- Establish realistic operating budgets, and make necessary adjustments to retain a positive bottom line.
- Follow policy for background checks for Board members and officers as well as have Conflict of Interest documents signed.
- Coordinate efforts with the Development Committee to increase fundraising.

Submitted by,

Dan Wiest, Chair



FUND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

The 2014-15 goal was to raise \$2000 dollars; to date we have raised \$1725.

GOALS:

We'll be reaching out to the congregation to recruit new members and, hopefully, raise \$275 before June 30 so we may reach our \$2000 goal for 2014-2015. Please let me know if you're interested in working with me, Nathan Strickland, and Jody Wise to plan FUNdraisers for First UU.

Respectfully submitted,

Matt Friedrichs, Chair



MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

As of February 2, 2015, the Membership Committee submitted our congregation's "Certificate of Membership 2015 Confirmation" to the UUA. The membership count, as of January 29, 2015 was 96. As stated in the "Certificate of Membership 2015 Confirmation" form:

- Average Weekly Attendance: 61
- Number of Pledging Units: 83

We welcomed 9 new members at the writing of this report (May 1, 2015).

During the past fiscal year, the Membership Committee has:

- Conducted the monthly "Intro to First Church" to new and interested individuals.
- Conducted "Getting Involved" sessions to new and interested individuals.
- Encouraged friends and members to volunteer or join various groups, activities or committees.
- Welcomed new members to the Membership Committee.
- Delegated responsibilities to the new Committee members.
- Practiced "radical hospitality" by reaching out to Church members, who we have not seen in a long time.
- Assisted with the 2015-2016 Canvass Campaign.
- Recruited and assigned ushers and greeters for weekly services.

GOALS:

In the upcoming year, the Membership Committee will work to encourage membership growth of the congregation.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan S. Smykowski, Chair



PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT (STRATEGIC PLAN)

VISION:

First UU is an urban center in Detroit for spiritual renewal and social justice.

MISSION:

First UU strives to be an expanding transformative community whose mission is to liberate truth, radiate kindness and love courageously

For the first time in many years, First Church embarked on a one year strategic plan in 2014. The process began with a leadership retreat and led to the creation of a Planning Committee charged with the creation and implementation of the plan. A half day strategic planning meeting was held in October with 15 members designing the goals, objectives and action steps. The process aimed to focus our efforts and resources to bring new member, strengthen administrative systems, increase resources and provide more services and programs.

The plan covers the year of 2015 and the first quarterly report presented to the Board in April shows good progress. Our committees and congregational members have worked very hard to achieve our successes. We have encountered obstacles and problems during the process and found weaknesses that have prevented completion in all areas. We are adapting our plans and learning from the process.

The full strategic plan report can be viewed on our website and highlights are listed below:

2015 STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES:

Objective 1: Increase membership by 15% annually

- Provide 2 annual social activities for current and potential church members
- Provide child care during service by February 2015
- Provide group spiritual growth and guidance sessions monthly following church service
- Participate with the UUA's beta testing program in the fall of 2014, determine appropriate follow-up and implement

Outcome

- *Child care began in May 2015*
- *Spiritual growth sessions were started but placed on hold due to changes with minister*
- *We completed testing the new UUA outreach program and continued as the Welcoming Task Force with 6 programs/events provided for members and nonmembers*
- *The Welcoming Task Force will provide new activities through-out the year, is working on branding strategies and will apply for recertification as a Welcoming Church*

Objective 2: Expand our vision and mission to reach 100 people (non-church members) by December 2015

- Change current Outreach Committee to Social Justice
- Hold 2 annual forums on Social Justice/justice or UU action items
- Host annual UU regional picnic
- Increase our visibility through adding 1 and improving 1 of our social media accounts



Outcome

- *The Social Justice Committee has held one event, a screening of the Viola Liuzzo documentary, "Home of the Brave," which had good attendance*
- *The Young Adults are organizing the Second Annual UU Regional Picnic*
- *The Communication Committee is improving our website, internal communications and social media accounts*

Objective 3: Improve organizational support to mission having at least 6 new or improved management tools

- Board Committee to provide job descriptions, annual goals and performance evaluations to all employees
- Develop job descriptions for committee chairs
- Develop a Policy and Procedure Manual for Board approval by December 2015
- Improve internal current communication system in at least 2 areas
- Provide leadership development training for church members

Outcome

- *All committee chair job descriptions are board approved and on the web site*
- *An ad hoc committee will have a new policy and procedure manual completed for board approval by June*
- *A new Communication and Coordination system at the board meeting is in place and being tested*
- *The Planning Committee has agreed to organize leadership training and provide training*
- *A second annual congregation meeting has been added for December*
- *A financial report in the newsletter has not been implemented*

Objective 4: Raise \$1000 above budget projection by December 31, 2015 (2014-15 fiscal year goal is \$2000)

- Increase Development Committee membership by 2 members
- Complete 1 new fund development strategy
- Complete one additional (not an on-going event) fundraising event

Outcome

- *The Development Committee added new members but also lost two new members*
- *The Committee is working on a new strategy and event for raising new dollars*

Submitted by the Planning Committee,

Deanna McGraw, Danny Rebb, Matt Friedrichs, Kathe Stevens and Joan Smykowski



UUA BETA-TESTING OUTREACH PROGRAM REPORT

Accomplishments:

The committee was formed in response to a request from the Unitarian Universalist Association for congregations willing to help “beta” test elements of a new outreach program. The testers were Al Acker, Lencha Acker, Irene Brisson, Trey Greene, Mary Lou Malone, Deanna McGraw, Sharon Mills, Dan Secrest, and Kathe Stevens. The committee then seamlessly morphed into the Welcoming Task Force. Details about our work may be found in the Task Force annual report.

Of the 90 churches that attended the kick-off webinar in August 2014, only 20 completed the program testing and, of the 20, we were one of a handful to have taken any action.

The UUA recently issued its “[Spring 2015 Outreach Team Beta-Testing Program Final Report](#)” with the comment that congregational testing has been immensely helpful in figuring out next steps.

Goals:

Kathe Stevens will attend General Assembly this year and will participate in the UUA Outreach Team’s workshop on outreach, branding and beta-testing. The Outreach Team is also planning to schedule a time for beta-testers who are attending GA to get together and meet one another in person; Kathe will be glad to make those connections in our wider community as well.

Conclusion:

The committee’s work is finished. We are proud that the only congregation quoted in the Final Report was First UU Detroit (albeit anonymously), from our survey responses: “It gave us the structure and tools to begin reaching out for new members, something we have not done for a long time. It has provided us with new ideas, good feelings about being a UU, and motivated us to take action.”

Respectfully submitted,

Al Acker, Deanna McGraw, Kathe Stevens – Co-Leaders



WELCOMING TASK FORCE REPORT

The Welcoming Task Force consists of 3 co-leaders, Al Acker, Deanna McGraw and Kathe Stevens, along with members Lencha Acker, Irene Brisson, Trey Greene, Mary Lou Malone, Sharon Mills, and Danny Rebb.

The Task Force was originally formed in response to a request from the Unitarian Universalist Association for congregations willing to help test elements of a new outreach and branding program. At the beginning it included a few other members who have been unable to continue their commitment for various reasons.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

We began work last September, holding several member workshops, using materials provided by the UUA and others created by the co-leaders. As a result, we zeroed in on a niche to target for growth: the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer community (LGBTQ). We then coordinated with the Worship Committee to plan a December worship service to announce our campaign to the congregation. We also reported details at the congregational meeting, announcing our intention to create and implement an educational program that would ultimately lead to First Church's recertification as an LGBTQ Welcoming Congregation by the UUA.

Since December, we have held two "read and discuss" sessions featuring selections from LGBTQ books, a LGBTQ-focused Vespers service, and planned the March 29th service on Marriage Equality, along with a subsequent panel discussion. We have also reached out to Affirmations, the LGBTQ organization headquartered in Ferndale.

GOALS:

We intend to sponsor other educational events leading up to a vote to recertify at the Annual Meeting and to continue our outreach efforts in the future. We also will examine and implement further "branding."

Respectfully submitted,

Al Acker, Deanna McGraw, Kathe Stevens – Co-Leaders



WORSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

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, and Sally Borden throughout the year, and by Ruby Jones, Rhonda Rogers, Deanna McGraw, and Elayne Sikelianos for part of the year.

Worship met the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 7pm. Special thanks to Danny Rebb for keeping and distributing minutes, as well as to Dan Secrest for maintaining worship electronic documents on the church website. Meetings were held once a month, with the goal to put on quality worship services 52 weeks a year plus Christmas Eve. Each service begins at 11:00am and end 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.

Highlights from this year include Elayne coordinating a series of 3 regional speakers as a Detroit Musings series, which proved so popular that the committee would like to continue this series sporadically throughout the year. This series has not only helped attract new members to the church, but to our committee as well. Ruby Jones has joined the committee and has brought in several great speakers as well, including coordinating Women Walking Woodward for Peace with our Mother's Day Service in May. Another highlight this year was having the Liuzzo children speak, of which our attendance that Sunday has brought in new interest and speakers, as well as higher numbers of attendance that Sunday as well as hits on our posted sermon on our web host. Worship has also enjoyed teaming up with the Welcoming Task Force to help plan services. It was great fun to coalesce with other committees and work with a theme.

Attendance average for the year so far is 65, which is where we were in 2012-13, up a little from 2013-14. While this winter was also quite cold, we did have 2 Sundays with numbers over 100 in attendance (Welcoming Congregation Sunday, as well as the Liuzzo tribute).

The Committee grew in confidence and independence so that even though we don't know what to expect as far as a minister in the 2015-2016 year, we feel confident that we can continue to fill the pulpit with quality sermons whether lay or minister lead. That being said, Dan Secrest has stepped down from Worship in order to take on more Communication Committee functions, as well as Danny Rebb may be stepping back some due to his workload from the Board. Our committee will need to recruit some new members and this will help to distribute the workload among the committee.

The Committee worked very well together this year, and kept careful watch over our budget too. We have also begun planning out a little farther at a time, while we have received several suggestions and offers for speakers we have added to our list of possible speakers. Some repairs were made thanks to Tim Bailey and Robert Johnson. This has fixed a lot of the crackling in the sound system; however, we will still need some new microphones and other items. Worship would also like to expand our sound abilities by purchasing a wireless microphone. This would make it possible for speakers to move about rather than be stuck at the podium (something that is often requested).

For the year to come, Worship requested a larger budget as we currently anticipate having a half-time minister, meaning that Worship will have to fill the pulpit for an estimated 31 Sundays. We hope to be able to bring in more "Detroit Musing" speakers; we have some journalists lined up, as well as we would like to bring in a few bigger speakers so that we can draw in more people on Sundays.

Worship hopes that by creating buzz within the community with our speakers and topics, we will be able to post higher Sunday averages as well as higher membership numbers and revenue. To help, Worship is actively seeking a more structured PR method so that we can better advertise our Sunday sermons.

Submitted by, Kathleen and Robert Johnson, Co-Chairs