



**First Unitarian-Universalist Church of Detroit**

**Annual Report**

**2015 – 2016 Church Year**

The 2015-2016 Annual Report is available on our website at  
<http://1stuu.org/Governance/2016AnnualReport.pdf>



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## A SNAPSHOT OF OUR GROWING CHURCH

### ***Our congregation is growing:***

- 🕯 In February 2014 our congregational census as reported to the Unitarian Universalist Association was 89 members; in February 2015 we were able to report 96 members; in February 2016 that number was up to 102 – in the three months from February to the date of this annual report, we've added more new members

### ***Our finances are growing:***

- 🕯 Our pledging income as reported to the Unitarian Universalist Association in February 2014 was \$59,049; in February 2015 we reported pledging income of \$73,608; February 2016 was \$87,913
- 🕯 We projected pledges for the 2016-17 year to come in at \$74,000; pledges actually came in at \$86,770

### ***Our attendance on Sundays is growing:***

- 🕯 In 2014-15 our average attendance was up, from 61 the previous year, to 65 – since the start of this fiscal year, in July 2015, attendance at more than 10 Sunday services was over 70, including our Centennial celebration worship service which drew over 100

### ***Our committees are growing:***

- 🕯 Our Planning Committee reported real measurable outcomes from our first-ever Strategic Plan for 2015 and we're now well on the way to achieving our goals under our 2016 Strategic Plan
- 🕯 The Policies & Procedures *Ad Hoc* Committee has completed its review of policies and procedures, which will be compiled into a manual, to be published pending board approval
- 🕯 The Social Justice Committee organized many successful events involving our community (gentrification forums, a movie screening on the environment, escalating inequality speaker series)
- 🕯 Our Finance Committee has worked diligently and the outcome is that we have almost completely paid off one of our two long-term debts
- 🕯 The Membership Committee continues to advocate radical hospitality, to spread the word about opportunities to serve, and to honor our members
- 🕯 The Child Care Committee completed all procedural requirements and has established a warm and cheerful nursery in the narthex



***Our events are growing:***

- 🕯️ A fundraiser was organized to purchase new hymnals
- 🕯️ We joyfully celebrated 100 years at the corner of Cass and Forest with two days of history, fun and food

***Our outreach to the community is growing:***

- 🕯️ We were proud to add “Black Lives Matter” language to the original sign in the front of the church
- 🕯️ The Welcoming Task Force successfully completed its application to renew our Welcoming Congregation designation; we continue to advocate for LGBTQ issues
- 🕯️ Noel Night was another great collaboration with East Michigan Environmental Action Council, with the Young Adults-organized coffee house, CommonUnity Café, being a sell-out
- 🕯️ We promoted and contributed to EMEAC’s “Winter Blast Fundraiser” to support building operations this winter

***Our denominational outreach is growing:***

- 🕯️ The Young Adults organized the second UU regional picnic on Belle Isle where we welcomed over 100 picnickers from the Detroit, Grosse Pointe, Southfield, Birmingham, Troy, Ann Arbor, and Brighton congregations
- 🕯️ Board president Kathe Stevens began reaching out to southeast Michigan church presidents, which has resulted so far in meetings with the presidents of the Farmington, Birmingham, and Grosse Pointe churches
- 🕯️ Kathe took part in the MidAmerica board’s initiative to get to know congregations by participating in three “Board / Congregational Leaders Conversations” with members of the MidAmerica board
- 🕯️ The Social Justice Committee worked with five other UU area churches to present a winter speaker series on escalating inequality
- 🕯️ We were represented by two delegates at General Assembly in June 2015 and by two delegates at Regional Assembly in April 2016, and will be sending three delegates to assemblies in this fiscal year



## LETTER FROM THE MINISTER

It is remarkable to think that we have spent nine months together. Nine months is a pregnant time indeed, from which one begins with just the seeds of a new relationship, and out of which emerges a series of interconnections that weave together into something known, trusted, even sacred, but still and always developing. I know that when I first arrived at the First Unitarian-Universalist Church of Detroit, there were some that questioned the wisdom of the Interim Minister Search Committee. "They did what? They hired a Baptist? Who authorized that?" But as I think you have encountered me and come to know me, I'm not a typical Baptist for this region of our nation.

I believe fiercely in what Baptists call "soul liberty," the right of every individual to freely and unreservedly make up her or his mind about matters of the divine. In this sense, I have believed throughout my life in the importance of inter-religious dialogue, even at times saying that while I believe my type of belief is true, I always am conscious am open to the realization that what I hold to be truth may be part of a larger interrelated network of truths. We may not always believe the same thing, but it may turn out that our truths adhere one to another in a larger way that leads us together to a life well lived. It is the mark of a good spirituality that one does not limit the imagination of the divine within the confines of one's own imagination! The spark of the divine engages the world in peoples who pray in different languages, sing different hymns that calls God by different names. And of course there are those that think all of this God-language is wrong-headed and passé, that there is an indelible moral weight to humanism unencumbered by religious overtones, and of course there is truth to that perspective as well. But I always have enjoyed the writings and advocacy of my friend Chris Stedman, leader of the humanist community at Yale, who in his book (F)atheist argues that atheists need to be at the table of the dialogue of world religions because to do otherwise means that one's voice is not heard, one's truth is not spoken, and one's conscience is sacrificed to silence.

Please know how genuinely I adore my time working with this church as your Interim Minister. I told you in my first sermon back in August 2015 that what I wanted to instill in your church is joy. And so I have tried to offer that to you, through my sermons and conversations over potluck meals and when we happen upon one another out on Woodward or Warren during the week. This, of course, is not a new concept to this historic church, which has used its joy to be a force for social justice and witness in this region for well over a century, and precisely a century at the corner of Forest and Cass. But joy is something that this church and its members, I believe, should hold as an important standard in your search for a new Settled Minister. Hold yourselves to the firm conviction that you need and deserve to find the person who will be a wonderful fit for this particular church, who will challenge you in the best of ways, who will take up the burdens and joys of life in Detroit with vigor and vivacity. Your next Settled Minister comes here in an amazing time in the life of this church, as you determine who and what you will be in a Midtown Detroit that is changing radically, in a Detroit that will see tremendous wealth, privilege, and opportunity stream into its Downtown while the neighborhoods may see frustratingly few residuals of that new prosperity. This church



deserves a Minister who will devote her or himself to leading this community of seekers, believers, and thinkers through this maelstrom of change, and who can offer the compassion, care, patience, innovation, intelligence, wonder, charisma, and joy necessary to navigate together the currents and harness the winds so that you and this church remain a force for justice and contemplation, conversation and artistic expression for countless generations to come.

Peace be with us all,  
*The Rev. Dr. Stephen Butler Murray, Interim Minister*



## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE GOVERNING BOARD OF TRUSTEES

One year has passed since I began serving as your Board President? It's hard to believe. And what a year – we've enjoyed the enthusiastic preaching of our “new” interim minister, called a Settled Minister Search Committee, celebrated 100 years at the corner of Cass and Forest, and continue to grow in members and activities.

The Centennial Committee did an outstanding job of providing two days of noteworthy, and fun, celebrations and deserves its own special “thank you” paragraph!

I'm especially impressed with our Worship Committee's continued inspiring services, including inviting many poets (Kim Hunter, Wardell Montgomery, Jr., Mary Minock, Aurora Harris, Dawn McDuffie, Olga Klekner), artists/musicians (Satori Shakoor), and community activists (James Perkinson, Joel Berger), and letting our members shine in our pulpit (Robert Johnson, Ruby Jones Mary Lou Malone, Danny Rebb, Lee Thume).

The Social Justice Committee's work and collaboration with other UU churches is a shining example of the future. I was lucky enough to attend the all-day workshop on escalating inequality sponsored jointly Birmingham Unitarian Church, First UU Church of Detroit, Northwest UU Church, UU Church of Farmington, Beacon UU Congregation, as well as the winter speaker series.

We've refined other committees and governance. Fund Development is now a successful *ad hoc* committee. We'll be posting our policies and procedures manual on the website in the next month or so. The Finance Committee has taken on an increasingly important role and we appreciate its diligence and forthrightness. One benefit of our strong Finance Committee is that we are continuing to make more and more fiscally responsible decisions. In that light, the Finance Committee has made a recommendation that we search for a three-quarter time minister rather than a full-time minister. I'm deeply grateful to the Finance Committee for its hard work, conscientiousness, and commitment to the future of our faith community.

So ... on to the next 100 years at the corner of Cass and Forest! I'm grateful to all of you and cherish our community.

Respectfully, and joyfully, submitted,  
*Kathe Stevens*, President



## BUILDINGS & GROUNDS COMMITTEE REPORT

### **Accomplishments**

Since transfer of ownership of our properties to the East Michigan Environmental Action Council, the Buildings & Grounds Committee is less a committee and more an on-call group to lead church clean-ups, make minor repairs, and work with building owner EMEAC to keep the building and grounds in good shape.

Our first clean-up of this fiscal year was July 25, 2015. We organized our annual major clean-up for Noel Night on December 4 and sprung into action again on April 9, 2016 for the Centennial celebrations. Donuts and coffee are provided for the early birds and pizza and pop for those left standing in the afternoon.

Noel Night was especially active as we worked with the Young Adult Group to prepare for festivities by hanging signage for the café fundraiser, strung lights, and put up red and green spotlights in the bell tower!

I've also brought a crew on a regular basis to manage the lawn to help keep the properties looking right at home in our increasingly modernizing Midtown neighborhood.

Other activities:

- The B&G team regularly organizes the kitchen pantry and maintains the social hour supplies. This includes dishwashing supplies.
- The dishwasher water valve was replaced along with a circuit breaker in the main electrical box.
- The mechanisms of the main doors to the sanctuary have required repair. One of the sanctuary internal doors was removed and taken out for repair.
- Two microphones were taken out for repair.
- The sound cabinet was cleaned out and organized.
- We've stretched the rug on the chancel to try to lessen the chance of tripping.
- A door leading from the narthex to the sanctuary was repaired.

### **Goals**

- Inspect roof and gutter system to insure proper function and provide an estimate of any required repairs
- Inspect windows, doors and other wood surfaces for preservation purposes
- Continue on landscaping improvements
- Study and start implementing accessibility for the physically challenged
- Begin providing EMEAC with an annual report of our accomplishments

Respectfully submitted,  
*Tim Bailey, Chair (de facto)*



## CANVASS COMMITTEE REPORT

Canvass outreach and events:

- Letters sent to all members by Marilyn Mitchell announcing the canvass drive.
- Outreach to 18 volunteers who agreed to make up to four calls each to members and friends to encourage pledging; callers included the following:

Lencha Acker	Sharlene Gage	Nancy Owen Nelson
Margaret Beck	Anita Jones	Aletha Oberdier
Sally Borden	Carolyn Ludwig	Joan Smykowski
Marsha Bruhn	Mary Lou Malone	David Vaillencourt
Linda Darga	Edie McKnight	Regina Weiss
Matt Friedrichs	Marilyn Mitchell	Jody Wise

- Kick-off on March 20 with lunch and presentations by 1) Matt Friedrichs on accomplishments this year (with robust feedback from members); 2) Bob Lauer on the state of the budget; and 3) Marilyn Mitchell to emphasize the importance of increasing pledge levels.
- Announcements by Marsha Bruhn at March 20 and 27 services on progress towards the \$74,000 canvass drive goal.
- Articles in March and April newsletters, and in the weekly Order of Service.
- Stewardship Sunday on April 3 with an inspiring message from Rev. Murray.
- Follow-up at social hour on April 3 to obtain outstanding pledges.
- Continued follow-up on subsequent Sundays for outstanding pledges.

Overall accomplishments of the pledge drive:

- Overall pledge goal: \$74,000
- Total pledged (as of 5/10/16): \$86,770
- Number of pledging units: 59

Canvass expenses:

- Refreshments: \$357.56 (included table covers, napkins, bowls)
- Printing: \$60.00 (brochure)
- Mailing: \$37.73 (77 stamps)
- Total expenses: \$455.29

Respectfully submitted,  
*Marsha Bruhn and Marilyn Mitchell, Co-Chairs*



## CARE COMMITTEE REPORT

### **Accomplishments**

We are a loosely defined committee which works “as needed.” On Sunday, January 10, 2016, we met after church (Linda Darga, Sally Borden, Nathan Strickland, Jr., Edie McKnight, and myself) to discuss two issues: use of a brochure of homeless and other help facilities in Detroit (created by a Henry Ford Community College student) and the changed wording in our newsletter and Sunday order of service.

Here is the changed language:

*Help us to minister to each other. If you or someone you know is sick, in need of a pastoral call or other assistance, please let us know by contacting Nancy Owen Nelson at [nelnan@aol.com](mailto:nelnan@aol.com) to provide a network for communication and support.*

The consensus was that we could use the brochure as well as resources which Nathan Strickland, Jr. has at hand from his work to refer those in need to services. The wording was adjusted to better clarify the purpose of the committee, which is to “help” those in distress by networking with other people and agencies, and to simply be available to support them.

### **Goals**

Our goals have been clarified with the above language. We did not want to send the message that we would “give care,” but that we would help people to find care.

Respectfully submitted,  
Nancy Owen Nelson, Chair



## CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE REPORT

### Accomplishments

The Centennial Committee is proud to report a grandly successful celebration of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of worship at the corner of Cass and Forest. Our official centennial celebrations covered the same two days as the original dedication celebrations – April 16 and 17, 1916 – and featured bus and bike history tours, celebratory dinner, special worship service, and reunion potluck.

On January 3, 2016, Rev. Dr. Stephen Butler Murray kicked off our centennial year – and the new year – with his sermon, “A New Year and A Century,” contemplating our roots in the Universalist tradition and the legacy that comes from a century of worshipping in our sanctuary.

Centennial Committee member Danny Rebb followed up on January 24, presenting the first sermon of an historical series to commemorate our centennial. The source material was taken from a book written by one of our previous Universalist ministers and posited that our ideals from 1922 are still relevant to our faith almost 100 years later.

On April 16, we organized an historic bus – and concurrent bicycle – tour tracing Unitarian and Universalist roots from the 1830s when free thinkers first began to dream of a liberal religious denomination in Detroit. On the bus, Trey Greene and Kathe Stevens served as co-tour guides with Trey providing background history about Detroit and Kathe sharing highlights from UU history. On the bicycle tour, Joel Batterman and Dan Wiest served as co-tour guides. We used the Detroit Bus Company, which contributes a percentage of all ticket sales to safe youth transportation in Detroit.

We visited the sites of previous meeting places and churches, and got to see the booming development in Downtown, Midtown and Corktown along the way, stopped at the Detroit Institute of Arts where Glen Maxwell provided a tour of the stained-glass windows designed by the renowned John La Farge, which had been in the First Unitarian Church on Woodward originally and later donated to the DIA, and ended with a tour of the building and an awesome presentation about our 51-rank Ernest M. Skinner pipe organ by our Music Director, Todd Ballou.

A celebratory dinner at Traffic Jam & Snug Restaurant followed, with many of the folks from the tour were joined by old and new First UU Church friends.

Our special worship service on Sunday morning, April 17, was enhanced by memories from the four women whom we've had the privilege of ordaining in our sanctuary: Rev. Nancy Doughty, our former Minister of Education, ordained at First UU in 1962; Rev. Susann Pangerl, ordained here in 1979; Rev. Emmy Lou Belcher, our former Director of Religious Education, ordained in our sanctuary in 1989; and former DRE and Community Minister, Rev. Lynda Ch'anna Smith, co-ordained here (with Northwest UU Church) in 2006.

Rev. Larry Hutchison, our Minister *Emeritus*, spoke lovingly and wittily about his nine years (1995-2004) as our pastor and we were also glad to welcome his wife, Nancy, who was Larry's full partner in his ministry at First UU Detroit. Our current Interim Minister,



Rev. Dr. Stephen Butler Murray, rocked the house with his sermon honoring our 100 years at Cass and Forest.

Following the service, a reunion potluck luncheon was enjoyed in our historic social hall by all these old friends, and visitors too. Special thanks to Lorenza Acker who provided the beautiful flowers for the table, and to Lorenza and Colleen Dolan-Greene who set the room for the delicious luncheon.

A booklet of the history tour was published and is available to view on the website, as well as sermon audio and photos: [Celebrating 100 Years](#).

On May 15, Danny presented another sermon in the historic sermon series, "Unitarians in the D - Since 1833," which continues our Centennial history theme by giving equal time to our Detroit Unitarian ancestors.

I want to thank everyone who worked so hard to help us to celebrate 100 years of worship at the corner of Cass and Forest, and especially the Centennial Committee: Nancy Owen Nelson, (Worship Committee Liaison), Maysel Brooks, Danny Rebb, Dan Secrest, Kathe Stevens, and Dan Wiest.

### **Goals**

The Centennial Committee's goal was to use the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UU sanctuary as a theme in order to create opportunities to celebrate, to increase membership and revenues, and to connect our past to our future. The Church's events throughout this year have clearly been such a celebration of our history! We recommend that the successful bus and bike UU history tours be repeated, that more dinner celebrations be held to increase membership and revenues and to allow members and friends of First UU to get to know each other better, and that additional Church services be planned that connect our past and our future.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Colleen Dolan-Greene, Chair*



## CHILD CARE COMMITTEE REPORT

### **Accomplishments**

We launched the Child Care Program as of July, 2016 to provide child care for younger children during the Sunday Service to allow parents/care givers to attend the service knowing their children are being safely cared for in a room at the back of the sanctuary.

The following people went through the process to be approved as child care providers: Richard Hillier, Nathan Strickland, Jr., Lencha Acker, Carolyn Ludwig, Mary Lou Malone, Sydney Schaaf and Sally Borden.

Many church members donated their time and work, child furniture and toys to furnish our child care room so that no money has had to be spent from the church budget.

Child care is advertised on the outside church sign at the corner of Forest and Cass and in other places. We did provide child care for 1 to 2 children five times during the year.

### **Goals**

To continue to encourage more use of the child care service.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Sally Borden, Chair*



## CHURCH TRUST REPORT

The Trust had assets of \$156,030 as of March 31. Oversight of these funds is handled by Trust members Al Acker, Sharlene Gage, Bill McKnight, Marilyn Mitchell and James Robinson, in conjunction with Tim Wyman, a Certified Financial Planner affiliated with the Raymond James firm.

The Trust disburses \$350 monthly to the Church. If the assets earn more than that during the month, the extra proceeds remain in principle. If the assets earn less, the payment to the Church comes from cash in the Raymond James account. The investment strategy calls for income combined with reasonable conservatism.

The Trust hopes to grow its asset base through contributions from church members and friends. Please consider providing a bequest to the Trust in your estate planning. A large bequest would be wonderful but a modest amount from a number of people would be great too. A healthy Trust can help ensure the success of First UU's next 100 years!

Respectfully submitted,  
*Bill McKnight, Trustee*



## COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

### Vision

UU 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

- Content and Quality
  - Newsletter
  - Event publicity including press releases
  - Organizational responsiveness
  - Committee standards
- Media
  - Electronic: email, website, Facebook, document storage and management, telephone / voice mail, calendar, Eventbrite, Twitter
  - Paper
- On Premises Equipment
  - Church office: computer, printer, Internet, WiFi, telephone, voice mail
  - A/V equipment: microphones, speakers, sound system, hearing assistance receivers, projector

### Accomplishments

- We have defined communication responsibilities as outlined above. Talented volunteers have stepped into many of the roles corresponding to these responsibilities, including graphic design, printed document composition and layout, document editing, photography and photo management, event management, calendar management, and voice mail management.
- Expanded use of Google Apps account for committee support, including email and document management. Expanded use of online sign-up for volunteers.
- Implemented electronic payment processing using Vanco and Eventbrite.

### Goals

- Transition website to WordPress platform with UUA template.
- Work with other areas to better manage and coordinate our various membership data stores.



### **Where to Find More Information**

There are 22 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. Communication Committee documents, including roles and responsibilities, are available at

[1stuu.org/Communications/communications.php](http://1stuu.org/Communications/communications.php).

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!

Respectfully submitted,  
*Dan Secrest, Acting Chair*



## FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

### Accomplishments

- Finances stayed within budget and no funds were drawn from the Trust principal
- Retired arrearage principal on the former minister's pension
- The following policies were submitted for Board approval:
  - Pledges and Gifts
  - Conflict of Interest
  - Expense Reimbursement
  - Operating Budget Development
  - Operating Budget Reporting
  - Spending Authorization Capital
  - Spending Authorization Operating
  - Spending Authorization Restricted
  - Sunday Collection
- Established electronic contribution program with Vanco
- Started issuing quarterly contribution statements to members

### Goals

- Payoff lost earnings on former minister's pension
- Start returning funds to Trust principal
- More fully integrate electronic giving in accounting software
- Educate the congregation on electronic giving options
- Continue documentation of Finance policies and procedures
- Working with Communications Committee to find common storage for financial documents in server based cloud

The budget for each fiscal year is approved by the congregation at each annual congregational meeting; the 2016-17 budget follows on the next page.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Dan Wiest, Chair*



2016-2017 APPROVED BUDGET **First U-U, Detroit**

Budget as approved by Congregational vote on May 15, 2016  
 FYE 06-30-2017

	projected year end at April 30	2016-2017
	FY 16 Projection	Approved by the Congregation
<b>Expected Contrib and other income</b>		
Pledges	74,000	\$ 86,770
Non-pledge	4,000	3,000
Plate-anon	3,000	3,000
Social Hour	1,350	1,400
Parking lot	15,600	16,320
Trust income	4,200	(6,000)
other	500	
Fundraising	1,700	1,700
Centennial	<u>2,362</u>	<u>0</u>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>106,712</b>	<b>\$ 106,190</b>
<b>Projected Expense</b>		
Ministerial and other rel	33,850	36,000
Other staff	5,400	6,400
Music	12,000	12,000
<b>Committees</b>		
Worship Comm	4,000	5,000
Communications	300	500
Comm-Telephone	410	400
Planning	375	400
Leadership Training	0	1,700
Social Justice	350	350
Membership	735	800
Canvass	200	500
Development	1,000	0
Finance related	980	1,280
<b>Admin and General</b>		
Fees	80	80
Soc hour	800	1,000
Insurance	4,185	4,500
Office supplies, copier	1,050	1,400
Bldg maint	2,000	2,000
Other misc	400	400
Centennial	2,612	
Search	600	13,100
UUA	1,800	3,000
MidAmerica	400	1,200
EMEAC	1,200	2,400
Fundraising	840	1,000
Prior period liabilities	<u>12,806</u>	<u>4,000</u>
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>88,373</b>	<b>99,410</b>
<b>Margin of Safety</b>	<b>\$ 18,339</b>	<b>\$ 6,780</b>



## FUND DEVELOPMENT *AD HOC* COMMITTEE REPORT

The Fund Development Committee is now operating on an *ad hoc* basis – as our members and friends are inspired with ideas to raise funds, they are encouraged to bring ideas to the board and organize others. For instance, our music director, Todd Ballou, perceived a need to expand our repertoire on Sunday mornings without violating copyrights. Todd organized a fundraiser to purchase new hymnals which culminated in a music concert and enough funds were raised to purchase 136 regular and six large print “Singing the Journey” hymnals.

Kathleen Jacobs Johnson and Robert Johnson continue to host “Curiously Odd Movie Nights” and Margaret Beck continues to organize trips to the Detroit Repertory Theatre, individual efforts that result in monies to our operating budget. Nancy Owen Nelson tirelessly sold books week after week to contribute to centennial celebration funding.

Please feel free to be creative and don't be afraid to step up with an idea!

Respectfully submitted,  
*Matt Friedrichs*, Vice President



## MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

### Accomplishments

During the past year, members of the Membership Committee met regularly to improve and enhance the experience for friends, visitors and members of the congregation. The members are Sally Borden, Glenn Maxwell, Joan Smykowski, Chair, Regina Weiss, and Kathe Stevens, *ex officio*.

On a monthly basis, the “Introduction to First Church” was conducted. Additionally, Volunteer Fairs were offered quarterly to encourage involvement in groups and committees. Greeters and Ushers:

- Welcomed and trained several new members and young members as Greeters.
- Replaced the New Visitor Form with a smaller guest “Connection Card.”
- Streamlined the process for collecting new guest information for our records.
- Optimized the Greeter role with a checklist for Greeters.
- Queried Greeters for feedback about the Greeter role.

The First Unitarian-Universalist Church of Detroit community welcomed a record number of new members to our church family. As of this writing (May 1, 2016), there are 106 members. We would like to welcome our new and returning members for the 2015-2016 Church Year:

Dessa Cosma  
 Aimee Cisler  
 Andy Cisler  
 Vercina T.A. Hollis  
 Anita Jones

Steven Lewis  
 Chloe Lundine  
 Carolyn Lusch  
 Sean McGraw  
 Cheryl Maliniemi Greene

Carmen Mendoza-King  
 Airlie Strasser  
 Regina Weiss

Additionally, more members and friends became involved in practicing radical hospitality as ushers and greeters in the past year. We thank the following individuals for volunteering as a greeter and/or usher:

Lencha Acker  
 John Angry  
 Tim Bailey  
 Joel Batterman  
 Margaret Beck  
 Sally Borden  
 Irene Brisson  
 Maysel Brooks  
 Marsha Bruhn  
 Paul Chislett  
 Charles Davis  
 Matt Friedrichs  
 Sharlene Gage

Dan Hale  
 Kathleen Johnson  
 Anita Jones  
 Carolyn Ludwig  
 Chloe Lundine  
 Deanna McGraw  
 Bill McKnight  
 Edie McKnight  
 Glenn Maxwell  
 Nancy Owen Nelson  
 Aletha Oberdier  
 Danny Rebb  
 Sydney Schaaf

Ruth Siefert  
 Joan Smykowski  
 Kathe Stevens  
 Nathan Strickland, Jr.  
 Emma Velasquez  
 Regina Weiss  
 Dan Wiest  
 Jerry Williams  
 Jody Wise  
 Sherry Wells  
 Roger Zeigler



Five Good Eggs were identified in December 2015, because they are examples of their belief and practice of the Unitarian-Universalist seven Principles:

Dale Compton  
Mary Lou Malone

Nancy Owen Nelson  
Dan Secrest

Roger Zeigler

### **Goals**

The Membership Committee plans to continue to make First UU a welcoming and engaging place in the next year. We plan to conduct various fun activities to encourage all members and friends to be part of the growing First Unitarian-Universalist Church of Detroit.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Joan Smykowski, Chair*



## NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

The Nominating Committee was involved in two major activities during the 2015-16 fiscal year, as described below. Members of the Nominating Committee were: Lencha Acker, Marsha Bruhn, Mary Lou Malone, Rhonda Rodgers, and Elayne Sikelianos.

### Settled Minister Search Committee

At the October 13, 2015 meeting of the Board of Trustees, it was decided that the search for a settled minister should begin in January 2016. This would be an 18-month process, with the potential to call a settled minister by Fall of 2017. In accordance with the church's by-laws, the Nominating Committee prepared a slate of candidates for a vote by the congregation.

The Nominating Committee was guided by the Unitarian Universalist Association's Settlement Handbook for Ministers and Congregations. The Handbook recommended a seven-member Settled Minister Search Committee. The Committee sought members who were known and respected by others in the congregation; committed to the congregation as a whole; willing to attend every meeting and give 250-400 hours over the coming year; reflected the diversity of the congregation; pledged to conduct a fair and nondiscriminatory process; and well suited to working as a team member.

The Nominating Committee recommended the following candidates who were approved at the special congregational meeting on Sunday, December 13, 2015: Lencha Acker, Robert Johnson, Deanna McGraw, Bill McKnight, Sharon Mills, Aletha Oberdier, and Joan Smykowski.

### Candidates for Board, etc.

In accordance with the by-laws, the Nominating Committee developed the following list of candidates for approval at the May 15, 2016 Annual Congregational Meeting.

- President Kathe Stevens
- Vice President Dan Wiest
- Trustees-at-Large (2) Dan Hale  
Nathan Strickland, Jr.
- Nominating Committee (5) Marsha Bruhn  
Matt Friedrichs  
Chloe Lundine  
Mary Lou Malone  
Regina Weiss
- General Assembly Delegates (3) Robert Johnson  
Danny Rebb  
Kathe Stevens
- Regional Assembly Delegates (3) To be nominated from the floor

Respectfully submitted,  
*Marsha Bruhn*, Member



## PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT

### **Accomplishments**

The 2015 Strategic Plan was completed and the full report is posted on church website. A quarterly report to track progress and problems was presented quarterly to the board of directors.

From the lessons learned from our first plan, two 2016 planning meetings (leadership and congregation) were held in October to create our 2016 plan. The entire 2016 plan is posted on our website. Below you will find the 2016 goals.

The one outstanding 2015 objective that was carried over to 2016 was the creation of a policy and procedure manual. Over 25 policies with procedures are now ready for final review by the Board. These policies and procedures will be posted on our website sometime in June. The implementation of the policies and procedures will include committee and program chair training and highlights in our newsletters and order of service.

Three trainings were held over the past year to develop leadership skill: Committee Communication, Leadership Development and Conducting Effective Meetings.

### **Goals**

2016 Strategic Goals (detailed action steps can be viewed on website):

- GOAL 1: Create new opportunities to expand interactions with EMEAC
- GOAL 2: Using the 100th anniversary of the UU sanctuary as a theme, create opportunities to celebrate, increase membership and revenues to connect our past to our future
- GOAL 3: Create a viable social justice structure built on the 7 principles to sustain our beliefs, outreach efforts and activities
- GOAL 4: Develop, conduct and evaluate opportunities and programs for spiritual growth

In August of this year Danny Rebb will begin to Chair the Planning Committee.

We expect to provide at least two leadership trainings during 2016.

Committee Members are Deanna McGraw, Danny Rebb, and Sally Borden, with Kathe Stevens and Rev. Murray *ex officio*.

Respectfully submitted,  
Deanna McGraw, Chair



## SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE REPORT

### Accomplishments

A snapshot of the activities of the Social Justice Committee in the past year includes:

- On July 3, 2015, members of First UU's Social Justice Committee joined the People's Water Board and Michigan UU Social Justice Network in a water walk from Detroit to Flint to bring attention to the injustices surrounding clean, safe and accessible water, participating at rallies at major stops along the way.
- At the instigation and encouragement of Ruby Jones, we were proud to add "Black Lives Matter" language to the original sign in the front of the church in August
- On November 20, we co-hosted "Opportunity for All? How to Keep an Inclusive Cass Corridor," a discussion about development and affordable housing with our neighbor, Source Booksellers. Owner Janet Jones and her daughter, Alyson Jones-Turner facilitated a discuss attended by almost 20 people
- Over 70 people attended the second community conversation on gentrification in the neighborhood on December 10 – Larry Gabriel, a former resident custodian at First UU and current freelance *Detroit Metro Times* contributor, moderated. Panelists were Ted Phillips, Director of United Community Housing Coalition; Janet Jones, owner of Source Booksellers, and her daughter, Alyson Jones-Turner; and Bradford Frost, Director of the Detroit Corridor Initiative
- On January 10, 2016, Carolyn Ludwig arranged for the screening of the film, "The Future of Energy: Lateral Power to the People" by the Southeast Michigan Group of the Sierra Club
- Mary Lou Malone and Sharon Mills, among other Social Justice Committee members, worked with five other UU area churches to present a winter speaker series on escalating inequality at the Birmingham Unitarian Church

### Goals

We will continue to advocate for Social Justice by our collaboration with other UU churches, and with regular meetings and through individual actions of our congregation.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
Joel Batterman, Chair



## WELCOMING TASK FORCE REPORT (FINAL)

The Welcoming Task Force, consisting of three co-leaders, Al Acker, Deanna McGraw and Kathe Stevens, with members Lencha Acker, Irene Brisson, Trey Greene, Mary Lou Malone, Sharon Mills, and Danny Rebb, has completed its objective to renew First Church's designation as a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (LGBTQ) Welcoming Congregation by the Unitarian Universalist Association.

### **Accomplishments**

The Task Force began its work in the fall of 2014. At our May 17, 2015 annual congregational meeting, after the completion of six months of educational programs, congregational events and community outreach, the congregation voted unanimously to affirm recognition by the Unitarian Universalist Association as a Welcoming Congregation.

On July 18, 2015 a comprehensive application was submitted to the LGBTQ and Multicultural Programs Director of the Unitarian Universalist Association and on July 31 we received notice that our application to renew our Welcoming Congregation status (originally attained in 1997) was approved – the approval came with a compliment on our spirit and energy.

Copies of our application and our acceptance letter, as well as a link to information about the UUA's Welcoming Congregation program, may be found on our website at [A Welcoming Congregation](#).

Subsequent to our renewal recognition, we continued to advocate for, and reach out to, the LGBTQ community:

- We observed National Coming Out Day in October 2015 with Rev. Murray's sermon, "Coming Out and Breathing In"
- The Board approved the establishment of an [Interweave Chapter](#) – the first meeting was held in November, co-chaired by Task Force member, Irene Brisson, with Nathan Strickland
- The Board also approved a new personnel policy and procedure which includes language affirming equal employment opportunities for any sexual orientation or gender expression or identity

### **Goals**

The Welcoming Task Force is officially disbanded; no other meetings are planned. However, we look forward to our work continuing in congregational projects, including efforts such as:

- Amendment of our bylaws to add language on affirmation and inclusion



First Unitarian-Universalist Church of Detroit

- Continued worship services focused on LGBTQ issues and themes
- Continued promotion of our Interweave chapter

Respectfully submitted,

*Al Acker, Deanna McGraw and Kathe Stevens, Co-Chairs*



## WORSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

### Accomplishments

Worship Committee was chaired by Robert and Kathleen Johnson, with Rev. Stephen Murray, Music Director Todd Ballou; members Danny Rebb, Mary Lou Malone, Nancy Owen Nelson, and Sally Borden, Ruby Jones, and newest member Chloe Lundine.

Worship met the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 7pm. 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 ends between 12:00 and 12:15pm. Rev. Murray, for the most part, filled the pulpit three Sundays each month, with the Worship Committee filling in the remainder Sundays. Committee members took turns being Coordinator for the month and either spoke in the pulpit themselves, or secured a guest speaker. Special thanks to Sally Borden for taking and distributing minutes to the committee and Board.

This year was the big Centennial Celebration. Thanks to Danny Rebb, whose research at the church archives at University of Michigan's Bentley Historical Library in Ann Arbor, was instrumental in putting together several services, one based on Unitarianism around 1916, one based on Universalism around 1916, as well as providing lots of information on important women at First UU throughout the last hundred years. During the Centennial Service, Worship aided the Centennial Committee to help plan the service. It was great having Rev. Larry Hutchinson, Minister *Emeritus*, back in the pulpit, as well as hearing from four women who have been ordained at 1st UU over the years.

Ruby Jones has also shared an endless list of great guest speakers to bring in to our church, which we have utilized many times.

Worship Committee was trying to be very cognizant of the calendar and including holidays and celebrations when possible. We have worked together with many individuals and committees who have specific topics and speakers they would like. Worship has planned out Sunday topics more in advance than previous years, which in some ways was good, but didn't always provide us the flexibility when we wanted to cover a particular hot topic, or when presented with the opportunity of a guest speaker.

Worship Committee was assigned many tasks from the Strategic Plan. Many were relating to the Centennial Service, some were aimed at strengthening our relationship with EMEAC, and some were aimed at more religious education for our congregation, all of which have been discussed during committee meetings. Many tasks have already been completed. We aim to continue checking these tasks off the list, and continuing to improve and plan.

Worship hopes to continue to bring topics and speakers to the pulpit to create more buzz within the community, which will bring higher membership numbers and revenue.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Kathleen and Robert Johnson, Co-Chairs*





## YOUNG ADULT GROUP REPORT

### Accomplishments

The Young Adult email list has 55 young people subscribed. Our main activities continue to be:

- The Noel Night fundraiser
- The annual UU regional picnic

**The 43rd Annual Noel Night** is one of the biggest events of every year for the Cass Corridor Commons and First UU. A group organized by the Young Adults decorated the parlor and the foyer to welcome hundreds of visitors.

Many of the same folks, and more, showed up again on the big night, December 5, to help run the CommonUnity Café. We ladled chili, cider and cocoa, served pizza, and poured coffee until we were out of everything. We're getting much better at assessing amounts and types of food and beverages that people want to purchase. The Café once again made a profit this year to donate to the church operating budget.

**Our second UU regional picnic** on Belle Isle on Saturday, June 6, 2015 was an opportunity to connect and relax with other UU-ers from all over Southeast Michigan. We welcomed over 100 picnickers from the Detroit, Grosse Pointe, Southfield, Birmingham, Troy, Ann Arbor, and Brighton congregations, starting off with a service project to help clean up the island, continuing with a potluck picnic and grilling, and closed festivities with a maypole dance.

### Goals

As this report goes to print we are planning the Third Annual UU Regional Picnic on Belle Isle. We'll start in the fall with plans for another Noel Night fundraiser café. It continues to be the goal of UUYA to engage young members and visitors of the congregation and seek to foster leadership within the church and community at large. Future events include: more fundraising opportunities such as a joint music/open mic with Cass Corridor Commons, and volunteer outreach to our immediate Detroit community.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Aletha Oberdier*, Lead