



First Unitarian-Universalist Church of Detroit

Annual Report 2016 – 2017 Church Year

The 2016-2017 Annual Report is available on our website at
<http://1stuu.org/Governance/2017AnnualReport.pdf>



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SNAPSHOT OF OUR CHURCH YEAR



We finished our centennial year at the corner of Cass and Forest! Let us honor and recognize some of our accomplishments over the past year.

We have hired a very accomplished and popular minister. His sermons have inspired us to dig deeper and live our Seven Principles. Thank you, Rev. Murray, for accepting our call.

We celebrated Todd Ballou’s 20th anniversary as our Music Director. Thank you, Todd, for providing your ministry of music. We appreciated the third annual congregational music conversation you hosted.

We’ve been welcoming children so consistently every Sunday that we’ve hired a Child Care Provider to lead our volunteers. We welcome Julia Cuneo and thank the volunteers who have spent their Sundays with the children.

Our census numbers to UUA keep rising! We are presently at 116 members. Welcome to new members!

Because our membership reached over 100 last year, we were eligible to send *three* delegates to General and Regional Assemblies. Great job, delegates!

Our attendance is often over 80 on Sundays. We thank all friends and members for joining us weekly.

Individual donations have increased to allow us to contemplate a healthy future. Thank you!



Financial stability has increased with the complete payoff of our two long-term debts and the continuation of rent on the Prentis parking lot. Thank you to the volunteers who labored over the budget and negotiated the parking lot agreement.

We published a Policies & Procedures Manual and amended our Bylaws to enhance ourselves organizationally. Thank you to the *ad hoc* committees for stepping up when needed.

Another organizational feat was to compile a list of the 13 different acronyms and abbreviations used in print and electronic communications and then vote to choose “UU Detroit” to use consistently.

We installed railings on the stairs leading from the sanctuary to the social hall and from the office vestibule to the chancel. Thank you to the organizers and the nail pounders and the hole drillers who made the sanctuary more accessible.

We’ve participated in denominational affairs: representatives of UU Detroit attended vigils to honor the LGBTQ victims of the Orland, FL massacre; Dr. Janice Marie Johnson, Director of Multicultural Ministries and Leadership for the UUA, visited UU Detroit to



discuss “Building the World We Dream About,” a UUA program on race and ethnicity; we co-sponsored “Escalating Inequality” workshops with Birmingham Unitarian Church, Northwest UU, UU Detroit, Beacon UU Congregation, and the UU Church of Farmington; we signed a commitment to justice — a joint Unitarian Universalist Association/Unitarian Universalist Service Committee “Declaration of Conscience”; and we participated in a White Supremacy Teach-In. Your commitment to social justice is inspiring.

New leaders have emerged and old leaders have persevered. In the past year, volunteers have agreed to chair the Canvass, Membership, Planning, Special Activities, and Social Justice Committees. Your leadership is appreciated.

And a special shout-out to the Settled Minister Search Committee’s creativity and commitment. Without their efforts, we wouldn’t be planning an installation service for Rev. Murray in the fall of 2017.

The Young Adults-organized coffee house, CommonUnity Café, a collaboration with EMEAC, sold out of all beverages and food and turned a nice profit. Thank you to the Young Adults for organizing!

And we again represented at Dally in the Alley!

We look forward to the future: Just a week after our 2017 Annual Meeting, we’ll enjoy our 4th annual UU Regional Picnic on Belle Isle, at the shore of the Lake Okonoka. Thanks again, Young Adults!





LETTER FROM THE INTERIM MINISTER

What a difference a year makes! It is amazing to think that a year ago, I was ensconced in the role of Interim Minister, preparing our congregation for its next Settled Minister, and lo and behold, it turns out that person is me! I am delighted that in July, I formally take on the duties of being our church's Minister for the foreseeable future, and am grateful to you, the members of the congregation, for giving my ongoing work and play with you such affirmation. As you know, I have served now with churches in six different denominations, and I can say unabashedly that I enjoy this particular church in this particular city more than any other.

In preaching this year, I wanted to take a real look at the underlying values of the Unitarian Universalist experience in America. The architecture by which I did that was through a monthly sermonic series on our Seven Principles, the core beliefs that bind and liberate UU churches of all kinds. As someone who has come to this tradition from the outside, this was enormously beneficial to me, and I hope it was for you as well, looking at these principles both philosophically and practically. But this also meant taking looks at contemporary issues, everything from our nation's presidential election to the recent "scandal" in the UUA itself, which prompted a sermon on "white supremacy."

This year also has been our centennial celebration of our sanctuary at the corner of Forest and Cass. Along with a wonderful tour of our history, our worship service incorporating everyone that our church has ordained in living memory (all women!) was a treasure. That same service brought back this church's last Settled Minister, the Rev. Larry Hutchinson, who interestingly came to serve our church out of his origins as a Presbyterian minister. I can attest that this church is a good home for liberal learning Protestant clergy of all kinds.

We have struggled in this last year with the uncertainty of our home in this Sanctuary, and encouraged that for now our place here seems less precarious than it seemed before. But that uncertainty has meant that we made stronger claims that our church is our people, and not our house of stone and wood. We know now that our church is a people who sing together and yearn for justice together, and not the specific pews and organ that we know so well. Our church, whether we remain at Cass and Forest for years to come, is more sure in our identity together as an uncompromisable community than we were before. We will do more than endure. We will thrive together as a community, no matter where we enjoy each other's company on a weekly basis.

I am grateful for the ever expanding repertoire of the music that we hear in our church, and for Todd's outstanding talent and generosity in allowing others to collaborate and be at play in the musical arts here as well. Ours is a church that thrives on music, and I am excited every week to find out what surprises Todd has in store. I can only applaud what he and our congregation's musicians bring to share in our community together.



Thank you for the joy of being with and for all of you in this church. And rather than what a year ago I thought would be a farewell letter, how wonderful that I now get to write you with the surety that this is just the second of many more.

In peace and joy,

The Rev. Dr. Stephen Butler Murray, Interim Minister



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

I know these words have been written before, by many others, but I cannot believe two years have passed since I was first elected as your board president. What an honor and a privilege it has been to serve you. I'll be turning over the gavel as of June 30. Your new board president, Dan Hale, is a great choice. Congratulations!

I'm sure everyone who moves over one seat from the President to Immediate Past President feels that they could have done more. I'm no exception, but I believe we've accomplished a lot together.

Two years ago, as a member of the Interim Search Committee, I interviewed Rev. Murray. He impressed then as he does now and we enthusiastically recommended him for the interim minister position. Rev. Murray came to my home early on a Sunday morning to sign his interim ministry contract and we walked to church together so I could introduce him to you. What a heartfelt memory! It's been a real pleasure to work with Rev. Murray and I've learned a lot from his leadership.

I also appreciate working alongside Sydney Schaaf, Dave Vaillencourt, and Marsha Bruhn, who are all going off the board. Marsha arrived on the board in 2012 to fill an open position, was eventually elected president, and has served admirably for five years. I appreciate her leadership and have learned a lot from her, too.

Throughout these annual reports, you will read about our accomplishments. I will highlight that our biggest accomplishment is remaining together, worshiping together, celebrating together, and growing. We are a warm and welcoming community. Visitors come back, again and again, and our membership is increasing exponentially because newcomers feel like they belong, that we care. Because we do.

Our centennial year in our sanctuary ended in April 2017. You and UU Detroit leadership have worked very hard for the last decade to ensure that we could celebrate that occasion. My goal for the future of UU Detroit is that we continue to work with East Michigan Environmental Action Council to remain in the buildings we have lovingly maintained for the past 101 years. I'm also pragmatic; as your Immediate Past President I'll continue to act with the board to meet our fiduciary duty to find what is best for the congregation. Always.

I appreciate you and thank you for your confidence in my leadership. We will go forward, together.

Respectfully, and gratefully, submitted,
Kathe Stevens, President



CANVASS COMMITTEE REPORT

Going Forward! — 2017-2018 Canvass Campaign

The Canvass Committee remains optimistic about the future of the First Unitarian-Universalist Church of Detroit. During the past year, the Church embarked on a realistic canvass campaign in April 2017. The Campaign focused on increasing Church pledge revenue by 5% to create a financial safety net for the upcoming fiscal year.

The increased pledges are vitally important to allow the Board to plan and strategize for positive outcomes that meet our Vision and Mission. The increased pledges will allow the Board and Minister to carefully consider all our options for the continued growth and financial security of our congregation.

At the time of this completing this report (April 20, 2017) of the 76 pledging units (couples/partners):

- 26 increased their pledges,
 - 1%-5% increase-6 pledging units
 - 6%-9% increase-4 pledging units
 - 10%-19% increase-3 pledging units
 - 20%-29% increase-4 pledging units
 - 30%-39% increase-1 pledging unit
 - 40%-49% increase-1 pledging unit
 - 50%-59% increase-3 pledging units
 - 60%-69% increase-1 pledging unit
 - 70%-177% increase-2 pledging units
- 4 pledging units remained the same,
- 3 new pledging units were recorded, and
- 2 pledging units decreased their pledges.

The amount of total pledges to date will be reported by the Finance Committee at the annual congregational meeting.

In the upcoming year, the Canvass Committee's goals are:

1. As needed, and suggested by the Finance Committee, increase the total pledge amount.
2. Increase the number of individuals on the Canvass Committee.

In conclusion, pledging is expected as members of First Unitarian-Universalist Church of Detroit. There are three requirements to being a member of the Church: (1) Signing the Membership Book, (2) Making a financial pledge and/or (3) Making a donation of record.

As important to making a pledge is making the actual contribution to the Church. Donations may be mailed directly to the Church, given during the weekly service, or given on line (www.1stuu.org).

Submitted by, *Joan Smykowski*, Chair



CHILD CARE COMMITTEE REPORT

Accomplishments for The Coming Year

Provided two child care providers each Sunday every Sunday for the past year ready to receive children who accompany their parents to the service.

With the Board's approval, we hired a paid child care provider, Julia Cuneo, starting in March 2017 to lead the child care team, along with one church volunteer.

Since January 2017, we have had at least one child in the child care room every Sunday.

No problems have been reported and some children now come regularly.

Goals for The Coming Year

Continue to recruit more child care volunteers within the church.

Continue to monitor our attendance and progress encouraging feedback for improvements.

Continue to provide good child care during the church service.

Submitted by, *Sally Borden and Richard Hillier, Co-Chairs*



CHURCH TRUST REPORT

First Unitarian-Universalist Church Trust assets grew to \$175,567 as of March 31, 2017. This is an increase of \$19,537 from March 31, 2016. Growth came from infusions provided by the congregation, market appreciation, and dividends. The Trust may only use its assets to benefit the church, but, as previously reported, the Trust is not currently disbursing money to the church. All assets are working to grow the principle.

Oversight of the Trust 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 investment strategy calls for income combined with reasonable conservatism.

The Trust and indeed the church would be pleased to see asset growth through contributions from church members and friends. Please consider providing a bequest to the Trust in your estate planning. A small bequest or a large one ... either will help ensure the success of UU Detroit'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

- Continued improvement of monthly newsletter thanks to Kathe Stevens.
- More convenient and attractive event communication thanks to Anita (Ruby) Jones.
- Church office equipment maintained and enhanced, led by Glenn Maxwell.
- Added wireless microphone to enhance worship and church meetings.
- Continued roll out of G Suite for communication and document management.

Goals

- Implement online membership directory.
- Continue to improve system for connecting visitors and new members with church on an ongoing basis.
- Standardize committee document management procedures.

Where to Find More Information

There are 27 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.

Visit our website at <http://1stuu.org>.

Visit 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



EMEAC BOARD LIAISON REPORT

At a meeting with the UU Detroit Board in February 2017, I reported that East Michigan Environmental Action Council was having financial troubles; they could no longer afford the space and were contacting realtors to look at the possibility of selling some or all of the property.

Financial status:

Today, EMEAC's financial situation has improved to the point that they are not talking to real estate agents, but are working towards a future at Cass and Forest. In February 2017, EMEAC was looking at a shortfall well over \$50,000. With additional funding, they reduced their deficit to \$13,800, per their audit report for April 2016 through May 2017. They have a positive cash balance through July 2017.

They project a modest deficit for 2017-18, with cautious confidence in additional funding.

1. Renovations for Semester in Detroit: \$40,000.
2. Future Plans: Commons University Educational Initiative: participation of local colleges and universities from greater Detroit.
3. Major fundraising effort: \$100,000. Building upgrade to ADA standards.
4. How UU Detroit can support EMEAC:
 - a. Financial donation to EMEAC's fundraisers;
 - b. Tell/encourage other UU and activist friends to support EMEAC;
 - c. Choose a piece of EMEAC's list of renovations and support it with money and volunteer work to see it implemented.
5. Recommend 2-4 talented candidates to serve on the EMEAC Board:
 - a. Someone with contracting/building/renovating/architectural skill;
 - b. Someone experience working with City of Detroit Building Authority;
 - c. Someone with financial skills;
 - d. Someone with organizational management skills.
6. Meet with a Subcommittee of the EMEAC board to talk about our common future.

My hope is that we can partner with EMEAC so they will be able to continue their good work for social equity in the city.

When our Boards meet, I hope we will make a full-hearted effort to share our experiences, refer them to realtors, architects, lawyers, city officials, and planners who can assist them in making the best choices for the future of EMEAC. Then, if need be, we can leave this place gracefully ... or find a way to mutually stay and thrive together.

What we do as a congregation to plan for "our" future will have far-reaching effects. How we behave in the process will also be part of our legacy. I hope we honor all those who have got us this far and act on our UU principles as we move forward.

Respectfully submitted,

Lorenza ("Lencha") Acker, UU Detroit Representative to the EMEAC Board



FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee Accomplishments in the Past Year

Along with routine duties of collection counting and logging, maintaining the general ledger, producing monthly reports for Board, the Finance Committee cleared up some old issues and took on some new responsibilities. Additionally, the Committee has developed a separation of duties process that increases internal control.

The Church was able to pay-off \$6,615 in prior period liabilities relating to the pension arrearage for the former minister and three years of unpaid Detroit city income tax. We have been paying these liabilities down over a couple years but they are completed and, we believe, are now closed issues.

For the first time in recent memory, the Church was able to transfer money to the Trust on a monthly basis. In prior years, we had to take money from the Trust to cover expenses but due to low expenses and strong collections we reversed that practice for this year.

Additionally, the Finance Committee took responsibility for the SHARE THE PLATE program participating in an ad hoc committee along with Mary Lou Malone. The program generated \$2,850 in additional contributions for worthy projects. Those were:

Zaman International	November	\$440
Freedom House	December	\$630
MU UU Social Justice Network	January	\$444
We the People	February	\$390
Coalition on Temporary Shelter	March	\$581
UU Ministry for Earth	April	\$367

This sharing of the plate does not seem to have cut into Church income. Comparing November through March (April figures not yet finalized) from this fiscal year to last shows that Church collections for the five-month period were higher by over \$2,300 this year when we are sharing. Some portion of that is due to increased attendance, of course, but more to the point, there is no apparent drop in giving to the Church from those who are participating in Share the Plate.

Committee's Goals for the Upcoming Year

Next fiscal year may be a completely different picture from this year. To begin with the Church will have a settled minister for the first time in 14 years. Additionally, the Congregation's worship location and the costs associated with that are uncertain. The Finance Committee will participate in the evaluation of alternative worship spaces.

The Committee will be watching the Church finances as they happen but more importantly, the Committee will be trying to anticipate changes in cost structure as the year develops and preparing the Board to respond to those changes.

Submitted by, *Robert Lauer* on behalf of the Finance Committee



2016-2017 APPROVED BUDGET

Approved by Congregational vote at the annual meeting on May 21, 2017.

Receipts and Disbursements: Projected and Budgeted

	FY 17 Budget	FY 17 Projected Year End	CANVASS Brochure version FY 18 Budget	Proposed FY 18 Budget
Estimated Income				
Pledges	86,770	83,000	83,000	87,057
Other donations including non-pledged and coffee hour	7,400	10,300	7,200	9,200
Parking lot and Trust Income	16,320	15,762	17,200	17,200
Fundraising and other	<u>1,700</u>	<u>3,172</u>	<u>220</u>	<u>220</u>
Total Income	112,190	112,234	107,620	113,677
Proposed Expense Budget				
Ministerial	36,000	36,000	56,000	56,000
Other staff	6,400	6,400	6,400	8,150
Worship, and music	17,000	18,000	18,000	16,600
Admin, general	17,560	14,710	12,930	12,370
Program Planning, Social Justice, Membership	2,050	975	1,200	1,050
Leadership	1,700	400	2,000	1,000
Facility rent	0	0	12,000	12,000
Search Expense/ Installation celebration	13,100	3,000	0	5,000
UUA, Mid-West, EMEAC	6,600	6,600	4,200	4,200
Fundraising	<u>1,000</u>	<u>1,145</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>590</u>
Total Expense	101,410	87,230	112,730	116,960
Margin of Safety/(Risk)	10,780	25,004	(5,110)	(3,283)



MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

Many new people are visiting UU Detroit and we are up to 115 members! While some of the increase in guests is likely because of the political climate and people seeking a community of like-minded individuals, no doubt it is also in part due of wonderful sermons and a friendly welcome. Thanks to everyone who helps ensure that visitors are nurtured and thus return and become part of our congregation!

The Membership Committee has streamlined our processes and materials. We are offering Intro to UU workshops quarterly and are signing up members monthly. In 2017-2018 we hope to continue growing in numbers and to ensure that new members are plugged in to church life in ways that are both exciting for them and useful for the congregation at large.

Respectfully submitted, *Dessa Cosma*, Chair



NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

The Nominating Committee's major role during the 2016-17 fiscal year focused on recruiting and recommending candidates for Board Trustees, General Assembly, Regional Assembly, and the 2017-18 Nominating Committee.

Nominating Committee members for this year were: Mary Lou Malone, Matt Friedrichs, Regina Weiss, and Marsha Bruhn. Chloe Lundine was elected at last year's Annual Congregational Meeting but has not been able to participate in this process.

In accordance with the Bylaws, the Nominating Committee developed the following list of candidates for approval at the May 21, 2017 Annual Congregational Meeting. Notice was included in the April and the May church newsletter.

President: Dan Hale (one-year term, to 2018)
Vice President: Nathan Strickland, Jr. (one-year term, to 2018)
Trustees-at-Large (4): Dan Wiest (filling second year of Nate Strickland's position, to 2018)
Maysel Brooks (two-year term, to 2019)
Joel Fortgang (two-year term, to 2019)
Dan Secrest (two-year term, to 2019)

General Assembly Delegates (3): Dan Hale, Matt Friedrichs, Kathe Stevens

MidAmerica Regional Assembly Delegates 2018 (3):

No candidates are recommended at this time, as Regional Assembly activities will be merged with General Assembly 2018, which takes place in our Midwest Region at Kansas City, MO. Nominating Committee is recommending that the congregation authorize the Board of Trustees to appoint candidates, if needed.

Nominating Committee (5 members, one-year term):

Marsha Bruhn, Jillian Fortgang, Matt Friedrichs,
Mary Lou Malone, Regina Weiss.

Respectfully submitted,

Marsha Bruhn, Matt Friedrichs, Mary Lou Malone, Regina Weiss, Nominating Committee



WORSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

Accomplishments in the Past Year

- cohosted a Nobel Laureate, Jody Williams and awards ceremony (with Wayne State Center for Peace and Conflict Studies);
- implemented services on topics related to social and spiritual challenges created by the recent election—Detroit's future, water and food justice, race, political activism, sanctuary, white supremacy;
- supported Interim Minister Murray in his sermon coverage of the Seven Principles;
- hosted a number of poets and writers related to "Detroit Musings" series;
- hosted services related to religious holidays (Rosh Hashanah);
- implemented changes in worship service—no announcements in squircle, reduced sing-alongs to two songs, incorporated "Spirit of Life" as a responsive singing after the meditation. (Zeigler/Nelson donated a karaoke machine for after-service announcements during coffee hour);
- implemented the weekly announcement email via Anita Jones (this precludes overabundance of announcements during coffee hour);
- continue to provide a quality worship service every Sunday of the year;
- continue to attract numerous visitors every Sunday, some of whom have joined the church.

Goals for the Upcoming Year

- continue to maintain radical hospitality;
- work with our soon-to-be settled minister to continue our exploration of timely issues;
- support the UUA effort toward an examination of white supremacy within the national organization by bringing in speakers relevant to the topic.

Submitted by, *Nancy Owen Nelson*, Chair