



UUCR

**Annual Report
2016**

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Rockville
100 Welsh Park Drive
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Rockville

100 Welsh Park Drive, Rockville, MD 20850
phone: 301-762-7666 ~ fax: 301-762-7667 ~ uucr@uucr.org
www.uucr.org ~ facebook.com/uu.rockville

Staff

Rev. Lynn Thomas Strauss, Senior Minister
Rev. Rebekah Montgomery, Assistant Minister
Rev. Jack Young, Minister Emeritus
Andrea Spencer-Linzie, Interim Director of Religious Education
Emma Falley, Youth Coordinator
Rena Geibel, Religious Education Assistant
Jennifer Rodgers, Director of Music
Justin Furnia, Pianist
Nancy Gregory, Director of Communications & Membership
Donna Taylor, Church Administrator
Bryant Taylor, Facilities Coordinator

Officers

Terrie Barr, President
Ellen Rohan, Vice President
See-Yan Lam, Secretary
Julie Robinson, Treasurer
Eric Burch, Assistant Treasurer
Barbara Harrison, Assistant Treasurer
Cynthia Bauerle, Immediate Past President

General Trustees

Adriana Brigatti
José Clemente
Bill Newhouse

Annual Report 2016

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Vital Statistics – as of April 30, 2016

Members: 394

Friends: 133

Religious Education Enrollment: 123

Religious Education Families: 70

New members from May 1, 2015 to April 30, 2016: 21

Bonnie Bloomquist, Susan Culbertson, Jon Facemire, Jessica Gardiner, Margie Henry, Bob Janowski, Heidi Janowski, Ody Leonard, Suzanne Leonard, Dory Lippert, Scott Reilly, Myra Remigio-Leonard, Ann Richards, Ray Richards, Kelly Schlessman, Jana Shobe, Judy Toth, Angie Watts, Glenn Watts, Steve Wright, Terry Zetts

Members off the roll from May 1, 2015 to April 30, 2016: 17

Antonio Aguilar, Amie Chamberlin, Ruth Cropley, Terry Drabant, Todd Garlow, Carly Gayle, Frank Gayle, Chris Holbein, Billie Jordan, Jay LaMarche, Jennifer Mitchell, Sam Mitchell, Anne Oyler, Bob Oyler, Amy Stevens, Greg Stevens, Nia Strother

Members changed to Friends from May 1, 2015 to April 30, 2016: 1

Eunice Moe

Child Dedications: 4

Lucian Nesta Hand
Teagan Malee Pied
Kiara Rose Santerre
Tieran Ash Santerre

Deaths: 7

Clifford Bachrach (June 16, 2015)
William Chapin (June 2, 2015)
Marilla Cohen (October 1, 2015)
Priscilla Kaeser (May 1, 2015)
Audrey Koch (January 28, 2016)
Ray Richards (April 7, 2016)
Joe Shankle (October 20, 2015)

Report from the President —*Terrie Barr*

The Board of Trustees establishes policy and oversees finances, financial and strategic planning, and approves major expenditures. The Board ensures that the congregation's resources are used to serve its mission. The Board provides governance and works with Rev. Lynn Thomas Strauss to lead the congregation in realizing our mission. Board and Lay Ministry Council leadership work to integrate governance and ministry at UUCR.

The Board year began in July 2015 with a Board retreat, during which we oriented incoming members and affirmed our Covenant, and developed goals for the year. The Board met monthly to conduct the work of the congregation, and held special Board meetings as needed. We hosted three Town Hall Meetings (September and November 2015, and April 2016) and the Annual Congregational Meeting in May 2016. The Mid-Year Congregational Meeting in January 2016 was cancelled due to weather.

Board members were visible and active in the life of the congregation, including weekly delivery of welcome at the Sunday service and presence during coffee hour, regular participation in new member events, Leadership Development Training, Rev. Rebekah Montgomery's Start-Up Workshop, and participation in a meeting to receive congregational feedback on the Religious Education (RE) Safe Congregations Policy. Throughout the year, the Board worked closely with the Lay Ministry Council, the Religious Education Committee, Buildings and Grounds Committee, Finance Committee, Personnel Committee, Church Administrator, and Senior Minister to update and strengthen policies and practices, and secure contractual obligations.

Our activities are guided by the framework provided in the 2012-17 Strategic Plan which directs our efforts to:

- Grow and diversify our membership;
- Strengthen and enhance congregational practices that support and connect all members and friends;
- Improve UUCR governance and staffing; and
- Cultivate UUCR's spiritual practice of engaging both the congregation and wider community as a leader and partner in social change.

The Board's goals were documented on the UUCR website in two places: the Board of Trustees web page and the Strategic Plan Summary. Board accomplishments for 2015-16 included:

Goal 1

Assessment and plan for Sanctuary and Building 1

Coordinated with the Buildings & Grounds Committee (B&G) and the Lay Minister for B&G to review assessments and plans and approve expenditures from the Capital Improvement Fund for:

- Upgrading the new sound system and for new acoustic panels applied in the Sanctuary to correct sound problems;
- New energy efficient lights installed in Founders Hall;
- New lighting and ceiling panels in the lobby of Building 1; and
- A comfortable, new meeting room for up to eight created by renovating the workroom.

Explore plans for a second Sunday worship service

- Reviewed attendance figures monthly for classrooms and the Sanctuary on Sundays.
- Compared them to prior years and determined that a second Sunday worship service was not needed at this time.
- Sought ideas from the congregation about how to ensure that losing parking spots due to the removal of the temporary parking lot doesn't discourage visitors.

Goal 2

Maximize the 60th Anniversary opportunity to honor the past and position UUCR for the next 60 years, determining the legacy that we will leave in terms of transforming our community and ensuring the buildings and grounds to support it.

- The 60th Anniversary will be October 16, 2016. The Lay Ministry Council and the Committee on Ministry share responsibility for planning this joyous occasion.
- Congregants identified building and grounds upgrades to prepare for the 60th at the April Town Hall Meeting. B&G and the Board will finalize the list and seek congregants' generosity for changes next year. The Strategic Plan developed next year will include five-year plans for buildings and grounds changes at UUCR.

Reimagine ways for UUCR to positively transform UUCR and our wider community through funding the operating budget and capital improvements.

- Approved and monitored UUCR's operating budget and approved expenditures from the Capital Improvement Fund to support Strategic Plan goals.
- Approved new leases for the nursery schools, increasing our income, and shared the cost of new flooring, upgrading our RE space.
- Approved new database linking all staff and volunteer databases into one.

Goal 3

Increase Board engagement with the congregation and promote congregational understanding of existing ways to engage.

- Created two new resources on the website: links to governing documents and UUCR policies, procedures, and guidelines to make it easy to access important documents in one place.
- The April Town Hall Meeting introduced a new format that includes spending half of the time engaging the congregation in open discussion of matters being considered for future decision-making. Posted ideas generated on four questions in E-Weekly article three days later.

Collaboratively prepare for a new vision for the next Strategic Plan, including the re-visioning for RE and the visioning for the start-up of the new Assistant Minister and all other church initiatives.

- The Choosing our Future Team, Ellen Rohan, Bill Newhouse, Mary Carvajal, Christin Green, Scott Reilly, Lynn Strauss, and Terrie Barr, worked with a consultant to draft and communicate a process for next year.

Identify the need for and support the development of policies that support the congregation's ability to grow and be together as a multigenerational, diverse, and inclusive community.

- Developed New Initiatives Policy;
- Approved revision of Memorial and Remembrance Policy and Remembrance Fund;
- Updated the Conflict Resolution Policy; and
- Reviewed the RE Safe Congregations Policy at four Board meetings; sought feedback from the congregation at a May 1 meeting in order to finalize the policy.

President's Perspective

The 2015-16 program year was a celebratory one marked by the 10th anniversary of Rev. Lynn Strauss's ministry and by welcoming our new Assistant Minister, Rev. Rebekah Montgomery, new Youth Coordinator, Emma Falley, and new RE Assistant, Rena Geibel. Rev. Lynn's sabbatical began in the fall and continued in April, May, and June. We reviewed the Religious Education Transition Team report and recommendations. We approved the new RE vision, the salary for a new credentialed Director of Religious Education (DRE), and an increase in the hours of the Youth Coordinator in the canvass budget. We piloted a Partner Plate effort that resulted in thousands of dollars for deserving charities and increased the UUCR share of the Sunday collection as well. A new team with a new concept executed the Halloween Hullabaloo on October 31. They exceeded the goal for this fall fundraiser and added a fun program of activities for children. We approved the selection of Dayna Edwards to be our new DRE. Karl Irikura led the Canvass Team this year, trying new ideas and working hard to enable our aspirational congregation to increase our efforts. We'll say farewell to Interim DRE, Andrea Spencer-Linzie, Director of Communications & Membership, Nancy Gregory, Director of Music, Jennifer Rodgers, and Youth Coordinator, Emma Falley at the end of the fiscal year. It is hard to say goodbye to them and we thank them for their good work.

Deep thanks to the ministers, members of the Board, Lay Ministers, committee chairs and members, and staff for your commitment to our congregation and for your work on our behalf. We are grateful to all members and friends for your generosity of time, talent, and treasure. Next year promises to be one of more celebration with our 60th Anniversary!

The 2015-2016 Board of Trustees budget was \$300. It was used to recognize congregational leaders at the Fellowship Dinner who advanced Strategic Plan goals.

Board of Trustees for 2015-2016: Terrie Barr (President), Ellen Rohan (Vice President), See Lam (Secretary), Julie Robinson (Treasurer), Adriana Brigatti, José Clemente, and Bill Newhouse (General Trustees), Cynthia Bauerle (Immediate Past President and non-voting member), and Rev. Lynn Strauss (Senior Minister and non-voting member)

Report from the Treasurer—*Julie Robinson*

The Treasurer has overall responsibility for all of the congregation's financial activities and is a voting member of the Board of Trustees. The Treasurer verifies that UUCR's financial records are accurate and up-to-date and prepares a monthly Treasurer's Report for presentation to the Board and to the Finance Committee. The monthly Treasurer's Report will be made available to any member or friend of the congregation who requests a copy from the Treasurer, a member of the Board of Trustees, or a member of the Finance Committee.

UUCR's financial condition is sound. The Endowment Fund balance is approximately \$288,000. The General Reserve is approximately \$261,000, 35% of the annual budget. Building and grounds costs have been higher than expected this year, driven by snow removal costs, while payroll costs are lower than budgeted due to open positions. After completing ten months of the current fiscal year, we expect to finish the year with a budget surplus.

UUCR's current operating budget is \$744,788. Payroll costs are the largest expense and will be approximately \$441,000 for the current year. More than 75% of operating costs are funded by contributions from members and friends of the congregation, so a successful annual canvass is vital to our financial health.

The Treasurer's financial responsibilities are shared with two Assistant Treasurers and a bookkeeper. Eric Burch is the Assistant Treasurer for Deposits and Barbara Harrison is the Assistant Treasurer for Disbursements. Martha Taylor is the bookkeeper. The Treasurer, Assistant Treasurers, and bookkeeper work closely with the Finance Committee, chaired by Kent Hancock, and with Donna Taylor, Church Administrator.

Report from the Lay Ministry Council—*Fran Lowe and Steve Eckstrand*

The Lay Ministry Council is responsible for visioning, coordinating, supporting, and evaluating the program areas of the congregation, and for overseeing the congregational calendar and may render advice and/or make recommendations to the Board of Trustees on any issue which, in the Lay Ministry Council's judgment, may have a significant impact on the programs of the congregation.

This has been a rebuilding year for the Lay Ministry Council. Eight members decided to remain on the council for a second two-year term, while four members completed their two-year terms of service and moved on to other leadership positions in the congregation. Eight people are actively participating in the current Lay Ministry training program.

This year the Lay Ministry Council:

- Organized the annual Activities Fair
- Assisted with the formulation of the annual calendar
- Reviewed the UUCR Policy for Considering New Initiatives and discussed how to carry out its assigned role in the consideration of new initiatives
- Per the Annual Implementation Plan Activity 18b: Research and implement leadership development programming - Provided two leadership development classes, in May and September. Over 40 people attended at least one session; each session had at least 30 people.
- Provided Lay Ministry training sessions in November, February, and April, with plans for one more session in June. Topics included: worship, spirituality, ministry, the core of UUCR, communications and dialogue, cultural differences, and principles of leadership. Rev. Lynn, Rev. Rebekah, and Fran Lowe led the sessions with assistance from Cynthia Shires-Thurston and Steve Eckstrand.

An important task for the Lay Ministry Council during the coming year will be to assimilate new Lay Ministers and participate in strategic planning for the next five years.

The 2015-2016 Lay Ministry Council budget is \$500 of which \$207 has been spent.

Lay Ministers: Worship & Music Arts - Cynthia Shires-Thurston; Social Justice - Bennett Rushkoff; Adult Faith Formation - Steve Eckstrand (Interim Chair); Children & Youth Religious Education - Gwen Rowe; Community Outreach - Ken Sandin; Membership & Communications - Jill Asman; Buildings & Grounds - Marie Reed; At-large - Celia Young; Lay Ministry Council – Fran Lowe; Board of Trustees liaison – Ellen Rohan

Report from the Senior Minister —*Rev. Lynn Strauss*

To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven.

This year has been a season of changes. New beginnings and unexpected endings have marked the joys and sorrows of our Beloved Community. In our wise moments, we know that change is good, that life is change, and that new growth comes again and again.

I believe in the miracle that is religious community. Together we grow in spirit, in love, and in good works. It is the good of the whole that makes us a congregation. Individual changes, individual agendas, individual gifts and commitments come together and make of us a new creation, a renewed congregation.

And so we share the journey of seasons, saying goodbye to Rev. Doug McCusker, our first Assistant Minister, saying goodbye to Sarah Prager and Emma Falley, our Youth Coordinators, saying goodbye to Andrea Spencer-Linzie, our Interim Director of Religious Education, saying goodbye to Jennifer Rodgers, our Director of Music, saying goodbye to Nancy Gregory, our Director of Communications & Membership. So many goodbyes, drenched in so much gratitude.

Then we said “welcome” to Rev. Rebekah Montgomery, our new Assistant Minister, and we will say “welcome” to Dayna Edwards, our incoming Director of Religious Education. We prepare to welcome our new Director of Music and our new Director of Communications & Membership, and we give thanks for the blessings of good leaders, staff, clergy, and lay volunteers.

I am most grateful to Donna Taylor, our stalwart Church Administrator. And I am grateful to Terrie Barr, President of the Board of Trustees this year, and to the Executive Team of the Board, and to the entire Board. They have held us through this journey of change with dedication, wisdom, and compassion.

May we move into the new season with our honed resilience and our highest hopes.

Oh, and yes, I have squeezed in some sabbatical time this year as well.

With deep gratitude, Lynn

Report from the Assistant Minister —*Rev. Rebekah Montgomery*

I am honored to be UUCR’s second Assistant Minister, after my colleague, Rev. Doug McCusker, who served the congregation last year. Since last year was the first time UUCR had an Assistant Minister, the portfolio of responsibilities is still continuing to adjust and expand, with the needs of the congregation.

I have been serving UUCR since the fall of 2015, so this report is inclusive of just my time: October to June. I am grateful to have been welcomed so warmly by this UUCR family and for the many ways I have been able to get to know the history, legacy, culture, and great future for our community.

Highlights of 2015-16:

- Enriching and engaging theme-based worship experience, led by the Senior and/or Assistant Minister three to four times per month
- Successful and well-attended Assistant Minister Start-up Workshop, facilitated by the Joseph Priestley District Executive
- Providing the leadership for the multi-session Adult Faith Formation class, *Building Your Own Theology*, with an incredible and thoughtful group of UUCR members and friends
- Wisdom Wednesdays with vespers, dessert, and presentations were enthusiastically supported
- Continuation of the UUCR Mind, Body & Spirit Fair, an innovative multigenerational worship/spiritual practices event
- Deep reflection and discussion of the death penalty issue with the Unitarian Universalist Association Common Read book, *Just Mercy*
- Regular attendance at the Montgomery County Interfaith Working Group meetings, which are hosted at UUCR
- Celebrating the installation of UUCR's solar panels with Interfaith Power & Light
- Supporting the Lay Ministry Council with trainings and collaborative pastoral and leadership initiatives
- Honoring Rev. Lynn Strauss's sabbatical over 2015-16 by providing additional worship, pastoral, and committee involvement
- Continuation of the Assistant Minister support to the Small Group Ministry program with trainings and the creation of the monthly session plans, tied to the monthly worship themes
- Active participation in the Montgomery County Black Lives Matter UU Clergy Group with monthly meetings and a collaborative multi-event honoring Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- UUCR initiated a Racial Justice Working Group this year and encouraged the community to engage in Black Lives Matter and racial justice issues by hosting two book discussions on *Between the World and Me*, by Ta-Nehisi Coates, attending the regular River Road UU vigils, organizing participation in local Black Lives Matter events, and attending Joseph Priestley District and area racial justice workshops

Report from the Interim Director of Religious Education—*Andrea Spencer-Linzie*

The work of an Interim Director of Religious Education (IDRE) is different from a long-term DRE. An IDRE does need to sustain and continue the current program. At the same time, s/he also engages in other tasks that are part of an intentional transition period that has a shape and momentum set apart from that of a settled leader. The limited time of an Interim DRE helps the congregation focus on its developmental work. The interim professional also needs to shine a light on possibly uncomfortable truths and to work with the congregation to effect difficult changes that may be necessary for the future health and success of the program.

There are five categories for my work as the IDRE at UUCR, which were developed by LREDA (Liberal Religious Educators Association), as well as the ongoing work of supporting, administrating, and developing the current program.

Coming to Terms with History

In addition to comments from the 2015 report, it is clear that there is still some residual sense of a divide between the RE teachers/helpers/students and the rest of the congregation. Something akin to “upstairs/downstairs” syndrome. The IDRE and Senior Minister discussed bringing in a consultant or facilitator to discuss how much this sense of separateness is still at play within the congregation. I believe this would be a healthy step to take, especially as a new DRE assumes leadership in July 2016.

Evolving a Unique Religious Education Program Identity

We have focused on the fact that it really does take a village to raise children. We have tried a new trimester approach in teaching the curriculum throughout the year, giving teachers needed time to worship and rest, and incorporating more adults in the RE program in shorter periods of commitment. We had more trainings this year in classroom behavior management, how to adapt a *Tapestry of Faith* curriculum to fit our RE year, safety issues, and the like. Most, but not all, teachers participated in the training, and the IDRE had specific trainings with new teams, particularly in the 2-3rd grade class and the 4-5th grade class.

Leadership Changes During the Interim Period

During the interim period both the RE Assistant and Youth Coordinator positions needed to be filled. A Youth Coordinator was hired in September 2015 thanks to the efforts of a selection committee which included two youth members as well as youth teachers and OWL (Our Whole Lives) facilitators. The RE Assistant position took much longer to fill. We hired someone in July 2015, but realized fairly quickly that she was not the right person for the job. Nearly one year after the long-serving RE Assistant retired, we hired a new RE Assistant, who is doing great in the position. However, the lack of an assistant for nearly a year curtailed how much the IDRE could accomplish, both in supporting the ongoing program and new initiatives. While lead teachers in preschool, K-1, and the Junior and Senior Youth classes stayed fairly constant throughout the year, the 2-3rd and 4-5th grade classes had teaching teams with no designated team leaders. These classes did suffer from this lack of leadership and the IDRE and RE Assistant picked up the role of scheduling teachers and helpers.

Renewing Associational Linkages

This has been a challenge this year given the restructuring of the Youth Cons and the move from district to regional leadership in the Unitarian Universalist Association.

Commitment to Future Program and Vitality

The RE Transition Team completed its work in 2015 and submitted a comprehensive proposal to the Board of Trustees that included staffing (with a recommendation for increased hours for the Youth Coordinator position), programing, and resource recommendations, including increasing use of up-to-date technology, creating a three-year cycle for Coming of Age, including 6th grade in the Junior Youth RE class, and beginning steps to add a third year of curriculum to the Junior Youth class. A very significant proposal initiated by the RE Transition Team took on life with a specific structure and content for a youth program for Junior and Senior youth to run throughout the year, based on the six pillars of strong youth programs. The RE Committee supports this new initiative and, after a round of conversations with Junior and Senior youth and their parents, there is much positive support for this new initiative. It is key to developing the leadership of our youth, both in UUCR and throughout the UU denomination.

Information from the RE Transition Team focus groups, research, and visits with other congregations will be crucial to the further development of the UUCR RE program, its identity, and its programming going forward.

Another note here about the Coming of Age program. The RE Committee had many conversations about this and a selected task force to research and talk through possibilities, including a three-year Coming of Age process, use of mentors, community service, leadership opportunities, etc. Findings will be shared with the new DRE beginning July 2016.

An additional recommendation would be to hold regular meetings throughout the year that include OWL leadership, Junior and Senior Youth Program leadership, RE/Children's Worship leadership, and Rainbow Youth Alliance (RYA) leadership. Especially since we are looking to implement the new youth program for Junior and Senior youth in the 2016-2017 program year, the functionality, scheduling, and overall goals of the RE program would be enhanced by shared scheduling and priorities, including how to manage time for adults and youth given that the youth programs, OWL, and RYA all currently meet on Sundays. Doing some joint planning could be positive for each program and overall.

New initiatives beginning fall 2015 through spring 2016:

- Trimester model for fall 2015, utilizing three-person teams per trimester.
- Attendance tracking spreadsheet that captures data for individual teachers, students, and classes as well as attendance rates overall. This type of tracking has allowed us to better know when children or youth have consecutive absences so we can follow up sooner with the youth or family. The mechanism to follow up was not really put into place, but we do have the data. Moving forward with the new church database, it will be easier for teachers to track attendance and reach out to students.
- The Holiday Pageant was scheduled a bit differently in order to sustain more classroom time during the Christmas season. The new schedule worked fairly well.
- More sessions of teacher training were available, mainly through use of web-conferencing (Zoom). Topics included classroom behavior management, how to adapt a *Tapestry of Faith* curriculum, and safety policies.
- As was the case in 2014-2015, there was successful support of the Mind, Body & Spirit Fair, which integrated children and youth within the schedule as participants and leaders.
- Peace Camp, facilitated by Little Friends for Peace (LFFP), is continuing at UUCR for the 2016 summer. It is totally managed by LFFP this year, reducing time for UUCR staff and volunteers.
- The RE Safe Congregations Task Force created a final draft policy recommendation to the Board in April 2016, including use of background checks for volunteers in the RE and youth programs. A congregational forum to discuss the draft policy was held on May 1, 2016. Hopefully, policies and procedures will be completed by the end of the 2016 calendar year.
- Child care was a bit easier this year. UUCR hired six regular caregivers that have been consistent and good at their jobs this year. The hourly rate was increased by \$2 per hour to be more in-sync with market rates. We did not hire a Child Care Coordinator, and all scheduling was done by the IDRE and, eventually, the RE Assistant. We've consistently provided care through 1:00 p.m. each Sunday. Caregivers have also provided care for other congregational events, including the Fellowship Dinner, Assistant Minister Start-up, Action Auction, and mid-week Adult Faith Formation evening programs.

- I recommend that we re-assess the need for a Child Care Coordinator. It still takes several hours per month to make sure child care is available for various congregational events, in addition to Sunday mornings.

Challenges:

- The RE Assistant of 13 years resigned in May 2015. It took nearly a year to find a suitable replacement. We did hire an RE Assistant in July 2015, but she was released in September. She did not have the requisite skills for the position. Furthermore, the oversight of the search fell to the IDRE who was already doing the tasks normally done by the RE Assistant, causing a setback in moving some initiatives forward, especially in terms of the “interim” tasks. It also created additional work load and stress.
- We implemented a new RE teaching system in 2015-2016, utilizing trimesters and team teaching. About 20 new people entered the RE volunteer system as a regular helper or teacher. Most classes worked very well, especially those who took the responsibility to organize their teams and schedules. Two classes did not do this and there was more chaos among those teams (2-3rd grade class and 4-5th grade class). While we have not yet performed an official assessment of the trimester approach, we do know that it gave teachers more time in worship if they chose that. It made room for new helpers/teachers.
- As was the case last year, expectations for teachers and helpers need to be clearer so everyone is on the same page, especially if we continue the trimester model for another year. It’s important that the teachers and helpers are in charge of their class. There simply is not enough capacity on the staff side to be scheduling individual helpers and teachers per week.
- There are many parents who did not proactively help in the RE program this year. While we do not require that all parents volunteer throughout the year, it is probably necessary to communicate that we do need their help.
- The IDRE will complete an RE manual, annual calendar, and recommendations for the new DRE, since currently these resources do not exist.
- Child care for functions other than on Sunday mornings needs to be more clearly explained and transparent to leaders of other committees and events. Without a Child Care Coordinator, it really isn’t possible for the RE Assistant or DRE to oversee the child care for other activities.
- We continue to work on integration of RE with other congregational events, which has been difficult. Multigenerational events need to be the priority of the congregation as a whole, not simply of RE, and need to have age-appropriate programming across the ages.
- Significant events in the life of the congregation would benefit from cross-program area planning so that more or most congregants can participate without conflicts with other events.
- As we implement the new youth program for Junior and Senior youth, which is now recommended to be twice monthly on Sunday evenings, it will be even more important for the various elements of RE and youth programs to coordinate together – RE classes, Coming of Age, RYA, OWL, and Heritage trips. We are reaching capacity in terms of scheduling.
- While *Spirit Play* has been on the list as a desirable program for RE, we have yet to even begin serious discussions on implementation. Classroom space is still an issue, but may have some solutions as Building 2 gets upgraded with additional storage space.

September 2015 through May 15, 2016:

- 146 distinct children and youth (nursery – 12th grade) attended RE
- 24 children/youth (nursery – 12th grade) were recorded as visitors in RE
- 82 distinct adults and youth taught or helped in an RE classroom

Report from the Youth Coordinator – Emma Falley

The Youth Coordinator works with two separate groups – the Junior Youth Group (6th-8th grade) and the Senior Youth Group (9th-12th grade). During this year, a lot of research, conversations, and planning have been put into developing a comprehensive youth group program for junior and senior youth. An outline and plan have been developed and presented to the junior youth, senior youth, parents, and the Children & Youth Religious Education (RE) Committee. I had hoped to start the youth program before RE ended for the summer in order to have a trial run, but was not able to make that happen. Next year, I hope the youth group will have a committee with youth representatives dedicated to it to help the Youth Coordinator and youth advisors have a robust program with plenty of input.

Activities this year included:

- A two night lock-in at UUCR with the 9th-12th graders for their fall retreat. Groceries were purchased using funds from the RE budget to host this event.
- The Senior Youth Group presented their annual Youth-led Worship Service, which included a day-long retreat/work session to finish planning and practicing the service. This also included a lot of planning during RE class time.
- Senior youth helped lead a nature walk for congregants as part of the Mind, Body & Spirit Fair. A young family was recruited to help advise the Senior Youth Group during this process. It was a great way to get the youth connected with other congregants.
- The Junior Youth Group went on two alternate faith field trips - a trip to an Islamic Community Center and to observe a Catholic Mass.
- Both Junior and Senior Youth Groups participated in several Youth Worship services during the year that mirrored the worship theme of the month.
- The Senior Youth Group will provide a meal for UUCR's "meals week" at the Wilkins Avenue Women's Assessment Center later in May. This is only the start of different volunteer activities and community service the youth will be participating in. There is hope that Habitat for Humanity will become a staple of the youth program in the summer.
- A full weekend spring/summer retreat is planned for early June at an off-site location.

Report from the Director of Music—Jennifer Rodgers

The Director of Music is the head professional musician on staff and is responsible for the overall planning, management, and implementation of all aspects of UUCR's music programming. UUCR has supported and appreciated a robust and vibrant music program for long before my tenure as the Director of Music. As I leave my position here to pursue a Doctorate in Musical Arts in Choral Conducting, I am confident that a strong music program will continue to be a vital center of our congregational life.

Activity 33 of the 2015-16 Annual Implementation Plan is to "identify supports needed to take our music programming to the next level." The following are key aspects that I believe define the "next level," along with questions that could help us evaluate our progress:

1. Expanding opportunities for all ages and levels to participate in the music program in some way. *Who could have more opportunity to grow musically?*

2. Maintaining and refreshing a healthy and well-distributed core of volunteer leadership from the congregation to balance the limitation of our staffing capacity. *How can we continue to ensure sustainable programs led by joyfully-engaged professionals and congregants?*
3. Continually identifying and striving for excellence. *How can the quality of our musical offerings strive for ever-higher levels within the appropriate context of a volunteer population and a limited budget?*
4. Providing a diversity of music that reflects the diversity and depth of our sources. *How can music at UUCR incorporate and celebrate the diverse world traditions and history that we draw from as a religion? How can we do that in increasingly excellent and authentic ways?*
5. Respecting and supporting the livelihood of music as an organization that values the arts in society. *How can our support of musicians create a win-win situation for their livelihood and our growth?*
6. Connecting us to the larger community. *How could our music program enhance our connection to our community? Where would the community benefit from music/musicians at UUCR?*

Looking at the past year through the lens of those six areas, here are our major accomplishments and/or challenges:

1. After identifying a core of 6th-8th grade youth who would benefit from their own musical place at UUCR, we implemented a youth ensemble, Unisons, under the leadership of Samantha Buckley and Justin Furnia. We are also working with guitarists in the congregation to offer regular music support for Children's Worship. There is not a clear way towards a high school ensemble at this time; however, a family choir offered a couple times each year would be another opportunity.
2. As of this fiscal year, the Tree of Life Café and two drumming groups are fully led and supported by volunteer musicians from UUCR, in addition to our ensembles outside of the Adult Choir. This ensures a more sustainable workload for the half-time Director of Music and allows him/her to foster new initiatives, provided that they, too, have the potential of volunteer leadership.
3. Over the course of this program year, I worked with our Adult Choir to record a CD. This served as our annual fundraiser, but its true purpose was to take the choir to the next level of musicianship. In addition, WildBerry Jam, an internal group focused on a more intricate musical sound, had its debut year.
4. Our new drumming and Shamanic Meditation circles tap into a different genre of inspiration and I strove to continue our diversity of musical offerings with both professional and volunteer musicians. In particular, we held two services that focused on World Music: a steel drum ensemble and an African American traditional music service with Dr. Lester Green.
5. Our Tree of Life Café is built on a structure that both offers payment to the artists and encourages outreach to the broader community in a win-win formula. For our Sunday morning professional musicians, it is a challenge to allocate budget monies to pay them appropriately, but a worthwhile one. Continuing to build the Ethier Fund for Special Music as well as support the music operating budget is certainly part of the "next level" for music programming.
6. In addition to the Tree of Life Café's connection to the area's musicians and community, Steve Lapham has initiated a Music at Asbury program that can connect UUCR musicians (particularly youth) with performances that benefit the Asbury community. More connections like that and collaborations with Rockville organizations and churches could be a direction that we'd like to head in.

The 2015-2016 music operating budget is \$3,700, which has been allocated and will be spent by the end of the fiscal year.

Report from the Director of Communications & Membership – Nancy Gregory

The Director of Communications & Membership position was created in 2012 in order to allow for dedicated staff time to be focused in these two areas critical to UUCR's growth. As I leave this position this summer, I believe the congregation has a good foundation to build upon, and that there are many opportunities for exciting and innovative approaches in both areas in the future.

This year, I remained the primary editor and point of contact for the UUCR website. Our volunteer Webteam – Bill Newhouse, Eric Norris, Lisa Petrovich Smith, and Tom Rowe – primarily worked on structural maintenance and changes, including continuing to expand the website's functionality. Thanks to Eric, the website's back-up systems have been greatly improved this year, and editor privileges have been tightened to prevent accidental page deletions and other unintentional problems. Congregants may submit material for inclusion on the website using the form at www.uucr.org/submit-new-article. Feedback on the website may be submitted at www.uucr.org/website-feedback. And, in both cases, congregants may also send an email message to webteam@uucr.org.

In an effort to allow all congregants, and especially those who cannot make it to UUCR on Sunday mornings, to have some experience of the worship service, I posted edited MP3 recordings of the service on the website each week. Audio of the past week's service, as well as archived recordings from previous weeks, may be found on the website at www.uucr.org/worship/sermons (scroll to the bottom of the page).

A communications goal for this year was to make better use of social media and I accomplished this to a limited degree. UUCR E-Weekly now auto-posts to our public Facebook page (www.facebook.com/uu.rockville) each week and I post service recordings and major events there. Members and friends may join two different Facebook groups now – one specifically aimed at parents (Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Rockville: Parents) and one more generally for members and friends (Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Rockville: Members and Friends). Thanks to Julia Santerre and Myra Remigio-Leonard for creating the UUCR parents Facebook group. Everyone who uses Facebook is invited to join these groups and to stay connected with fellow congregants. The strategic use of social media is a major area for growth and improvement in the future.

We welcomed 21 new members to the congregation this year and, with membership losses due to moves, resignations, and deaths, we sustained a small net decrease in membership - from 398 members on April 30, 2015 to 394 members on April 30, 2016. Fortunately, attendance at our Newcomer Brunch with the Minister remained strong, with a total of 34 adult participants, and we welcome first-time visitors to Sunday morning worship and religious education almost every week. Due to scheduling conflicts with other major UUCR events, we've only been able to hold two newcomer brunches so far this year. A third brunch, and the final one for this program year, will be held in June.

We continued our efforts to help new members and friends find their place in our community through good collaboration with other staff members and committee/group leaders. This year, newer members have served or are serving on selection teams for the Director of Religious Education and Director of Music, the Adult Faith Formation Committee, the Choosing Our Future Team (strategic planning), and more. Others have joined the Adult Choir, the Young Adults Group, Dinners for 8, the Small Group Ministry program, and the group of dedicated volunteers who serve in our RE classrooms.

A major, long-standing goal currently being realized is the consolidation of multiple UUCR databases (some managed by volunteers and some by staff members) into one comprehensive and cloud-based

database that can meet all of our needs. Many, many thanks to Eric Burch for lending his time and significant expertise to this effort. With Eric's leadership, the Board of Trustees authorized the purchase of database software from ChurchDB earlier this year. ChurchDB is used by a number of UU congregations around the country and will allow for much greater functionality than our current database. Best of all, because it's Internet-based rather than maintained on a local server like our current database, ChurchDB will allow us to consolidate records of all kinds into one location and provide for much greater efficiency and collaboration. We are now in the process of migrating data into ChurchDB, with the goal of being fully operational in the new system for the start of the new program year in September.

ChurchDB will allow everyone in the congregation (and only those in the congregation) to access information through a secure portal on the UUCR website. Because of its greater functionality, our plan now is to use ChurchDB, rather than the member directory on the website, as our online photo and contact directory. Watch for more information and opportunities over the summer months to utilize ChurchDB features to get better connected to fellow congregants. In the meantime, members and friends may continue to access the UUCR website's secure online directory by logging in at www.uucr.org/members/member-directory (or clicking on the Log In button next to the search box at the top of every page). The website directory contains congregant email addresses and phone numbers.

As ever, I am grateful to my staff colleagues and all the many volunteers who support UUCR's communications and membership efforts. Special thanks to Jill Asman and Terri Fritz for their generous offerings of time and care on the membership team. And, thanks to UUCR's faithful greeters who warmly welcome all – visitors, newcomers, members, and friends – on Sunday mornings: Jill Asman, Bob Campbell, Paulette Campbell, John Dickson, Judy Eisenhauer, Jewell Golden, Lynne Goss, Sue McCall, John McIlwaine, and Rachel Shaw.

Report from the Church Administrator – Donna Taylor

This has been another year of creativity, cooperation, and successful projects that enhance the physical, operational, and spiritual well-being of UUCR. I am so grateful for the outstanding and consistent contributions of staff, contractors, members, and friends who help make UUCR such a warm, welcoming place.

Jay Stewart is UUCR's part-time contractual custodian. He cleans the church buildings each week and sets up/takes down/rearranges tables and chairs for special church and rental events. And, most importantly, he makes sure our classrooms and Sanctuary are ready for every Sunday morning—even when a special event goes on in the Sanctuary until midnight the night before! With expanded use of church facilities for UUCR and rental events, Jay's responsibilities also expand. We now charge renters a custodial fee for Jay's services, to offset the custodial cost to the church.

Bryant Taylor is UUCR's Rental Attendant and Facilities Coordinator. He's our regular Sunday morning facilities person and also supports most evening and weekend rentals. In addition, Bryant performs a variety of general maintenance, including minor plumbing, assembling new furniture, gutter cleaning, light bulb replacement, and re-attaching hymn trays under the Sanctuary chairs.

Several major facilities, grounds, and infrastructure projects were completed this year, including:

- Installation of new, light-colored flooring in Buildings 2 and 3. These buildings now look much brighter and inviting, and have reduced our costs because annual waxing is no longer required.

- Reconfiguration of the Building 1 workroom, under the leadership of Sue Hedges and April Pulvirenti, to provide another small meeting and conversation space for congregants.
- Additional storage shelving in Building 4 to accommodate office and RE supplies, thanks to Dave Bennington and the Power Tool Gang.
- Implementation of a new, cloud-based telephone system for the office, with the guiding expertise of Bill Newhouse.
- Significant improvement of the Founders Hall sound system, thanks to Mike Holmes.

And, as of this writing, members of the Landscape Committee are leading an effort to mitigate rain water runoff from the church property into the yards of neighbors on Lynch Street.

Facilities improvements and major repairs are coordinated with the Lay Minister for Buildings & Grounds (Marie Reed) and the Buildings & Grounds Committee, ensuring that the work is aligned with UUCR's Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) and Board priorities.

Use of UUCR buildings continues to grow.

- UUCR program usage increased again this year, primarily due to 1) the increased Adult Faith Formation offerings, and 2) additions to the music program this year, with two monthly drumming circles and the new Unisons group.
- Long-term rentals (groups that rent space on a regular weekly or monthly basis) are stable this year, and will generate about \$13,000 of income. We are pleased that UUCR can offer economical space to so many groups that support individuals or families facing challenges — another way UUCR fulfills its mission to positively transform our community.
- Short-term rentals (single events) are flat this year; we expect about \$22,000 income here.
- UUCR continues to provide space at no charge for local non-profit philanthropic organizations that share our commitment to social justice. A few such organizations this year were:
 - Healthy Montgomery Community Conversation on Health and Wellness
 - Montgomery County Food Security Collaborative
 - Interfaith Clergy of Montgomery County
 - Montgomery Hospice
 - Interfaith Works
 - Hospice Caring
 - Montgomery County Housing Prioritization
 - Montgomery County Healthcare for the Homeless

It is a privilege to work with such dedicated people as the members, friends, and staff of UUCR. I look forward to our next year together.

Committees Reporting to the Board

Canvass Committee—*Karl Irikura*

The theme for this year's canvass was "The Fire of Commitment" (hymn #1028). Susie Spangler created a beautiful, artistic logo, which received many compliments and inspired Mark Stiles to make a big tie-dye version. The Fire of Commitment Moments during Sunday services were moving and inspiring, also generating many compliments. There were good sermons about generosity and related themes. There were articles in UUCR E-Weekly and *Quest*, mostly written by Bruce Baskett. We had a

table in the corridor for several Sundays, staffed mostly by Bruce and José Clemente, to answer questions and accept pledges. We held a well-attended event, as done every year, to honor and address the people who pledge the most, the “lead givers.” We also held “canvassing fellowship” events, which were intended to be fun and to encourage giving. These were unevenly and less well attended, partly because of families’ tight schedules. However, those who did attend enjoyed the events. The biggest event considered connected with the canvass, the Fellowship Dinner, was led by Christy Shannon. The dinner was well attended and was a wonderful sharing of food, fellowship, stories, and honors.

This year, instead of asking people to increase their giving in proportion with the budget (6%), we asked for an equivalent dollar increase (\$3 per week). A “leadership” increase of \$8 per week was suggested for those able to do so. Pledges could be made by using printed pledge cards, online, or by direct communication with committee members. Bill Newhouse was responsible for the online pledging facility, cloud-based committee communications, and other technology. We printed “I pledged” stickers for people’s name badges, as was done last year; this was received with some enthusiasm but also some negative comments. We are sending acknowledgment letters to thank people who have pledged, and to confirm the amount pledged. The Board of Trustees, which includes Bill and José, has supported the canvass administratively, by hosting events and by direct canvassing.

As of May 6, the congregation has made 230 pledges, reaching 92% of our pledging goal of \$598,000. This is \$47,400 short of the goal and \$15,000 less than we pledged in last year’s canvass.

The guiding principle has been the long-term health of the congregation, of which the annual pledge drive may be considered a measure. The Canvass Committee has a limited ability to guide long-term change, but all committees play roles. This year, it took a while for the Canvass Committee Chair to get moving. It would be helpful to begin earlier, maybe when the school year starts. Healing our profound cultural hang-ups about money would make canvassing easier and more comfortable.

Committee: Bruce Baskett, José Clemente, Karl Irikura (Chair), Bill Newhouse, and Christy Shannon

UUCR is grateful to the following people for pledging during this year’s canvass*:

Abott, Stacey
Allen, Amy Greene & David
Alzouma, Dana & Karim
Anderson, Marty & Chuck Peden
Asman, Jill
Baillie, Diane
Barnes, Andrew & Dolores
Barr, Terrie & Jim Fein
Baskett, Bruce & Emily Untermeyer
Bauerle, Cynthia & Robbie Reasoner
Bennington, David
Bertka, Connie & Yingwei Fei
Blackford, Corinne
Bloomquist, Bonnie
Blue, Jim & Lee
Bolland, Silvia
Bradshaw, Pat
Brandt, Larry & Susan
Brigatti, Adriana

Bright, Roselie & Mark Lewandoski
Brooke, Mary
Buck, Janet
Burch, Eric & Arlyn Sanchez
Burroughs, Charles
Butler, Kris
Buzy, Joel & Wendy
Byrd, Anne
Campbell, Bob & Paulette
Campbell, Chad & Renae
Campbell, Gaynelle
Campbell, Polly
Carrillo, Suzanne & Antonio
Carvajal, Ricardo & Mary
Cerny, Lana & Louis
Chalkley, Margaret
Chamberlain, Irv & Sherry Henry
Chapin, Patricia
Chitty, Richard & Claudia

Claxton, Erin & Utako Matsumura
 Clemente, José
 Clemente, Kathy
 Cohen, Len
 Colletti, Mary Caroline
 Cox, Allison & Steven Rosen
 Crane, Cammy & Alex Szatmary
 Crump, Annmarie & Wayne
 Dangel, Carol & Richard
 Danielson, Carole
 Dauler, Jeff
 Dawisha, Sahar
 Delavan, Deb & Bronson Hoover
 Dickson, John & Rachel Shaw
 Dittmann, Sharrill
 Dixon, George & Virginia
 Doerr, Edd & Herenia
 Dolak, Colleen & Matt Zembrzuski
 Dunbar, John
 Eckstrand, Steve & Irene
 Ehrlich, Shira
 Einhorn, Pat & Steve
 Eisenhauer, Jack & Judy
 Fabian, Teki
 Facemire, Jon
 Fenimore, Chuck & Natalie
 Floge, Liliane & Stephen Crawford
 Folsom, Ginny & Norman Rave
 Forrest, Julie
 Fox, Joan
 Francis, Tim
 Fredin, Lisa
 Friedenber, Louise & Paul
 Fritz, Terri & Ron Cancelose
 Furlani, Cita & John
 Garbe, Edward
 Gardiner, Jessica
 Gellman, Carey & Richard
 Gilbert, Ethel & Richard
 Gilfrich, Bob
 Golden, Jewell
 Goodyear, JP & Catherine
 Goss, Lynne & Joe
 Graf, Julie
 Griffin, Glenn & Jane
 Grissom, Nancy
 Haber, Martin & Valerie
 Hall, Andrea & Dan Zabinski
 Hancock, Kent & Gayle
 Harrison, Barbara & Dan Pierce
 Harrison, Beth & Todd
 Hayes, Allen
 Hedges, Sue & Kyle
 Heilman, Robert & Karen
 Helton, Don & Shana
 Higgins-Bisnett, Cathy
 Higgins-Bort, Marion
 Hoferek, Mary & Susan Wilson
 Holmes, Marge & Michael
 Huff, Laura
 Huffaker, Angela & Diana
 Hurcombe, Stacey & Joseph Johnson
 Hurlbut, William & Nancy Blum
 Irikura, Karl & Beth
 Ivy, Nahla
 Janowski, Heidi & Bob
 Johnson, Myles & Ruth
 Joseph, Stephanie
 Julka, Clarice & Chris
 Karras, George
 Kawamura, Barbara & Dale
 King, Karen & Ted
 Klag, Jane & Nancy
 Kohout, Nick & Chris
 Kreps, Stephanie & Gary
 Lam, See-Yan
 Landenburger, Jon
 Lanigan, Mary
 Lapham, Steve & Cheryl
 Larson-Rabin, Leah & Zach
 Lee, Doris & Jeremy Martin
 Leonard, Ody & Myra Remigio-Leonard
 Leonard, Suzanne
 Libert, Judith
 Lippert, Dory
 Lorms, David & Alberta Maschal
 Lowe, Phil & Fran
 Luce, Marsha
 Lyons, Jennifer
 MacIntyre, Karen
 Magnuson, Gary
 Malley, Karen
 Malone, Maura
 Marks, Dave & Diane
 Martzloff, François & Madeleine
 Mascardo, Jennifer
 McCall, Susan
 McCann, Andy & Susie
 McCarthy, Sean
 McClelland, Martha & Peter Shaw

McCormick, Mary
McGovern, Maude
McIlwaine, John
McCaffrey, Anne
Meyer, Holly & Robert
Miller, Marianne
Moore, Andy & Melissa
Morales, Jaqueline
Newhouse, Bill & Kay
Noreikis, Richard
Norris, Eric & Karen
Oketch, Hellen
Parker, Karen & Dan Zimble
Partington, Leigh
Paulson, Louis
Perino, Elaine & Don
Perkins, Neil & Melissa
Pied, Aaron & Erika
Pittleman, Karen & Steve
Plumb, Don & Judy
Popp, Jan
Power, Kevin & Christin Green
Preisendorfer, Rolf & Dominic Russoli
Pulvirenti, April
Randall, Carolyn
Rathbone, Donna
Rayner, Judith & Dennis Wellnitz
Reed, Lisa
Reed, Marie & Steve
Reilly, Scott
Reinsberg, Carol
Reuther, Pat & Ted
Riley, Bryan & Marla
Roberts, Luci & Jim Carleton
Robinson, Julie & Alex Chauche
Rohan, Ellen & Steve Greene
Rosewater, Mary
Roth, Sue
Rowe, Gwen & Tom
Rushkoff, Bennett & Karen Whitesell
Ryan, Ellen
Sandin, Ken
Santerre, Julia & Tyler
Schlessman, Kelly
Schrack, Roald
Schuhmann, Jeremy

Scott, Anne Hope
Shannon, Christy & Mark
Sherr, Marialyce & Ted
Shires-Thurston, Cynthia & Ginny
Simpson, Richard
Smith, Alonzo
Solberg, Larissa
Sosa, Julio & Rebecca
Spicknall, Anne
Stahl, Deb & Mike
Steel, Elizabeth & Sam
Stiles, Mark & Barbara Weis
Stolz, Richard
Stover, Connie
Strauss, Lynn & David
Tait, Erynn & Brian
Taylor, Donna
Taylor, Jack & Pamela
Taylor, Len & Martha
Thomas, Frank & Susan
Timmons, Karla & Burt Smith
Tolgyesi, Eva
Toth, Judy
Traini, Elizabeth & Joe
Walker, Patty & Kelly Cahill
Watts, Angie & Glenn
West, Bryan
West, Pamela & Matt Beyers
Wheeler, Teddy & Jenny
White, Robin & Chris
Wicker, Dorothy
Wilcock, Daniel & Takako Maeda
Wilcox, Steven
Williamson, Victoria
Wilson, Mark & Jo
Wilson, Pat
Witt, Kevin & Duyen Truong
Wright, Steve & Susan Culbertson
Yoder, Greg
Young, Celia
Young, Joe & Melissa
Zarrett, Sue
Zatman, Andrew & Marilyn Briant
Zerby, Elizabeth
Zetts, Terry
Zimmerman, Pat & Elana

*List is complete as of May 9, 2016

Committee on Ministry—*Cita Furlani*

The Committee on Ministry (COM) works with our ministers and members of the congregation to care for and strengthen the overall ministry of the church.

Major accomplishments:

- Planned and facilitated the start-up event for Rev. Rebekah Montgomery led by consultant, Rev. David Pyle.
- Published a paragraph in *Quest* and UUCR E-Weekly designed to inform about the work of the COM and to invite comments from the congregation.
- Supported the Senior Minister's role in filling staff positions.
- Supported planning for Rev. Strauss's 10th anniversary celebration.
- Supported planning for Rev. Strauss's sabbatical.

In addition, the COM pursued its role with regard to Annual Implementation Plan Activity 35 - "Prepare for the 60th Anniversary in the Fall of 2016 to honor the past and position UUCR for the next 60 years, determining the legacy that we will leave in terms of transforming our community and ensuring the buildings and grounds to support it." – by engaging Rev. Rebecca Parker to give the keynote address for the public event on the afternoon of October 16. Outreach will extend to other UU congregations, liberal Jewish congregations, the interfaith community network, civic leaders, etc. A light reception will follow.

Next year, the COM will work on planning for the future of our professional ministry.

The 2015-2016 Committee on Ministry budget is \$0; \$165 has been spent.

Committee members: Ricardo Carvajal, Steve Eckstrand, Cita Furlani (Chair), and Rolf Preisendorfer. Rev. Lynn Strauss and Rev. Rebekah Montgomery regularly attend the COM meetings.

Finance Committee—*Kent Hancock*

The Finance Committee reports to and supports the Board of Trustees as the Board carries out its fiduciary duties. The committee prepares the annual canvass budget and helps the Board set the annual operating budget. The Finance Committee, in partnership with the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurers, assures UUCR's financial records are accurate, and monitors the long-term financial health of the congregation.

This year, the Finance Committee supported the Landscape Committee in completing a new memorial area in the Sanctuary courtyard. This includes a contemplation area and a Memory Board with brass nameplates of loved ones who have passed on. The purchase of a nameplate is tax deductible, and funds are placed in a new Remembrance Fund to preserve our memorial practices and landscaped areas. A brochure discussing our memorial programs can be found on UUCR's website, linked from the Policies, Procedures & Guidelines page at www.uucr.org/uucr-policies-procedures-guidelines.

Under the leadership of Eric Burch, Assistant Treasurer for Deposits, UUCR signed an integrated information database software agreement with ChurchDB. Migration of data is now underway. This will be a valuable information resource and time-saver for both staff and volunteers.

The Finance Committee developed a policy for reimbursement of staff for their professional and business expenses and updated UUCR's credit card policy, both of which were approved by the Board. The committee also reviewed UUCR's restricted fund policies and has submitted several updates for Board approval. When approved, the committee will provide a complete package of our restricted funds to Board members for their information.

Committee members: Eric Burch (Assistant Treasurer - Deposits), Kent Hancock (Chair), Barbara Harrison (Assistant Treasurer – Disbursements), Dave Marks, Marianne Miller, Bill Newhouse, Julie Robinson (Treasurer), and Martha Taylor (Bookkeeper)

Personnel Committee—*Suzanne Carrillo*

The mission of the Personnel Committee is to provide personnel support for the administration of church employees. This year, we provided professional support, as needed or when requested, for the hiring of staff and in support of the Senior Minister's managerial functions. A telework policy was developed and included in the Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual, which can be found on the UUCR website. Thank you to José Clemente and Marianne Miller for their contributions to the committee and welcome to new members, Nancy Klag and Kris Butler.

Committee members: Kris Butler, Suzanne Carrillo (Chair), and Nancy Klag

Planned Giving Committee—*Sharrill Dittmann*

The purposes of the Planned Giving Committee are to raise awareness in the congregation of the importance of estate planning and to encourage gifts to UUCR's Endowment Fund through the inclusion of UUCR in those plans and with gifts.

At the time of the Annual Report's publication, Legacy Sunday for 2016 has not been held. The committee is working with Rev. Montgomery and also plans to host a seminar later this spring. We are always looking for new members of the Legacy Society, and we are eager to talk to you about ways to remember and honor UUCR in your estate plans. Through the generosity of members' bequests and gifts, our Endowment Fund has grown to more than \$300,000. Next year, we hope to revise the committee's pages on the UUCR website to reflect current possibilities for bequests.

The 2015-2016 Planned Giving Committee budget is \$500 of which \$60 has been spent.

Committee members: Len Cohen, Sharrill Dittmann (Chair), and Roald Schrack

Religious Education Transition Team—*Fran Lowe*

The Board of Trustees created the Religious Education Transition Team in October 2014 to protect and ensure the integrity and vitality of our Religious Education (RE) program in light of the resignation of our long-serving Director of Religious Education (DRE) and our Youth Coordinator, and to take advantage of this opportunity to explore new and exciting visions of staffing and program. We were charged by the Board to lead a process of evaluation, research, collaboration, and visioning, in order to develop a proposal for permanent staffing of UUCR's RE program.

In addition to the activities described in the 2015 report, we continued our research and data collection as follows:

- Studied nine other congregations;
- Interviewed our Senior Minister;
- Surveyed and interviewed teachers and staff;
- Analyzed results of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) Youth Survey for Rockville;
- Completed focus groups with a total of 62 participants;
- Met with our RE Committee to understand priorities; and
- Met with UUA Central East Region/Joseph Priestley District consultants for advice about best practices.

We analyzed the data and, based on our analysis and our many interactions with UUCR members and friends, UUA consultants, and other UU churches, we developed recommendations which we provided in a report and presentation to the Board in October 2015.

The team's work was undertaken in the spirit of our UU values and UUCR identity, and guided by our Covenant of Right Relations and the mission of the team, with a view toward personal spiritual growth while building Beloved Community.

Team members: Fran Lowe (Chair), Erika Pied, Gwen Rowe, Andrea Spencer-Linzie (Interim Director of Religious Education), Rev. Lynn Strauss, Len Taylor, Beth Vann, and Karen Whitesell

Space Planning Task Force—*Marie Reed*

The Space Planning Task Force was created by the Board of Trustees at the end of the 2013-2014 fiscal year to consider a redesign of Building 1.

After much consideration, the general consensus of the Board and congregation was not to proceed with further redesign of Building 1 at this time. Instead, Sue Hedges, April Pulvirenti, and others worked to redesign the workroom to include a much-needed conversation area, and the lobby was refurbished with new ceiling tiles and LED light fixtures. Also in the works is a minor facelift for Founders Hall, which hopefully will take place in the summer of 2016. Members of the task force will be presenting ideas that could be funded by a Miracle Sunday campaign in honor of UUCR's 60th anniversary.

Task Force members: David Bennington, Mark Corfman, Sue Hedges, Marie Reed (Chair), and Donna Taylor (Church Administrator)

Congregation-Chartered Committee

Nominating Committee—*Karla Timmons*

The Nominating Committee is a congregation-chartered committee charged with presenting a slate of candidates for church officers, Board of Trustees, and Nominating Committee members, who are then elected by the congregation at the Annual Congregational Meeting in the spring.

We identified candidates who demonstrate leadership skills and creativity, and who reflect the general make-up of the congregation. We found candidates for two Board positions (Vice President and

General Trustee) as well as candidates for Assistant Treasurer for Deposits and for two Nominating Committee positions. We also found a candidate for a new position this year – Representative to the Capital Cluster of the UUA Central East Region. Biographic information, obtained from the candidates, was published in the May issue of *Quest* and posted on UUCR’s website. We found excellent candidates and thank them for agreeing to run for office.

We did note a need for a change to the historical process of seeking self-nominations at the same time the Nominating Committee is vetting candidates, and next year, we will seek self-nominations earlier in the nominating process.

Committee members: Cynthia Bauerle (Board of Trustees representative), Nancy Blum, Ricardo Carvajal, Karl Irikura, Clarice Julka, Andy Moore, and Karla Timmons

Worship & Music

Decorations Committee—*Holly Meyer*

The Decorations Committee provides floral decoration in front of the Sanctuary every Sunday, and Stephanie Kreps and Carolyn Randall managed the poinsettia sale at Christmas. This committee pays for the evergreens outside the Sanctuary during the holidays, and for some memorial receptions.

This year, Marion Higgins-Bort arranged decorations on the first Sunday of each month, Sue McCall on the second Sunday, Holly Meyer the third Sunday, Mary Caroline Colletti the fourth Sunday, and Carolyn Pooley the fifth Sunday. Ginger Dixon, Anne McCaffrey, and Joan Fox were substitutes.

Music Committee—*Mike Holmes*

The mission of the Music Committee is to support the Adult Choir and the Director of Music in the use of music to enhance the life of the congregation, both in Sunday services and through other musical events that support the social justice goals of UUCR and provide an outreach to the larger community.

The Tree of Life Cafe has continued to be a success. This year we have been hosting one event every second month, starting this past September. Attendance varies from event to event, but we have continued to bring in enough to exceed the \$300 artist guarantee each time, while still covering our expenses and accumulating additional funds in our account as a hedge against low attendance or unexpected needs. The final Cafe for this year was held on May 13. We plan to continue the series next year, once again on Friday evenings every second month.

This year, the annual fundraiser for UUCR’s Ethier Fund for Special Music will be a CD release party. Friends and family of Bill Chapin, a long-time choir member who passed away in June of last year, made a donation to the Ethier Fund in his name, and we have used that money to offset the cost of the recording engineer, performing rights, and production of a CD of choral music. At the release party, the Adult Choir will perform the pieces and we will offer CDs for sale. The party will be on the evening of Saturday, June 4.

Committee members: Mike Holmes (Chair), Steve Lapham, Jennifer Rodgers (Director of Music), and Jeremy Schuhmann

Ushers—*Patty Walker*

Ushers welcome congregants and visitors and maintain the dignity and spiritual atmosphere of the Sunday service.

There are 19 congregants who serve as ushers for the Sunday service on a rotating basis. An additional 9 people serve as substitutes and fill in as needed. Overall, the ushers have been a consistent group of individuals who enjoy the opportunity to greet everyone as they enter the Sanctuary. Ushers are the first point of contact for congregants and visitors and, as such, we attempt to offer a positive, warm welcome. Three ushers have resigned since the start of this program year and, as of now, substitutes serve to fill in as needed. These positions will be filled through a *Quest* article or during September volunteer recruitment, if necessary.

Training is completed as needed for each new usher. Last year's goal was for the ushers to become more proactive in seating latecomers when the Sanctuary is nearly full. I believe we have become more helpful in this regard. This year's goal is to have the ushers become familiar (or at least read) the Emergency Preparedness Guidelines so that we can assist as directed during an emergency.

Ushers and substitutes for 2015-2016: Diane Baillie, Susan Beach, John Beach, Antonio Carrillo, Suzanne Carrillo, Claudia Chitty, José Clemente, Len Cohen, Steve Crawford, Elaine Diamondidis, Ginger Dixon, Pat Einhorn, Steve Einhorn, Joe Goss, Mary Hoferek, Nancy Klag, David Lorms, Alberta Maschal, Maude McGovern, Elaine Perino, Jan Popp, Robbie Reasoner, Scott Reilly, Ken Sandin, Burt Smith, Sue Thomas, Karla Timmons, Patty Walker (Chair), and Elizabeth Zerby

Worship Arts Team—*Jim Blue*

The Worship Arts Team is charged with supporting the Minister and Assistant Minister in planning and creating high-quality worship services. The team provides a Worship Steward to prepare the Sanctuary for the service every Sunday and a Worship Associate to assist in the pulpit as needed. The team coordinates the lay-led services, the quarterly solstice and equinox celebrations, and the Sunday services with guest speakers, as needed.

We were pleased this year to welcome our new Assistant Minister, Rev. Rebekah Montgomery, to the team. This year, Jim Blue agreed to serve as the Chair of the Worship Arts Team. Team member Cynthia Shires-Thurston plays a dual role, as she also serves as a Lay Minister for Worship & Music.

For three months this year, Rev. Lynn has been on sabbatical, with Rev. Rebekah and others filling in ably. We appreciate the time and effort that Rev. Lynn and Rev. Rebekah provided this year in giving guidance to the team.

We thank Jennifer Rodgers, Director of Music, for her work in providing inspiring music for worship services and in leading congregational hymns every Sunday. We thank Cynthia Shires-Thurston for her substituting for Jennifer on several Sundays. We thank Justin Furnia for his marvelous accompanying of hymns and amazing preludes, offertories, and postludes.

We thank Andrea Spencer-Linzie, Interim Director of Religious Education, for her First Fifteen Wisdom Story and her assistance for the multigenerational services, including the Christmas Pageant. We thank Rev. Montgomery and all the volunteers for their work on the Mind, Body, & Spirit Fair. We thank the Sound Team who set up the microphones and other sound equipment and record the services.

We thank the many congregants who helped with services in many ways, including Opening Words and Chalice Lighting. We thank Nancy Gregory for her outstanding work in preparing each week's Order of Service and mailing it out early to all involved, which serves as a reminder to us and helps keep us organized.

We look forward to the promised improvements in the Sanctuary sound system and the new pulpit.

Team members: Jim Blue (Chair), Wayne Crump, Christin Green, Rev. Rebekah Montgomery, Scott Reilly, Dominic Russoli, Cynthia Shires-Thurston, and Rev. Lynn Strauss

Lifespan Religious Education

Adult Faith Formation Committee— *Shira Ehrlich*

The Adult Faith Formation (AFF) Committee offers programs and classes that encourage UUCR members and friends to: learn about the history and current issues of Unitarian Universalism; build a better world by acting on UU values; and learn the wisdom of other world religions.

The committee started this year with a new Assistant Minister, Rev. Rebekah Montgomery. Under Rev. Montgomery's guidance, we accomplished the following:

- Sponsored and collaborated with UUCR congregants and staff on the Mind, Body & Spirit Fair in April. This multigenerational event offered various spiritual practices for participants.
- Organized two multigenerational Wisdom Wednesday events, which offered food and entertainment. Rev. Montgomery provided spiritual leadership for these events by starting each with a vespers service.
- Offered a ten-session Wednesday night class, *Building Your Own Theology I*, led by Rev. Montgomery.
- Co-sponsored with the Social Justice Committee a viewing and discussion of the 2015 General Assembly Ware Lecture by Cornel West.
- Offered viewings and discussions of the six-part DVD series, *Long Strange Trip*, which tells the story of UU history from early Christianity to modern times.
- Initiated an early morning Sunday spiritual discussion program, Emerson's Sunrise Coffee Circle, facilitated by Rev. Montgomery, AFF member Tim Francis, and UUCR member Ken Sandin.
- Sold copies of the UU Common Read, *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*, by Bryan Stevenson. Rev. Montgomery led a discussion of this book.
- Revived the UUCR Friday Night Poetry & Music Coffeehouse, largely due to UUCR member Celia Young.

Our committee also developed a Vision/Mission/Responsibilities Statement that has helped us focus on our purpose and work for Adult Faith Formation. A copy of this statement is on the Adult Faith Formation bulletin board in the lobby.

In November, we distributed a survey online and after two worship services. The most requested class mentioned on the survey was *What We Choose: Ethics for Unitarian Universalists*. The second most requested class was *Spirit in Practice*. We expect to offer the first class this fall, and the second class next spring. For general topics, the top three requests were spirituality, social justice, and UU history.

One disappointment for our committee was that we had some issues with the staff about how to administer the survey. This seemed to be due to unintentional miscommunication. One thing that will be helpful to our committee to improve on next year is to be proactive in communicating to staff about any of our work that will affect the congregation, or the work of any staff member.

The 2015-2016 Adult Faith Formation Committee budget is \$650 of which \$44 has been spent. Before the end of the fiscal year, we anticipate spending \$122 for reimbursement of expenses from the Mind, Body & Spirit Fair, \$350 as an honorarium to The Sanctuaries for their May 11 Wisdom Wednesday performance, \$100 for the purchase of food for Wisdom Wednesday, and the remaining \$34 for books or other resources for the UUCR library.

Committee members: Bonnie Bloomquist, Anne Byrd, John Dunbar, Steve Eckstrand (Lay Minister), Shira Ehrlich (Chair), Teki Fabian, Tim Francis, and Rev. Rebekah Montgomery

Children & Youth Religious Education Committee—*Andrea Spencer-Linzie*

The mission of the Children & Youth Religious Education (RE) Committee is to give the children and youth of UUCR the tools they need to seek, answers, nourish their spirits, and build the world they dream about. We aim to nurture the awakening of their minds, hearts, and souls, to deepen their compassion, and to help them live our Unitarian Universalist faith.

Our responsibilities include:

- Promoting the faith development of children and youth
- Recruiting and training volunteer teachers for RE classes from preschool to 12th grade
- Reviewing and selecting curricula
- Facilitating the OWL (Our Whole Lives) program
- Hosting the beloved Getting Ready for the Holidays Potluck
- Hosting teacher and helper appreciation and Bridging and Coming of Age receptions
- Developing the Coming of Age program
- Providing youth programming
- Facilitating summer Peace Camp
- Ensuring the safety and well-being of children, youth, and adults active in the RE programs

Our goals for the coming year:

- We look forward to welcoming our new DRE, and supporting her in the search for a new Youth Coordinator
- We plan to implement the new youth group program, separate from the Senior and Junior High RE class, in order to foster leadership, spiritual growth, and UU identity.
- We will continue development of the three-year Coming of Age program, in which 6th graders join the Junior High RE class. This arc includes a third year of curriculum (which still needs to be identified), mentorship from adult congregants, and community service.
- We will organize the bi-annual Heritage Trip to Boston.
- We will continue our new trimester and team teaching models, which breaks the RE year into ten-week sections, allowing our dedicated teachers and helpers to spend more time in worship.
- The RE Safe Congregations Policy will hopefully be approved by the Board of Trustees so that procedures are put into action by the end of the 2016 calendar year.

- We'll work to better integrate multigenerational programming with other committees in UUCR.
- We will develop training for staff and volunteers in the RE programs, including at least: new safety policies and procedures, behavior management in the classroom, teaching techniques and skills, and how to use *Tapestry of Faith* curriculum in the time allotted for classes.

The 2015-2016 Children & Youth RE Committee budget is \$5,100.

Committee members: Jonathan Langsam (Chair), David Lorms, Karen Pittleman, Judy Rayner, Gwen Rowe (Lay Minister), and Andrea Spencer-Linzie (Interim Director of Religious Education)

Children's & Youth Worship Committee—Gwen Rowe

The mission of the Children's & Youth Worship Committee (CYW) is to provide meaningful worship opportunities through planned services and rituals that parallel our adult services, and connect us to the larger Unitarian Universalist community of faith.

The CYW Committee meets monthly and is responsible for:

- Bi-monthly Children's Worship services for preschool-5th grade, held in Founders Hall. In addition to our beloved annual services, including Tashlich, Social Justice/Manna, New Year's, and Maypole, our Children's Worship services coordinate with the monthly liturgical theme and function as a point of contact between the children and members of the congregation. This year, Marie Reed joined us to talk about the Confederate statue in Rockville, the Green Team shared an Earth Day message, and we explored three Bible stories, including the story of the Good Samaritan.
- Social justice projects for the children:
 - Our year-long food collection for Manna.
 - As part of an "all morning" Children's Worship service, we made lunches for the homeless women's shelter.
 - At a joint Youth Worship and Children's Worship, we heard from a guest speaker about Comfort Cases, a charity that supports children and youth in the foster care system. Our month-long collection created over 90 bags filled with supplies to ease and comfort children and youth in foster care.
 - Our annual Mitten Tree collection of hats, gloves, scarves, and mittens supported Beacon House and local families in need.
- The annual Holiday Pageant. We continued our ongoing expansion of costumes to accommodate the growing number of children and youth who participate, and welcomed the entire congregation to a celebratory reception!

Goals for next year:

- Continue to expand the Holiday Pageant set to increase visibility for the congregation, accommodate participation of more children, and maximize longevity and ease of storage of the set components.
- Continue both our "Meet a UU" and "Stories from the Bible" programs.
- Re-invigorate Youth-led Worship with the 6th grade through Senior High RE classes.
- As part of the new Coming of Age (CoA) program, help the CoA youth design and deliver a Children's Worship service.

- Coordinate with the Children & Youth RE Committee to plan “all-morning” Children’s Worship services for preschool-5th graders periodically throughout the year. These services will take the place of RE classes for those grades on those days.

The 2015-2016 Children’s and Youth Worship Committee budget is \$650.

Committee members: Wendy Buzy, Mary Carvajal, Steve Lapham, Melissa Moore, Gwen Rowe (Chair), and Andrea Spencer-Linzie (Interim Director of Religious Education)

Social Justice

Partner Church Committee—*Louise Friedenberg*

The mission of the Partner Church Committee is to help build a religious community with the Unitarian Church in Magyarszakod, Transylvania, Romania, to facilitate the exchange of people and ideas, to assist in economic development, to support modern education, to increase knowledge about the roots of Unitarianism, and to foster mutual tolerance and respect among ethnic groups.

UUCR and Magyarszakod have been partners since 1992. Rev. Sandor Balazs has been serving as minister in Magyarszakod since April 2013. He initiated an important Village Caretaker program, which continues to run smoothly. The demand for services is increasing as the church members get older. The village van, which Rev. Balazs helped secure, is very helpful. Rev. Balazs uses it to transport the middle school children to school and other events, to deliver medicine to the homes of the elderly, and other purposes. The children made Christmas presents for the elderly, delivered them, and sang Christmas carols to them. We received many photos from Magyarszakod and they have some videos which they would like to share with us.

UUCR sent \$800 in September 2015 to support the Village Caretaker program. We also sent \$500 to Rev. Balazs for his annual stipend.

We are seeking new members for the Partner Church Committee, since we have lost many members due to moves to other states, illnesses, and deaths. We would like to plan a fundraiser soon.

The 2015-2016 Partner Church Committee budget is \$650 of which \$500 has been spent. An additional \$150 for our annual dues to the Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council will be spent before the end of the fiscal year.

Social Justice Committee—*Alonzo Smith*

The mission of the Social Justice Committee (SJC) is to lead and engage the congregation on social justice concerns, providing tangible ways to live our Unitarian Universalist principles in the community and the world, financially supporting social justice groups, working in coalition with partner organizations, and encouraging congregational exploration and action on emerging issues. The SJC coordinates the work of the congregation’s social justice groups, as well as the congregation’s support for partner social justice organizations.

The congregation currently has the following social justice groups:

- Green Team – environmental awareness and activism
- Hunger Relief Task Group – food collection and volunteer work at soup kitchens
- Immigration Action Group – work for immigration reform
- LGBTQ Task Group (including the Rainbow Youth Alliance program) – support for rights and concerns of LGBTQ people
- Peace Study Group – study and promotion of peace and non-violence

In addition, the congregation supports the following Unitarian Universalist and community allies:

- Action in Montgomery (AIM) – non-partisan community organizing and advocacy
- Amnesty International Group 82 – letter-writing for release of prisoners of conscience
- Beacon House – activities and programs for at-risk children and youth in DC
- Community Ministries of Rockville – a coalition of congregations serving the needy
- Habitat for Humanity – summer work week constructing homes in Garrett County, Maryland
- Interfaith Works – service, education, and advocacy with other congregations of diverse faiths to address root causes of poverty
- Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland (UULM-MD) – advocacy at the Maryland General Assembly
- Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC) – worldwide social justice work
- UUs for Social Justice (UUSJ) – collaborative work in the National Capital Region

As part of UUCR’s Strategic Plan, the SJC has been charged by the Board of Trustees with 1) finalizing a biannual process for identifying the congregation’s three or four priority social justice programs, and 2) determining how best to use Internet-based social media to connect UUCR’s social justice activities with the larger community. Because the primary focus this year has been on developing the Partner Plate Pilot Project, these two objectives have been put on hold. We expect to address them in the coming year.

This year, the SJC facilitated UUCR’s initial effort to “share the plate” through its Partner Plate Project. From mid-May through July 2015, the SJC coordinated a congregational process to select community service organizations with which to share UUCR’s Sunday service offering (not including contributions made to fulfill a canvass pledge). Each organization received a 50% share of UUCR’s collections for a two-month period.

As of May 2016, the results of this effort are:

- Hospice Caring, recipient for the months of October and November 2015 - \$2,742
- UUSC – UUA Refugee Crisis Fund, recipient for December 2015 and January 2016 - \$2,882
- A Wider Circle, recipient for February and March 2016 - \$2,556
- Community Ministries of Rockville, recipient for April and May 2016 – total contribution to be determined

The SJC’s opening meeting in September 2015 was attended by Rev. Lynn Strauss, who proposed that the term “racial justice work” be used for our activities at UUCR in support of the Black Lives Matter movement. A Racial Justice Working Group (RJWG) was formed and has met several times during the year. Although the RJWG is organizationally separate from the Social Justice Committee, three committee members, Fran Lowe, Alberta Maschal, and Alonzo Smith, have been active in it. Two

book discussions have been held, one on the book, *Just Mercy*, by Bryan Stevenson, and the other on the book, *Between the World and Me*, by Ta-Nehisi Coates. Members of the SJC have also attended UU racial justice workshops in the DC area. Several committee members have, along with other UUCR congregants, participated in the weekly Black Lives Matter banner vigil at the River Road UU Congregation. In addition, Ken Sandin showed a video of Cornel West's Ware Lecture at last year's UUA General Assembly.

Additional activities:

- Steve Lapham met with the mother of Masoud Khan, a Pakistani immigrant who has been sentenced to life imprisonment without parole. Although the circumstances of his case are involved, there is a general feeling that this extreme sentence was imposed because he refused to plead guilty. A statement is being prepared asking President Obama for a pardon.
- Alonzo Smith, Steve Lapham, and Marie Reed, along with UUs from other area congregations, testified before the Rockville City Council in opposition to moving a Confederate commemorative statue from the County Courthouse lawn to the Beall Dawson Park. The Council voted to not accept the statue.
- Members of the SJC also supported the legislative work of the UULM-MD in Annapolis, including in support of death with dignity and police accountability.
- Based on an initiative from Johanna Marshall, members of the committee collected cleaning materials for the Rockville Men's Shelter.
- We helped to support the Rainbow Youth Alliance's 10 Year Celebration, featuring a performance by two ensembles from the Gay Men's Chorus of Washington, and several of our members attended this event.
- Two of members, Gary Magnuson and Pat Bradshaw, are members of the UUSJ Board. UUSJ is experiencing transformative changes, and Gary and Pat are seeking ways in which UUCR can help to revitalize the organization. In addition to our annual financial contribution, we hope to get more congregants involved.
- On May 22, the SJC will sponsor the program, "Forum on Israel, Palestine, and the UUA GA Resolution on Divestment," with speakers Seth Morrison and Jamal Najjab. At the 2016 UUA General Assembly, delegates will be discussing a business resolution to divest from four companies that profit from the Israeli occupation of the West Bank. To increase understanding of this complex issue, the SJC invited these speakers who offered a similar program at the Cedar Lane UU Church.

The 2015-2016 Social Justice Committee budget is \$12,200. The budget will be spent by the end of this fiscal year. Separate reports below detail the accomplishments by each group.

Social Justice Committee Groups:

Green Team —*Julia Santerre*

The Green Team's mission is to: 1) continuously find ways to reduce our negative impact on the Earth (e.g., reduce carbon footprint, water usage, pollution); 2) empower the youth and congregation to care for the Earth through education and action; 3) continue to educate and find ways to live in harmony with nature; and 4) celebrate the Earth together.

Over the past year we:

- Expanded our TerraCycle program, which gives congregants a place to recycle items which would otherwise go in a landfill;
- Helped celebrate the installation of UUCR's solar panels;
- Led the youth in our Adopt-a-Road cleanups;
- Led a Children's Worship for Earth Day;
- Actively participated in the UUCR Grounds Master Plan discussions to ensure that the plan keeps our environmental goals in mind; and
- Started a blog to help educate and inform the congregation of our efforts to live in harmony with the Earth.

It has been a time of transition for the Green Team as our leadership and active membership shifted after UUCR was certified as a UU Green Sanctuary. We plan to organize more events in the coming year and invite anyone to send us suggestions for how we can better educate the community and celebrate our beautiful planet together.

The 2015-2016 Green Team budget is \$900 of which \$130 has been spent.

Matt Beyers and Julia Santerre are the Co-Chairs of the Green Team.

Hunger Relief Task Group—*Dolores Barnes*

UUCR continued its weekly Manna food drive in partnership with the Children's & Youth Worship Committee. We are tracking with last year's end-of-year total of 2,500 pounds of food delivered, and will continue the drive through the summer months to meet our goal. Efforts to publicize current and ongoing summer collections will run in upcoming *Quest* and E-Weekly communications. UUCR has donated approximately 1,900 pounds of food to the Manna Food Center in Gaithersburg as of the end of April 2016.

UUCR youth and friends continued a once-a-month (third Monday) service day at The Lord's Table Soup Kitchen in Gaithersburg. We will work on continued recruitment of youth to staff our service day for the coming year, September through May. UUCR adult volunteers continued to work throughout the year at The Lord's Table, preparing and serving meals. In addition, the Hunger Relief Task Group used part of its budget to supply specific needs for The Lord's Table "wish list."

The UUCR community once again donated Thanksgiving baskets to Community Ministries of Rockville (CMR). Twenty complete baskets were assembled and additional grocery gift cards were donated to CMR, which serves the Montgomery County community. Money allocated from the Social Justice Committee budget was also donated to Rockville HELP, a volunteer emergency aid service in Montgomery County.

Immigration Action Group —*David Strauss*

The Immigration Action Group (IAG) seeks to educate the UUCR community on the issues affecting immigrants in Montgomery County and throughout the nation, in keeping with the Unitarian Universalist Association's Statement of Conscience on immigration. We also collaborate with other

faith-based and community organizations to engage in both service and policy actions on behalf of immigrants.

The IAG has about 25 members, many of whom participated in the group's monthly meetings and activities. The IAG is co-chaired by David Strauss and Adriana Brigatti.

Our year's main activities:

- We were one of the most supportive congregations in the National Capitol Area for the second annual Greater Washington Immigration Film Festival. The festival took place over the four day period of October 22-25, 2015. The IAG showed the film, *Underwater Dreams* at an auditorium at Montgomery College. Most seats were filled, for a total attendance of 135. Following the film, Adriana Brigatti moderated a panel of students who are leaders of the Richard Montgomery High School Robotics Team, an adult robotics coach, and an assistant principal from Richard Montgomery. The students are children of immigrants and the coach is an immigrant. Overall, the festival reached over 1,200 people in thirteen venues. Once again, the festival facilitated a strong collaboration among the IAG, Montgomery College's Student Abroad Program, and Community Ministries of Rockville (CMR). The festival will be produced again in the fall of 2016. The IAG will continue to serve on the festival's steering committee and to be a vital part of this event.
- The IAG continued to manage UUCR's successful collaboration with CMR's Language Outreach Program. Due to transportation barriers for their students, CMR no longer conducts classes at UUCR facilities. However, IAG members volunteer in the program on a regular basis, providing vital services to immigrants living in Montgomery County.
- Several members of the IAG volunteered in CASA de Maryland's clinics in Langley Park to assist young undocumented immigrants under the President's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program. The IAG will be working with CASA to consider holding clinics in the Rockville area, when and if the court stay of the President's new program for adults is lifted.
- The IAG worked with an interdenominational group to co-sponsor a welcome dinner for six Syrian refugee families at the University Christian Church near Hyattsville in March 2016.
- The election of a much more conservative Congress in November 2014 continued to present a strong challenge to the IAG's desire to help facilitate a just and equitable federal immigration reform program of legislative changes to what we see as a broken system. The IAG will seek opportunities through Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice and other groups to protect the rights of immigrants in the coming year.

The IAG stays informed of advocacy activities on the state and federal levels and remains committed to participating in actions that will forward the cause of immigration reform. We will continue to stay involved in service provision that assists immigrants, and to keep the UUCR community informed on the issues.

The 2015-2016 Immigration Action Group budget is \$800, which we expect to spend by mid-June.

LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer) Task Group—*Stephanie Kreps*

The mission of the LGBTQ Task Group is to support the rights and concerns of LGBTQ people in our congregation and in the wider community, and to foster awareness of such concerns among UUCR congregants and friends.

Major activities and events this year:

- Timothy Elliott tendered his resignation as Rainbow Youth Alliance (RYA) Program Coordinator in September 2015, and stayed on until the end of December 2015. RYA attendance continues to be brisk, with new youth at nearly every meeting, plus a core group of regular attendees. Our fiscal year donation total has grown as never before because of special donations, a benefit event, and a grant.
- RYA's 10 Year Celebration, which featured performances by two ensembles from the Gay Men's Chorus of Washington - The Rock Creek Singers and the GenOut Chorus - brought recognition to UUCR and its support of RYA through advertisements of this benefit concert.
- RYA continues as co-sponsor of Rockville United Church's LGBTQ Youth Forum and supported several of its activities, including the upcoming Pride Prom on May 27.
- In October 2015, Stephanie Kreps and Stephen Colgan participated in the NAACP Community Resources Fair at Richard Montgomery High School.
- UUCR and RYA participated in Capital Pride with area UUs, and DC's Youth Pride and Rockville Hometown Holidays continue to be major outreach events.
- Stephanie Kreps and RYA Program Coordinator, Bobby Bangert participated in a day-long seminar for Gay Straight Alliance high school groups presented by SMYAL (Supporting and Mentoring Youth Advocates and Leaders), a DC-based LGBTQ youth support and advocacy community organization.
- RYA Advisory Council members, Terri Fritz, Timothy Elliott, and Jennifer Carter tabled at the MCPS Back-to-School Resource Fair in August 2015.
- We are beginning talks with Rev. Archene Turner of the Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church to create a Spanish-speaking RYA based at Cedar Lane.

The RYA Advisory Council currently includes Jennifer Carter, Terri Fritz, Beth Irikura, Charles Farmer, Stephen Colgan, Timothy Elliott, Stephanie Kreps, and Bobby Bangert as ex-officio. It is an active and productive group. Activities which cemented bonding and teamwork by the Council, as well as brought in significant donations, included being servers at the Rodgers-Gregory wedding in January 2016 and producing the 10 Year Celebration benefit concert on April 9, 2016. One disappointment this year was the postponement of an end-of-year donation campaign to the spring. The Council is working on a fundraising strategy and definition of member duties. Next year, we hope to do outreach to middle schools and to Spanish-speaking LGBTQ youth.

The 2015-2016 LGBTQ Task Group budget is \$1,000 of which \$300 has been spent to date.

Peace Study Group— *Ken Sandin*

Peacemaking - both internationally and at home - has been a focus of UUCR's Social Justice Committee since 2002, when a group of UUCR members and friends formed a Peace Action Group. Today, several members of the congregation are members of Peace Action Montgomery, which the Social Justice Committee formally joined in 2014. We host some Peace Action Montgomery events and encourage congregational participation in peace vigils, petition drives, demonstrations, and peace advocacy directed to local, state, and national legislatures. In May 2016, we sponsored and hosted a "Forum on Israel, Palestine, and the UUA GA Resolution on Divestment," with speakers Seth Morrison and Jamal Najjab.

Group members: Susan Brandt, Steve Lapham, Ken Sandin, and Alonzo Smith

Social Justice Committee Affiliations:

Amnesty International Group 82—*Roald Schrack and Zana Miller*

Amnesty International (AIUSA), the worldwide human rights organization based in London, is unaffiliated with any government, church, corporation, or other organization. AIUSA, Group 82, while independent of UUCR, continues to benefit from the use of its facilities for meetings. The group was founded in 1975 by Parson Bill Moors and the late Dan O'Connell, a member of the church. About one-third of the group's members are also members of UUCR. The co-leaders are Zana Miller and Cathy Knepper.

During this program year, Group 82 has continued to hold its monthly meetings on the third Sunday at noon in Room 53. UUCR members and friends have a standing invitation to attend these meetings as observers or potential members. We are currently participating in world-wide campaign against torture and in support of women's rights and Guantanamo detainees. We also work on human rights abuses involving refugees and indigenous peoples. We are actively engaged in anti-death penalty work.

We send about 200 cards and letters throughout the year on behalf of various prisoners of conscience. We send cards at Christmas and at the Persian New Year. We also take action on cases that are posted online. We had a prisoner case in Indonesia, Filep Karma, who was recently released. Our new prisoner case is Dawit Isaac of Eritrea. Our other prisoner of conscience is a young Kurdish woman in Iran, Zeynab Jalalian. Our member Ferrah Pourahmadi, originally from Iran, is in charge of the case. One of our long-time members, John Welton, attends the Mid-Atlantic Regional Conference and the Annual General Meeting of AIUSA each year.

Beacon House—*Alberta Maschal*

The purpose of the UUCR liaison to Beacon House is to keep the congregation informed about activities, needs, and volunteer opportunities at Beacon House.

Beacon House Community Ministry is a Unitarian Universalist community ministry founded by Rev. Donald E. Robinson in 1991. Beacon House is a neighborhood-based organization supporting youth and families of the Edgewood Terrace community located in Northeast Washington, DC. The primary goal of Beacon House is to provide at-risk youth with opportunities for positive educational and culturally-rich programs, and to assist at-risk children and youth to identify and pursue their educational objectives, culminating in college or vocational training and to prepare them for productive involvement in their community and society.

In addition to providing funds for scholarships for Camp Leap, the summer day camp sponsored by Beacon House which serves about 200 children for eight weeks, the congregation donated supplies and kits to the Back to School drive during the summer and gave generously to the Christmas gift collection for children, youth and seniors at Edgewood Terrace in November and early December.

To learn more about Beacon House, check out its website: www.beaconhousedc.org, or go to its Facebook page at www.facebook.com/beaconhousedc.

Beacon House is supported by all of the members and friends of UUCR who: contribute to the Back to School drive during the summer; donate new unwrapped gifts for the children, youth and seniors at Edgewood at Christmas-time; make financial pledges to UUCR, which enables support for Beacon

House to be funded as part of the Social Justice Committee budget; and volunteer their time. Community service hours are available to our Senior High youth who wish to participate in Beacon House activities.

Community Ministries of Rockville—*Antonio Carrillo*

Community Ministries of Rockville (CMR) is an interfaith coalition of twenty-one Rockville congregations founded in 1967 to serve those in need in Rockville and Montgomery County. UUCR is represented by two Board members and contributes financially. This year, UUCR contributed \$2,000 to CMR and \$1,000 directly towards the Mansfield Kaseman Health Clinic (MKHC).

CMR is an advocate for the underserved and supports several programs to serve the needs of the community. These programs include an emergency assistance program (REAP), the Latino Outreach Program, Elderly Ministries to enable frail elderly to remain in their home, the MKHC for uninsured adults, and Jefferson House and Rockland House – transitional housing for homeless men and women.

Many UUCR members and friends participate in a variety of CMR programs, such as making Thanksgiving baskets for needy families in the Rockville community and donating winter wear during the annual Mitten Tree collection. Through UUCR’s Immigration Action Group, congregants also support CMR’s Latino Outreach Program.

CMR has many challenges for the upcoming years. This includes continual funding for the MKHC. Financial and volunteer support through the member congregations is crucial for the organization’s survival. UUCR, as a member of the Rockville community, has an obligation to support CMR at its past historic levels. More detail about the programs and budget is available through www.cmrocks.org and the CMR annual report.

UUCR’s representatives on the CMR Board are Johanna Marshall and Ken Sandin.

The 2015-2016 budget allocation for CMR is \$2,000 for general programs and \$1,000 for the Mansfield Kaseman Health Clinic. The full \$3,000 has been sent to CMR for the year.

Interfaith Works—*Kay Newhouse*

UUCR is one of over 165 member congregations of diverse faiths who find common ground through service to our neighbors in need via Interfaith Works (IW). With an emphasis on identifying and meeting the needs of the poor by linking Montgomery County’s faith communities in service, education, and advocacy, Interfaith Works seeks to reduce the root causes of poverty in our area. A large, multifaceted organization with a long-established reputation as “the conscience of Montgomery County,” Interfaith Works advocates for and addresses the needs of the financially disadvantaged in our wealthy county.

IW’s professional staff provides individuals and families either experiencing or vulnerable to homelessness with holistic resources specific to their needs, empowering them to move from crisis to stability. Interfaith Works directly operates professionally-staffed emergency shelters and transitional housing across the county, a clothing center, vocational and job placement services, and safety net loans and grants to prevent evictions, and serves as an important resource for referring vulnerable people to the support services they need through a large network of local social service providers.

Through our Interfaith Works congregational membership, UUCR partners with others who are similarly committed to helping our struggling neighbors, including other faith communities who share our values surrounding social justice, 5,200 volunteers at the many IW shelters and resource centers, individual donors, foundations, corporations, local businesses, and government agencies. Together, via Interfaith Works, we focus on our shared community responsibility and successfully address the varied needs of 20,000 of our most vulnerable Montgomery County neighbors each year.

UUCR supports Interfaith Works by providing meeting space and by financial contributions. Congregants volunteer on an individual basis with the Interfaith Clothing Center, Carroll House men's shelter, vocational services at Community Vision, and through IW Board leadership positions. In addition, during our "meals week" in May/June, volunteers from UUCR work as a team coordinated by the Social Justice Committee to prepare and serve breakfast, lunch, and dinner for sixty-five women receiving emergency shelter and case management support services at the Wilkins Avenue Women's Assessment Center.

Our budget for Interfaith Works remained at the same level as last year: \$1,650. Of that, \$1,400 has been donated to the organization and the remaining \$250 is slated for the purchase of supplies during UUCR's meals week.

Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland – *Andrea Hall*

The Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland (UULM-MD) advocates for legislation that reflects UU values in the Maryland General Assembly.

Before the start of each year's 90-day legislative session, UULM-MD selects three or four priority issues, working with established coalitions. These priority issues are centered on bills that will be introduced that year that foster UU values. This year, the priority legislation selected by UULM-MD included bills for paid sick leave and pay equity, reforming the criminal justice system, climate change, and death with dignity.

During the legislative session (January 13 to April 11), Andrea Hall tabled periodically after services to let UUCR members and friends know of opportunities to contact their state legislators to express support for our priority legislation, and urged congregants to call, email, or visit their legislators. Many congregants contacted their legislators by email during the session, and Andrea attended one committee hearing in Annapolis and visited her legislators the same day.

Five of UULM-MD's priority issue bills passed this year:

- Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Act – Reauthorization (SB323) – 40% reduction in greenhouse gases by 2030 and 25% by 2020
- Clean Energy Jobs – Renewable Energy Portfolio Standards Revisions (SB921) – a workgroup will study the best ways to fund programs that expand and diversify clean energy jobs workforce and businesses
- Equal Pay for Equal Work (SB481) – ends pay discrimination and employment opportunities based on sex or gender identity
- Justice Reinvestment Act (SB1005) – addresses and reduces over-incarceration in Maryland
- Public Safety and Policing Workgroup – Recommendations (HB1016) – makes revisions to the Law Enforcement Officers Bill of Rights

UUCR's involvement with UULM-MD gives members and friends an opportunity to take their faith and values into the wider community and advocate for positive change in Maryland. It gives UUs a voice in the legislative process. The work of UULM-MD involves all of the Maryland UU congregations, so participating in these advocacy activities brings together UUs from across the state. Because UULM-MD works with established coalitions, it also gives UUCR members and friends the opportunity to work with other diverse faith communities and nonprofit organizations, such as the Maryland Climate Coalition.

The Social Justice Committee allocated \$300 for UUCR's annual membership in the Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland.

Andrea Hall is a member of the UULM-MD Board.

Unitarian Universalist Service Committee—*Ken Sandin*

UUCR supports the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC), a membership organization founded in 1941 to advance human rights and social justice worldwide, by encouraging individual memberships and, with the Children & Youth Religious Education Committee, collecting for UUSC's annual Guest at Your Table fundraiser. During December 2015 and January 2016, UUCR shared the Sunday worship service offering with the UUSC-UUA Refugee Crisis Fund, donating nearly \$2,900 to the Fund.

Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice—*Pat Bradshaw and Gary Magnuson*

Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice (UUSJ) is a collaborative organization in the National Capital Region that brings together UU congregations to do advocacy, take action, raise awareness, and be a united and strong voice for a peaceful, just, and environmentally-sustainable world. UUCR is a member in good standing by participating in and contributing to this regional organization, which is currently comprised of 25 UU congregations in Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia.

To financially support UUSJ activities, congregations like UUCR provide their "fair share" based on \$4.75 for each member of their congregation. For UUCR, this amounts to \$1,871.50, toward a total UUSJ 2015-2016 budget of \$66,709. Other organizational revenues come individual members, Combined Federal Campaign contributions, and grants.

Since its inception in 2001, UUSJ's mission has been to educate and raise awareness among its members. Now, UUSJ is embarking upon an additional role of taking action and being an advocate for priority concerns, including immigration reform, climate change, income equality, and LGBTQ issues. As a result, UUSJ is developing an organizational strategy and hiring a new executive director to plan and execute activities that will make a difference in furthering social justice regionally and nationally. This is an exciting and pivotal time for the UUSJ as it seeks to build upon its education and networking programs to consistently and constructively communicate with legislative bodies and governmental entities to garner the attention and support of elected officials and policy makers.

For more information on UUSJ and its activities and accomplishments, go to its website: www.uusj.net. On the website, you may also register to receive the UUSJ e-newsletter, which publicizes regional and national events, including those by UUCR.

The UUSJ Board, which oversees the organization's budget and activities, includes representatives from each UUSJ member congregation. Currently, Gary Magnuson and Pat Bradshaw represent UUCR on the Board, and David Strauss is a member of the UUSJ Immigration Task Force. All UUSJ matters are coordinated with the UUCR Social Justice Committee, led by Alonzo Smith.

Membership & Communications

Denominational Connections—*Eric Burch*

Denominational Connections is a small group to notify UUCR members and friends of activities at the Unitarian Universalist Association, and other UU groups at the national, regional, and local levels.

Major accomplishments:

- Coordinated activities with the Capital Cluster, which is comprised of a dozen UU congregations in DC and suburban Maryland. The Cluster had some organizational meetings as the Joseph Priestley District (JPD) folds its operations into the larger Central East Region (CER) of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). Other Cluster meetings had a focus on racial justice issues, driven by activities at All Souls Church in DC.
- The Denominational Connections group, UUCR's President and Vice President, and other members of the congregation attended the Joseph Priestley District Assembly, where actions to fold the JPD into the CER were discussed and approved.
- Working with the Director of Communications & Membership, notified UUCR members and friends of social action opportunities organized by local UU congregations. Through the years, the local congregational network between individuals is strong, but there are always opportunities for others to become involved.
- Attended the UUA General Assembly in Portland, Oregon. UUCR had over a dozen members attend. Currently preparing for the upcoming General Assembly in Columbus, Ohio this June.

If any member of UUCR is interested in getting more involved in local, regional, or national activities of fellow UUs, contact the Director of Communications & Membership or one of the members of the Denominational Connections group.

Group members: Eric Burch (Chair) and Judy Rayner

Joseph Priestley District Chalice Lighters—*Ken Sandin*

"Lighting the Chalice" refers to funding grants to Unitarian Universalist congregations that have an intention to grow and have a specific urgent need. The Joseph Priestley District issues a call three times each year, suggesting \$30 per call, to fund grants for land, buildings, a first minister, a first music director, a first director of religious education, and innovative growth proposals. Several UUCR members participate. During the past year, the Chalice Lighters program was publicized with a *Quest* article and an information/sign-up sheet at the annual Activities Fair.

Quest Newsletter—*Alberta Maschal*

Quest provides information about people, activities, programs, and major decisions to UUCR members and friends. It's published in three formats: mailed paper version, postage-saving email (in color), and

the web version appearing on our website. *Quest* is published once a month. This change and the addition of a weekly electronic newsletter, UUCR E-Weekly, has enhanced communication among the congregation, allowing for timely announcements and reminders of congregation activities. Nancy Gregory is the editor of UUCR E-Weekly.

Editing, producing, and delivering *Quest* is the work of teams: Alberta Maschal, Beth Irikura, and Elizabeth Sullivan are the editors on a rotating basis. Layout, proofreading, reproduction, and distribution of the email version, as well as posting to the website, are all handled by Nancy Gregory. Louise Friedenbergl is the Wednesday mailing crew coordinator. Margaret Chalkley, Nancy Grissom, Branka Kienstra, and Gwen Rowe are the regular crew, and Jo Wilson is a substitute. Thanks to all.

Finance

Action Auction Fiesta Cruise—*Colleen Dolak*

The Action Auction Fiesta Cruise combines a fundraising event and community building for UUCR. Our focus was to be inclusive of all our members and friends while striking a balance that allowed us to raise funds for our varied congregation needs.

The Action Auction was held on Saturday, May 7, 2016. Donation items were solicited from outside businesses, as well as congregation members and friends. This year's Auction set a record of over 175 items up for bid, and a record number of attendees, with about 140 registered before the night of the event, including 27 children under the age of 18. About 20 additional attendees came on the night of the event, making it the largest fundraising event that UUCR has seen in recent history.

The food this year was in line with our cruise theme - a buffet that highlighted dishes from three ports of call: Japan, India, and France. Beer and wine were sold as well. We repeated last year's successes with the Fine Wine Raffle and the Big Beer Raffle, and added a Pick a Worship Theme Raffle.

The Action Auction requires much planning, coordination, and participation from congregation members and friends. There were volunteers participating in publicity, business outreach, ticket sales, computer and website work, decorations, set-up, clean-up, solicitations of donations, catalog preparation, and more. The coordination brings many members and friends together for a common goal. In addition, the many dinners and services bring varied groups of congregants together in social settings. Committee/group members were given the opportunity to work together, developing stronger and/or new relationships in a shared experience with a goal to benefit the congregation. More importantly, we had fun!

Other tools and resources that would be useful to help the Action Auction achieve its goals for the future include:

- A seed money budget for planning and preparation of the event - this could potentially allow for online bidding to offer more flexibility for those who are unable to attend the event.
- Additional networking with congregants and local businesses to increase and provide varied donations for the Auction.
- Networking with RE families, younger members, and new members of the congregation to explain the Action Auction and promote participation.
- With many families participating this year, a staff liaison to assist in navigating the child care requirements.

For next year, the Action Auction team would like to recruit additional volunteers and new members and add a staff liaison for child care.

Net of expenses, the Action Auction Fiesta Cruise raised over \$30,000 this year.

Action Auction Fiesta Cruise Co-Chairs: Colleen Dolak and Carolyn Randall

Halloween Hullabaloo—*Richard Chitty and Aaron Pied*

The first ever Halloween Hullabaloo was held on October 31, 2015. This Halloween-themed fundraiser was initiated as a minimal-effort activity with the intent of drawing people from the surrounding community and raising additional funds to support UUCR. It took the place of previous fall fundraising efforts that had required extensive planning and support, but were not able to generate sufficient income to justify the expended effort. This event did not accommodate external vendors.

The approach for the Halloween Hullabaloo was to emphasize fun and games to create incentives for the public and members and friends of our congregation to bring their families, and to allow parents to shop longer while providing activities for their children. The fundraiser was scheduled on Halloween, so naturally, Halloween inspired the games, face painting, and activities for children. In addition to the games and activities, items sold at the fundraiser included books, quilting, jewelry, “white elephant,” toys, games, baked goods, and lunch foods, which relied solely on contributions from congregants. Most sales areas sold the majority of their items, which resulted in a relatively small amount of items donated to local charities. In total, the Halloween Hullabaloo raised roughly \$7,200, net of expenses.

The desire to keep costs low and profits high, while accommodating the short ten-week lead time to organize and execute the event, shaped many decisions. This event was only possible thanks to the assistance from the sales area leads who had experience from previous fall fundraisers and largely staffed their own areas. We recognize, however, that new volunteers should be trained in these positions to enable a future transition. Efforts are planned to streamline volunteer recruitment and promote a sustainable hand-over of leadership roles.

Attendance for the Hullabaloo was adequate, with the busiest times for the carnival activities between 10:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. However, there was no attempt to count patrons. We used both traditional advertising and social media to inform the public of this event. Given the short planning period, however, many opportunities for a wider reach were not possible. We hope to improve data collection of who attends so that we can be more strategic about where to market future events and provide more activities that will draw attendance from the wider community.

Halloween Hullabaloo Co-Chairs: Richard Chitty and Aaron Pied, with creative direction by Julie Graf

Buildings & Grounds

Aesthetics Committee—*Sharrill Dittmann*

The Aesthetics Committee works with artists and congregants to contribute to a beautiful and welcoming worship space.

The committee hosted a number of shows throughout the year:

- August and September 2015 – “Cosmic Vibrations” by Shanthi Chandrasekar, various media
- October and November 2015 – Alexey Zoob, oil and watercolors
- December 2015 and January 2016 – UUCR members and friends, various media
- February and March 2016 – UUCR Religious Education children and youth, various media
- April and May 2016 – UUCR Quilters

We were particularly gratified by the warm reception to the UUCR-artist shows. Plans are already underway for the next several shows.

One piece was sold from which UUCR realized 20% of the sales price. These funds were deposited into the Aesthetics Fund, from which the committee draws. \$265 was spent this year. Next year, the committee will be funded from the operating fund. We hope to install a better hanging system that will work with our existing moldings and make the process more efficient.

Committee members: Diane Baillie, Liliane Blom (Co-Chair), and Sharrill Dittmann (Co-Chair)

Buildings & Grounds Committee—*Mark Corfman*

The Buildings & Grounds Committee strives to maintain the congregation’s facility and property in a condition that allows UUCR members and friends, as well as other end-users, to perform the wide variety of activities that take place here. There are basically three types of projects undertaken to accomplish this.

First, there are annual service contracts for building systems like the elevator and fire alarm, in addition to the regular service contracts for lawn maintenance and snow removal. These contracts are all managed ably by our Church Administrator, Donna Taylor.

Second, there are normal maintenance and repairs which are performed by a combination of UUCR’s Facilities Coordinator, Bryant Taylor, the Power Tool Gang (volunteers led by Dan Pierce, Nancy Klag, and Mark Corfman), and contracted services.

Finally, there are major capital improvements, which this year included the following:

- Installation, by Solar Solution LLC, of 42 kilowatts of solar cells on UUCR roofs under a Power Purchase Agreement. The system has been generating electrical power since late last summer and, on an annual basis, is expected to generate approximately 35% of UUCR’s electricity needs.
- Planning and soliciting proposals to install storm water management features at the bottom of the paved parking area to better control the runoff that, in times of heavy rain, over-saturates a neighboring property.
- Renovation of the ceiling in the Building 1 lobby, including new LED lighting and replacement of the existing ceiling tiles.
- Renovation of the Assistant Minister’s office in Building 4 to improve its aesthetics and functionality. This was accomplished by a team led by David Bennington.
- The Building 1 workroom was refurbished and converted into a new work/meeting room through the efforts of several UUCR volunteers led by Sue Hedges and April Pulvirenti. This

renovation created a space that provides both the functionality of a work area and a small space for casual meetings and more private conversations.

- The Memorial Board on the outside of Building 4 was refurbished and reinstalled thanks to the efforts of Dan Pierce, Nancy Klag, and Mark Corfman.
- Unfortunately, the temporary gravel parking lot installed at the south end of the property was identified by the City of Rockville as a violation of its building code. A proposal to remove the lot was accepted and this work accomplished in May.

Last year, a great deal of effort was spent to complete a preliminary design for renovating Building 1, including hiring an architect. Regrettably, the resulting design was not deemed sufficient in terms of the cost-to-benefit to be considered viable to continue with the planning at this time.

The Power Tool Gang gathers on a few Saturdays each year to do necessary work at UUCR. Neither power tools nor experience is necessary. We gather for the fellowship and fun, while helping to maintain UUCR property. Some of the projects this past year have included painting the curbs in front of the Sanctuary and painting wood siding and wood trim on several buildings. Our work is accompanied by doughnuts and coffee in the morning, lunch with beverages, and much camaraderie. Any interested person should feel welcome to join in!

Committee members: David Bennington, Mark Corfman (Chair), Sue Hedges, Nancy Klag, Jon Landenburger, Mary Lanigan, Dan Pierce, Marie Reed (Lay Minister), and Jo Wilson

Information Technology Committee—*Bill Newhouse*

The mission of the Information Technology Committee is to maintain UUCR office IT systems and provide first response when the UUCR staff cannot resolve an IT system problem. The IT Committee also works with the office, Finance Committee, and Board of Trustees to discuss the use of new technologies and to plan for upgrades of systems when necessary. The IT Committee can also support requests for information technology support for church activities.

IT systems at UUCR include Voice-Over-Internet-Protocol (VOIP) telephones, computers, projectors, large screen HDTV, facsimile, printers, scanners, a mobile phone, and networking equipment such as switches, cable modems, and WiFi routers.

Major accomplishments:

- Replaced the Vodavi private branch exchange (PBX), which had a broken motherboard, with VOIP telephones that allow for more remote trouble-shooting and voicemail retrieval.
- Enabled voicemail notifications to email for staff.
- Removed cabling for Vodavi from the wall in Building 4 Room 45.
- Moved the cabling for the copier in the Building 1 workroom to support re-use of the space.
- Replaced the battery in buildings 1 and 4 alarm systems.
- Added and removed email and network login accounts to cover staff changes.
- Procured Microsoft Office 2013 and Windows 7 Enterprise for each staff member via discounts available from our non-profit status at TechSoup.
- Refreshed the operating system with a new install of Windows 7 Enterprise on all staff computers.
- Doubled the RAM on all staff computers.
- Replaced Rev. Lynn's iPhone 4 with a more modern iPhone 5s.

- Replaced Andrea Spencer-Linzie’s monitor with a larger one.
- Procured a 70” HDTV.
- Replaced two ethernet switches with Gigabit ethernet switches to improve performance of the LAN.
- Established new mailing lists and aliases for all the congregation’s email needs, continuing to support our policy not to publish private email addresses on our public-facing UUCR website or to use private emails for important roles where the corporate memory gained by preserving emails is best done by having an email for a role, like the chair of a search committee.
- Trained the staff to maintain email mailing lists germane to their staff functions.
- Continued to patch all systems on a regular basis with the latest software and firmware releases.
- Procured new lightweight laptop to support Rev. Lynn’s sabbatical.
- Repurposed Rev. Lynn’s old laptop for use by the Religious Education program.
- Procured webcam for Andrea Spencer-Linzie to use on laptop or desktop.
- Connected the new solar panel control system to the Internet.
- Replaced the ethernet cable between the Comcast router and the UUCR router after two outages.
- Continued to provide remote access for the treasurers to the finance PC.
- Regularly backed up the church database.
- Maintained backups for staff files saved to the UUCR server shared and personal directories.

Next year’s goals:

- Achieve the desired performance of VOIP system, improving sound quality and phantom incessant ringing.
- Fix alarm system to connect properly with alarm system provider.
- Determine if UUCR can use newly-installed (5/2/2016) Early Childhood Center Comcast network for WiFi bandwidth in classrooms on weekends. If not, extend our network into Building 3.
- Extend the Comcast Xfinity hotspot to provide WiFi coverage throughout Building 3.
- Populate the new church database to support staff and program needs.
- Move all the staff files into the cloud, eliminating our need to maintain a server onsite at UUCR.

UUCR IT systems are vital to all church functions, supporting our worship, religious education, social justice and fellowship activities and enabling the UUCR staff to communicate with congregants as well as other UU churches and organizations, other faith groups, and other community groups.

Committee member: Bill Newhouse

Landscape Committee—*Barbara Harrison*

The Landscape Committee was established in January 2016 to combine the overlapping functions of the Grounds Committee and the Site Beautification Committee. The two main functions of the new committee are: 1) to manage routine maintenance of the landscape – primarily removal of downed branches and trees after storms, pruning of trees and shrubs, tree management, and Do It Day landscape efforts; and 2) to develop and oversee implementation of a new landscape master plan for the entire campus to enhance the beauty and accessibility of the landscape as well as to assist in implementing green solutions where appropriate, and to sustain the forest conservation areas on the grounds in accordance with the guidelines of the City of Rockville.

We continued our annual contract for regular campus-wide clean-up, mulching, pruning and edging services, lawn mowing, raking, and snow removal. Considerable savings are achieved by bundling these activities. Additional weeding of the garden beds and tear-out of ivy and other invasives has been accomplished by the wonderful volunteers who come out on Do It Day and for other landscape maintenance efforts, organized primarily by Mary Lanigan, Jo Wilson, and Sue Hedges. Attractive grounds contribute to the aesthetic experience at worship services and to the appeal of our congregation to visitors.

The Site Beautification Operating Fund provided funding to install a pathway paved with permeable pavers up to the relocated and refurbished Memorial Board, as well as a revised landscape in that area. The pathway and landscaping will allow congregants to walk up to the Memorial Board and touch memorial nameplates (to be installed in the fall of 2016). In 2016, the Landscape Committee will develop a new master plan for the church grounds and will oversee use of the Site Beautification Operating Fund to help implement this plan. The Landscape Committee also has convened a sub-committee to help manage major storm water runoff issues that require immediate attention. The committee has responsibilities that overlap interests of a number of groups and individuals, making it important to continue efforts to communicate among all interested parties.

The 2015-2016 ground maintenance budget is \$13,100, of which \$11,276 has been spent.

Note: The Site Beautification Operating Fund does not have a line item in the annual budget. It is funded through disbursements from the Site Beautification Fund, a donor-established restricted fund set up some years ago to provide for landscape enhancement projects. Site Beautification Fund principal may not be expended and funds may not be used for other purposes. Disbursements are limited to a small percentage of the value of the fund, and occur only when the balance of the fund exceeds a threshold set by the Finance Committee. Disbursements are made under a policy established by the Board of Trustees, and significant expenditures must be approved by the Board.

Committee members: Matt Beyers, Wayne Crump, Irene Eckstrand (Chair beginning 2016), Tim Francis, Glenn Griffin, Martin Haber, Barbara Harrison (Co-Chair through 2015), Sue Hedges, Mary Lanigan, Steve Lapham, Maude McGovern, Bill Newhouse, April Pulvirenti, Marie Reed, and Jo Wilson (Co-Chair through 2015)

Sound Committee—*Mike Holmes*

The mission of the Sound Committee is to enhance and maintain the sound equipment at UUCR, specifically in the Sanctuary and Founders Hall.

The use of a designated sound volunteer at each Sunday service continues to work well, although we should continue to expand the pool of available volunteers. Additional training will also be needed once the sound system upgrade is completed.

During this fiscal year, we purchased two Audio Technica wireless microphones for Founders Hall, to replace the lower quality microphones that had been in use there. We also added a power sequencer to that system to eliminate the loud "thunk" that occurred when the system was turned on, and to protect the speakers. The new equipment is working well.

A major focus of the committee this year has been a plan to improve acoustics in the Sanctuary and upgrade the sound system. We consulted with Turner Bridgforth, a sound and recording engineer, to

help focus our early discussions and develop a plan of action. We then developed a budget and sought approval from the Board of Trustees to fund the work from the Capital Improvement Fund. The Board approved a budget of \$18,150 for this work, which includes both the acoustical work and the sound equipment upgrade.

It would be very expensive to treat every part of the Sanctuary walls and ceiling with acoustical panels, and we should be able to improve the intelligibility of speech in the room without going to that extreme. We identified the raised wall at the back of the main Sanctuary space as the area to be dealt with in this first phase of acoustical treatment. If we find that the amount of improvement that this yields is not enough, we can consider doing additional work at some point in the future.

We met with three different installers to get estimates for this work, and finally located a fourth company, Snap Wall, that specializes in acoustical treatments of the kind that we need. We have contracted with them to install the acoustical panels on that raised wall at the back of the seating area, as well as the seven windows above that wall. They will install a system of fabric strips over the panels to minimize the number of visible seams and yield a visually pleasing result. The Worship Arts Team selected a fabric color to blend well with other colors in the Sanctuary. Panel installation is scheduled for May 18 and 19, 2016.

The main components of the sound system upgrade are a new digital mixer and a desk to house the mixer. The mixer desk will sit in front of the sound closet. Having the desk will allow the sound volunteer to sit facing the stage platform, rather than standing in the closet and turning to face the equipment rack when making adjustments. The new mixer has several advantages over the existing system. It has 24 input channels, and so it will allow all of the stage microphone jacks to be active at all times and still have additional inputs for future expansion. It will make it possible to adjust the equalization of each input separately, and this can have a significant impact on speech intelligibility. The mixer can also be controlled by an iPad over a WiFi connection, and we will purchase an iPad for this purpose. This will enable a sound volunteer to sit in the main Sanctuary seating area and make adjustments from there.

We are in the process of acquiring the cables and other required hardware for the upgrade. Members of the Sound Committee will do the installation; we expect this to be completed in late May or early June.

The 2015-2016 Sound Committee budget is \$1,282 of which \$1,309 has been spent.

Committee members: Steve Greene, Mike Holmes (Chair), Jennifer Rodgers (staff liaison), Jeremy Schuhmann, and Dennis Wellnitz

Spiritual & Caring

Pastoral Care Team—*Paulette Campbell and Jane Klag*

In conjunction and cooperation with the ministers, the UUCR Pastoral Care Team (PCT), consisting of volunteers, provides support services for UUCR members and friends who need assistance. These services are limited by capability and liability considerations. Team members personally provide some services and arrange for other UUCR members and friends to help as specific needs occur. The team furnishes transportation, runs errands, delivers meals during crises, visits people at home and in hospitals, sends cards, and provides other services as needed.

Other major functions include:

- Memorial receptions: They are organized to honor the lives of those members and friends who have died during the past year. Several receptions have been catered this year with the assistance of the Pastoral Care Team. No fees are asked, but donations are gratefully accepted. Paulette Campbell chairs this function.
- Thinking of You column in *Quest*: Joys and concerns are to be communicated to the editor in order to appear in *Quest*. Marianne Miller served as editor for the column through April 2016 when she passed on her keyboard to Judy Eisenhower, who took over this role in May. If you have joys and concerns that you would like to appear in *Quest*, please contact Judy.
- Greeting cards: The Pastoral Care Team is responsible for sending cards to members and friends who celebrate special events and to those who are ill or hospitalized. Sue Thomas is the coordinator of this activity.
- Pastoral Care Team bulletin board: With the help of Donna Taylor, a new bulletin board was installed in Fellowship Hall in November. It includes obituaries of congregants and former congregants, a copy of the current Thinking of You column as it appears in *Quest*, and area workshop invitations.

Many thanks to all who have donated time and effort to the UUCR community during the past year. A special thanks to Nancy Klag who, through his connection to the Lions Club, delivered health aids to those in need.

This year's special events and activities:

- An October 24 event entitled, "End of Life Issues - Maryland Advance Directive Workshop." Many favorable comments were received from attendees on the content of this workshop as well as the expertise of our facilitator, Amy Gribhoff, attorney at law.
- UUCR recognized National Hospice and Palliative Care Month with a Partner Plate collection in the months of October and November, a benefit concert for Montgomery Hospice, and the October 24 advance directive workshop. The Pastoral Care Team proposed the local nonprofit organization, Hospice Caring for UUCR's first Partner Plate collection. Penny Gladhill, the founder of Hospice Caring, spoke during the worship service on October 4, 2015. On November 29, she returned for the service to receive a check for \$2,742.
- We prepared a draft web page for the Pastoral Care Team for the UUCR website.
- Our February 5 meeting included a one-hour training session on grief. Rev. Lynn Strauss told her story of grief experiences in her life, and others shared personal stories. Lynn referred to the book, *Good Grief, Healing Through the Shadow of Loss*, and copies were purchased for the team.
- The Pastoral Care Team assisted in outreach efforts for the annual Fellowship Dinner, contacting some congregants who did not sign up for the dinner.
- On April 1, Rev. Rebekah Montgomery conducted a two-hour training on complicated grief. Included in the session were role play experiences to increase our learning about listening skills and pastoral presence. Pastoral care volunteers from other UU congregations were invited to the training, and two women from the Hagerstown UU Church attended.
- In an effort to reach out to congregants who need to hear from caring friends for any number of reasons, we continued to staff the Pastoral Care Team "Post Office" after the Sunday service. The Post Office table is stocked with cards, stamps, and UUCR's member/friend directory. Team members assist at the table and handle the mailing of the cards.

Team members: Jill Asman, Marilyn Briant, Paulette Campbell (Co-Chair), Judy Eisenhauer, Jewell Golden, Jane Klag (Co-Chair), Fran Lowe, Susan McCall, Martha McClelland, Holly Meyer, Marianne Miller, Marie Reed, Marialyce Sherr, and Sue Thomas

Spirit of Life Sangha —*Liliane Floge*

The mission of the Spirit of Life Sangha is to assist those interested in improving their practice of mindfulness using the methods recommended by the Buddhist monk, Thich Nhat Hanh and others who practice mindfulness.

The Sangha meets almost every Sunday after the service to meditate and to study, through readings and discussion, aspects of mindfulness practice. We usually meet in Building 2 from 11:20 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Since we began in 2010, the number of persons interested in the Sangha has increased considerably. We have over 45 persons who have attended at least one meeting and are on our Sangha group email list. This year, more of our meetings have had a higher attendance at each meeting – about 15 persons. Our meetings are open to persons who are not part of UUCR and a few attend our meetings. We periodically have a Sangha lunch at a member's home, instead of meeting at UUCR. These lunches have strengthened ties among our members.

The Sangha is managed by a Caring Council, which leads the meetings and chooses the readings. This year, the members of the Council were: Robert Campbell, Liliane Floge, Ethel Gilbert, and Alex Szatmary.

Major accomplishments:

- We again participated in the Mind, Body & Spirit Fair by presenting two sessions on mindfulness meditation.
- We believe that participation in the Sangha has deepened the practice of its members and led to a more positive spiritual outlook. Many of the mindfulness practices encouraged are identical to Unitarian Universalist principles, such as the inherent worth and dignity of every person, compassion in human relations, and respect for the interdependent web of all existence.
- We have prepared a description of the workings of a Sangha, of the particular workings of our Sangha, a document listing the updated Five Mindfulness Trainings (authored by Thich Nhat Hanh, based on Buddha's precepts), a list of suggested readings, and a one-page general description document. During the week, these and other items are kept in our Sangha box located in the large closet next to the kitchen.

For next year, we are considering lengthening our sessions by 15 minutes to provide more discussion time.

Women's Spiritual Exploration Group—*Sahar Dawisha*

Our goal is to connect by learning about ourselves and each other, by deepening our spirituality together, and by exploring the feminine divine. A typical meeting consists of introductions with check-in, a guided meditation, a creative self-exploration activity and/or reading, sharing of insights from the activity/reading with group discussion, and closing.

We've been meeting in Room 44 in Building 4 on the third Saturday of the month from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. since July 2015. Meeting topics have included writing and sharing our spiritual timelines, a green eye and hand exercise, the selection of cards for self-reflection, gratitude, spiritual feminists, and discussing selections from the books, *Awakening Joy* and *Women Who Run with the Wolves*.

There are currently 28 women who have attended at least one meeting, and attendance ranges from 4 to 12 women at any given meeting. The highest attendance of 12 women occurred when we discussed *Women Who Run with the Wolves*. Additional activities include a group trip to see the play, *Miss Witherspoon*, in which a member of the group is starring in the lead role, and plans for a possible retreat in the summer/fall.

In April, our leadership expanded to include Julie Robinson and Bonnie Bloomquist, bringing new energy and commitment. Beginning in June 2016, we will start meeting on the second Saturday of the month from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. (still in Room 44 in Building 4). Our group's name will change to Women's Open Spiritual Connection Group, and we will remain open to all women who wish to join us at any time. We look forward to continued growth through connection.

Women's Spirituality Group—*Jewell Golden*

The group discusses various topics as well as sharing individual life paths. We strive for the spiritual growth of group members through close personal sharing. With the exchange of words in experience, wisdom, and support, we provide laughter, warmth, inspiration, and reassurance, moving forward on one's quest. We celebrate member's distinct achievements, birthdays, and special times in one's life through meals together.

The Women's Spirituality Group meets in Room 44 in Building 4 on the first and third Saturday of the month from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The meeting is open to all and we welcome all to our sisterhood of spirituality and support. In the next year, we hope to increase our outreach and encourage more women to attend.

Fellowship

Craft Group—*Sherry Henry*

We provide a place where women can look forward to meeting weekly with others, and work on an art project if they want to. Coffee, Crafts and Conversation meets each Tuesday morning from 10:00 a.m. until noon. We are open to all, and welcome anyone who wishes to join us for coffee and conversation, or to work on an individual or group project. Conversation is a major part of what participants enjoy from this group. On any given Tuesday, the conversation can be about current events, an idea picked up from last Sunday's sermon, or just talk about ongoing craft projects.

Most of our funds were used for materials either to make cards or package them for sale at the Halloween Hullabaloo. We bought foam slabs to make our own version of rubber stamps, and clear sleeve-like envelopes for completed cards. Occasionally we use money to replace standard items, like colored stamp pads. All materials are shared items, available for everyone in the group to use. Adult coloring books have recently become a popular item to work on.

Dinners for Eight—*Karla Timmons*

Dinners for Eight provides an opportunity for UUCR congregants to share good food and good company on a monthly basis in a friend or member's home, usually in groups of eight, allowing for the congregation to better know one another. The program provided many new members with an easy access point to meet and become acquainted with longer-standing members of the congregation.

This year, we utilized routine/regular communications in *Quest* and UUCR E-Weekly, and occasional communications in the Order of Service to increase participation. We have still been unable to increase involvement to the level it was several years ago, due partly to the inability of some of our older congregants to participate, and our inability to attract younger people to attend regularly.

Literary Fiction Book Group—*Marialyce Sherr*

There are now two book discussion groups at UUCR. This newly-formed book group does not conflict with the schedule of the UUCR Book Club, which was established many years ago. Congregants are welcome to join one or both groups.

The Literary Fiction Book Group confines its discussion to fiction and to those works, past and present, which have been deemed “literary.” The term literary is in itself controversial because, in fact, all writing is literary, since it uses words made up of letters. However, there was an expressed interest among congregants to form a group that focused on the subjects of the narrative in such a manner that in-depth character studies are created. Examples include: *All the Light We Cannot See*, by Anthony Doer; *The Japanese Lover*, by Isabel Allende; and *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, by Oscar Wilde.

The group has been strongly attended. It meets in Room 50 (in the lower level below the Sanctuary) on the second Monday of each month from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. All are welcome.

Quilters—*Louise Friedenber*

The mission of the Quilters is to create one quilt each year to be raffled at the fall fundraiser.

Our group created its 35th annual quilt, called “Sea Glass,” which was raffled at the Halloween Hullabaloo on Saturday, October 31, 2015. At a price of \$2 each or 3 for \$5, 1,150 raffle tickets were sold, and the net profit was \$1,899. Barbara Weis was the quilt winner.

Sea Glass is a paper-pieced, queen-sized quilt, consisting of 3,462 fabric pieces in shades of blue, green, aqua, and purple on a white background. The effect is to give swirling patterns, creating the sensation of waves splashing against the shore. Our inspiration was a photo on the cover of the Fall-Winter 2014 issue of the magazine, *Quilt Sampler*.

We also made many hand-crafted items for the Halloween Hullabaloo, including quilted table runners, pillows, potholders, wall hangings, tree ornaments, crayon and pencil roll-ups, note cards, knit items, and more. A profit of \$934 was raised for UUCR from these crafts.

Our group provides the possibility for anyone who practices needlework to experience group participation in the making of a beautiful product, while enjoying the warmth and support of friends who share an interest and meet together weekly on Wednesday evenings.

The 2015-2016 Quilters budget is \$275, which is allocated for both the quilt and assorted crafts. The amount spent as of May 2016 is \$163.

Group members: Margaret Chalkley, Pat Chapin, Carol Dangel, Louise Friedenber, Christina Ginsburg, Lynne Goss, Barbara Harrison, Marge Holmes, Louise Lovell, Alberta Maschal, Holly Meyer, Lisa Reed, Gwen Rowe, Anne Spicknall, Jo Wilson, and Florence Wyand

Socrates Café Rockville —*Ken Sandin*

Socrates Café Rockville, a philosophical discussion group, meets monthly. Originally an exclusively UUCR group, growth to 25-30 each month has come by attracting people through Meetup.com, who now constitute the majority of participants. Some of the latter have become UUCR members and friends. We meet in Fellowship Hall at 7:00 p.m. on the fourth Saturday of every month. All are welcome to attend.

UUCR Book Club—*Carolyn Pooley*

The UUCR Book Club meets in Room 50 (in the lower level below the Sanctuary) at 2:00 p.m. on the first Thursday of every month to discuss a variety of fiction and nonfiction books. All members and friends of UUCR who enjoy reading are invited to participate. Books are available at local libraries and through UUCR's link to Amazon.com.

Young Adults Group —*Lisa Fredin*

The Young Adults Group provides opportunities for people ages 18-35 to connect through social and spiritual development. Lisa Fredin and Cammy Crane are the group organizers.

This year, members of the Young Adults Group:

- Wrote and confirmed a group covenant;
- Organized an Articulating Our Faith workshop with Rev. Rebekah;
- Organized a trip to the American Visionary Arts Museum in Baltimore;
- Held movie discussion nights featuring movies with social justice themes; and
- Provided an email group through which young adults can coordinate attending UUCR events together. This year, these events included the Fellowship Dinner and the Rainbow Youth Alliance 10 Year Celebration.

With changes in leadership and conflicts between each other's schedules, we are looking for new ways to consistently provide meaning to our members.