



# **Annual Report 2017**

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

# Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Rockville

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## Staff

Rev. Lynn Thomas Strauss, Senior Minister  
Rev. Rebekah Montgomery, Assistant Minister  
Rev. Jack Young, Minister Emeritus  
Dayna Edwards, M.A., Director of Religious Education  
Grace Cho, Director of Music  
Adrian L. H. Graham, Director of Communications & Membership  
Donna Taylor, Church Administrator  
Rena Geibel, Religious Education Assistant  
Justin Furnia, Pianist

## Officers

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

## General Trustees

Adriana Brigatti  
José Clemente  
Aaron Pied

# Annual Report 2017

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## **Vital Statistics – as of April 30, 2017**

**Members: 413**

**Friends: 127**

**Religious Education Enrollment: 156**

**Religious Education Families: 122**

**New members from May 1, 2016 to April 30, 2017: 40**

Marga Adiego-Blasco, Lionel Bernardo, Mark Bernardo, Gayle Boyd, Jaime Chao Mignano, Katherine Earle, André Enceneat, David Fitzpatrick, Sharon Fitzpatrick, Juliette Gaitan, Joseph Gillen, Madeline Gillen, Brian Haugen, Claudia Langbehn, Jeffrey Lewis, MaryBeth Lewis, Maura Malone, Sean McCarthy, Chris McNabb, Samantha McNabb, Michael Mignano, Jay Mukherjee, Mary Mukherjee, Courtney Pinard, Kenan Pollack, Lane Pollack, Elsa Powel, Kenneth Robbins, Teresina Robbins, Virginia Runko, Kalman Rupp, Eric Strong, Marie Vivas, Marilyn Wood, Mary Beth Woodin, Jenny Yates, Michael Youngman, Monica Youngman, Elana Zimmerman, Patrick Zimmerman

**Members off the roll from May 1, 2016 to April 30, 2017: 4**

Pat Bradshaw, Beth Durmowicz, Gary Magnuson, Jana Shobe

**Members changed to Friends from May 1, 2016 to April 30, 2017: 6**

Diane Bates, Cammy Crane, Alex Szatmary, David Wilson, Leah Wilson, Rev. Jack Young

**Child Dedications: 3**

Theodore Emerson Edwards  
Luciana Runko  
Audra Youngman

**Deaths: 3**

Bill Barry (August 11, 2016)  
Larry Brandt (August 1, 2016)  
Barbara Eldridge (December 19, 2016)

**Memberships in Abeyance: 4**

Robert Heilman, Karen Knispel Heilman, David Mayhew, Shannon Mayhew

## **Report from the President—*Ellen Rohan***

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 2016 with a Board retreat later that summer, 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 2 Town Hall Meetings (with the LMC in Fall 2016 and after our Mid-Year Meeting), the Mid-Year Congregational Meeting in January 2017, and the Annual Congregational Meeting in May 2017.

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, and our numerous events related to our 5 Year Future Planning process. Throughout the year, the Board worked closely with Lay Ministry, the Religious Education Committee, Buildings and Grounds Committee, Committee on Ministry, Finance Committee, Investment Committee, Personnel Committee, Church Administrator, Assistant Minister and Senior Minister to update and strengthen policies and practice, and secure contractual obligations.

Our activities are guided by the framework provided in the 2012-17 Strategic Plan Goals 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 on the Board page:

### **Goal 1**

- Engage on and revise a policy for UUCR Membership to ensure support for our Beloved Community

We worked over many months of Board meetings, beginning with our Summer Retreat, to really examine all components of Membership comprehensively, to include: Benefits and Responsibilities of Membership, Categories of Membership, Right Relations/Crisis Resolution, and Canvass/Pledging as they relate to Membership.

### **Goal 2**

- Examine our current Policies and By-laws, to create an even stronger framework to support our Beloved Community

This year the Board did tremendous work updating, refreshing, and approving the following UUCR policies: RE Safety Policy for Children and Youth, Investment Policy, various aspects of our Financial Policies and Procedures, and Policy for Considering New Programs or Initiatives. We discussed looking into the idea of eVoting, which would have been a By-laws change, but we were not able to explore the idea this year. I hope we consider this again next year.

### **Goal 3**

- Lead a Miracle Sunday fundraiser for improvements and innovations to celebrate UUCR's 60th Anniversary and bright future

Our Miracle Sunday fundraiser set a lofty goal of raising \$60,000 to honor UUCR's 60th Anniversary. As usual, our congregation rose to the occasion and enabled our Beloved Community to 1) Upgrade Founders Hall including new chairs, new paint, new carpet, and new lighting! 2) Renovate our Kitchen! 3) Improve accessibility by building a new access ramp near the Founders Hall doorway and 4) Improve our pulpit and surrounding area. Amazing!

### **Goal 4**

- Increase congregational participation in the Canvass in coordination with Canvass Leadership

Many thanks for our Canvass Co-Chairs, Nancy Blum and Bill Hurlbut, for the wonderful job they did leading us. I hope everyone was able to participate this year either through face-to-face discussion at the Canvass table, through email, by US Mail, or by accessing our Canvass page online, or possibly even at a Canvass Brunch. Thank you Bill, Nancy, and all of UUCR for being part of our 2017 Canvass.

### **Goal 5**

- Use this *Year of Reflection* to shape and guide UUCR's future via the next 5 Year Plan

I hope that you have joined me in thoroughly enjoying all of our special 5 Year Future Planning activities this year. Our first Day of Reflection, in Fall 2016, was truly a time of creation and celebration as The Sanctuaries led us through our process of understanding all that UUCR is, has been, and dreams for our future. A joyous day! Our second Day of Reflection, in Spring 2017, helped us gather insights and feedback on our Mission and Values. Since then, a group of Congregational poets have worked to create a new Mission and Values statement which we hope to affirm at the Annual Meeting.

Our final Day of Reflection will be in Summer 2017 in hopes of introducing our new 5 Year Plan as UUCR's year opens again in Fall 2017.

### **President's Perspective**

The 2016-17 Church Year was a year of new beginnings and coming together for each other when we most needed "us". We welcomed our new Director of Religious Education, Dayna Edwards, our new Director of Membership and Communications, Adrian Graham, and our new Director of Music, Grace Cho. These 3 new staff people have enriched our congregational life through their many contributions, their unique leadership, and simply just by their presence. We continued our Share the Plate project,

again donating thousands of dollars in causes we believe in. Our fall fundraiser, the Harvest Bazaar, was held on October 29. In November we honored our 60th Anniversary in style with a special service honoring our Founders and Charter Members, a festive lunch, and an honored guest speaker, the Reverend Doctor Rebecca Parker. Thank you all for your generous participation in Miracle Sunday where together we raised \$60,000 to celebrate of 60th Anniversary. We are already seeing the benefits of our shared generosity in Founders Hall. We will be seeing more signs of progress in the kitchen renovation and ramp repair this summer. This spring we are participating in a Canvass, led by the dynamic duo of Nancy Blum and Bill Hurlbut. At the time of this writing, we are at 95% of our goal with high hopes to climb even further. Again, thank you for your generosity UUCR. We have completed 2 of our 3 Future Planning “Days of Reflection” across this year. I hope you have enjoyed and engaged in celebrating the UUCR we all know and love, as well as helped us plan to become an even more vibrant congregation as we move forward together. We are elated to have been able to find a pathway for Reverend Rebekah Montgomery to remain with us in her new role as UUCR’s first full-time Associate Minister.

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 fellow congregants for your generosity of time and commitment to our Beloved Community. UUCR has enjoyed an increase in attendance and participation this year. It must be that others believe as I do, that UUCR is where I want to be now and in years to come.

The 2016-2017 Board of Trustees Leadership and Training budget was \$800; it was used to recognize congregational leaders at the Fellowship Dinner who advanced strategic plan goals and also to help support people to attend General Assembly.

Board of Trustees for 2016-2017: Ellen Rohan (President), Steve Eckstrand (Vice President), See Lam (Secretary), Julie Robinson (Treasurer), Adriana Brigatti, Jose Clemente, and Aaron Pied (General Trustees), Terrie Barr (Immediate Past President and non-voting member), and Rev. Lynn Strauss (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 \$330,000. The General Reserve is approximately \$312,000, 41% of the annual budget. Building and grounds costs have been lower than expected this year, driven by lower snow removal and building maintenance 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 \$751,487. Payroll costs are the largest expense and will be approximately \$430,000 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 Receipts 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 Cynthia Shires-Thurston***

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. The LMC functions as an advisory resource to the ministers, staff, board, and committees, dedicated to considering the cascading effects of moving through the congregational year, with the spiritual orientation of how we live our mission and shared UU Principles together.

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 made recommendations to the Board.
- Assisted committees with leadership by listening, providing information, and making recommendations on mission statements, facilitation, difficult conversations, and communications.
- Actively participated in many aspects of congregational life, including our 60th Anniversary Celebration, Social Justice activities, Beloved Conversations, Canvass, the "Racism in our UU House Teach-in".
- Participated in the Board-led Future Planning including the Days of Reflection and planning in June to participate in the Courageous Love Leadership Summit.

Next year we plan to re-examine our Lay Ministry Vision along with the Board of Trustees to ensure it aligns with the new strategic plan, re-set objectives accordingly, and re-design and provide training for new Lay Ministers.

The 2016-2017 Lay Ministry Council budget is \$1500 of which \$547 has been spent.

Co-Chairs: Cynthia Shires-Thurston, Fran Lowe; Ministers: Lynn Strauss, Rebekah Montgomery

Lay Ministers: Worship & Music Arts – Cynthia Shires-Thurston; Social Justice – Ethel Gilbert; Community Outreach – Ken Sandin; Membership – Pat Einhorn; Program Leadership – Sherry Dittman; Pastoral Care – Kent Hancock. At-large: Fran Lowe, Marie Reed, Mark Shannon; Board of Trustees liaison – Steve Eckstrand

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

*“Ministry Is Everything We Do Together”*

These words of Universalist minister, Reverend Gordon McKeeman, capture my sense of this year at UUCR. What amazing ministry we’ve done together. Our intentional committed work this year has led us into moments of transformative action and deep into spiritual growth as a congregation. We are not the same congregation we were a year ago. We have grown in spirit and in clarity of mission and vision.

We have done it together, listening to the wisdom of these voices:

- ❖ Our Board leadership
- ❖ Our Lay Ministry Council
- ❖ Our consultants – Rob Keithan, Megan Foley, Jenice View, and Josh White
- ❖ Our new and long-time multi-racial families
- ❖ Those who challenged some processes and decisions
- ❖ The Interfaith Community of which we are a part
- ❖ Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism (BLUU)
- ❖ Our new and not-so-new staff: Dayna, Adrian, Grace, Rena, and Donna
- ❖ Our ministers, Lynn and Rebekah
- ❖ Those who participated in 2 Days of Reflection
- ❖ Those who lead our Social Justice Task Forces
- ❖ Our parents and teachers and helpers, our youth
- ❖ Our choir, our choral groups, our instrumentalists
- ❖ Our Canvass Team, our Finance Team
- ❖ Our Pastoral Care Team

We have been learning and listening and leading and leaning into our “calling” as a congregation! Our commitment to DIVERSITY, in all its forms, has emerged as our most cherished value. It has been a year of miracles and of faith. We have much to be proud of and we have good work ahead. We have become a congregation that is Practicing Courageous Love. I wonder what surprises, challenges and learnings the next year will bring?

I am deeply grateful for this ministry we share.

Reverend Lynn

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

I am honored to be UUCR’s second Assistant Minister and now have completed my second year. My portfolio of responsibilities continues to adjust and expand, with the needs of the congregation. I have been serving UUCR since October of 2015, so this is my second report as the Assistant Minister of UUCR. I am grateful to have deepened relationships and ministry within this congregation.

Highlights of 2016-17:

- Enriching and engaging theme-based worship experience, led by the Senior and/or Assistant Minister three to four times per month

- Organized an Iftar dinner with the Turkish-American Friendship society during Ramadan
- Co-led two creative worship services with UUCR members in a “sermon dialectic,” on “labels” and “spirituality and science”
- Supported and co-led the UUCR Wheel of the Year circles
- Co-organized and continued to support the Emerson Sunrise Circles
- Organized and co-led the 6th Grade UU Heritage Trip in DC
- Attended the Beloved Conversations retreat and provided support to the facilitators guiding this transformative work
- Co-organized and co-led the Healing Circles after the shooting at the Pulse Nightclub and the elections, including participating in the “Fast4Power” with CLF
- Hosted and co-led with Dayna Edwards, UUCR DRE, a potluck and panel discussion for multi-racial families: “Let’s Talk About Race, Baby!”
- Organized and led the UUCR Family-Friendly Seder
- Provided the leadership for the second multi-session Adult Faith Formation class, “Building Your Own Theology”
- Wisdom Wednesdays with vespers, dessert, and presentations were enthusiastically supported
- Provided trainings to our compassionate Pastoral Care Team to improve pastoral counseling and visitation skills
- Regular attendance of the Montgomery County Interfaith Working Group meetings, which are hosted at UUCR
- Supported the Lay Ministry Council with trainings and collaborative pastoral and leadership initiatives
- Continuation of support to the Small Group Ministry Program with trainings and the creation of monthly session plans, tied to the monthly worship themes
- Traveled to Bhutan with the UU Congregation of Arlington on pilgrimage, brought back to UUCR spiritual gifts from Bhutan
- UUCR initiated a Racial Justice Working Group last year and continued to support trainings for transformation, provided workshops to area UU congregations on cross-cultural competency and dismantling white supremacy culture
- Regular attendance and enthusiastic support of local Interfaith UU-led events, such as Diwali, Holi, and the MLK Observance at Cedar Lane UU

## **Report from the Director of Religious Education for Children & Youth**

—*Dayna Edwards*

This year in the RE program for children and youth was a time of growth, change, and energy.

- I was hired at the beginning of the fiscal year and began engaging RE leaders in a time of reflection as I sought to understand the history of RE at UUCR. At this time, I also started to use the work of the RE transition team and their report to the board to implement some minor changes to programming.
- In January of 2017, we hosted an RE day of reflection to develop a clear “charge” for RE as we move forward. A mandate toward family ministry became clear. Families with children and RE leaders are interested in an integrated approach to religious education that goes beyond Sunday morning.
- In April 2017 the 7th and 8th graders went to Boston on their bi-annual Heritage Trip and the 6th graders went to DC on a day-long Heritage Trip.

- As was suggested by the transition team, we have laid the groundwork to begin elementary school OWL and Spirit Play in 2017-2018.
- We have hosted a series of multi-generational events including, “Getting Ready for the Holidays,” and “pizza and postcard” nights.
- This year, I also introduced the “Wonder Box” to the congregation as a new way to do the “First Fifteen”.

One thing you’d like your committee or group to work on or improve on next year:

- This year was a year of planning and reflection as we gear up for changes to take place next year. In addition to adding Elementary OWL and Spirit Play, we will also focus more on integrating children and youth into the life of the congregation. This will include:
  - having children and youth in worship for the “First Fifteen” three times per month
  - sharing resources with families that they can take home and use during the week
  - hosting faith-based play-date groups
  - implementing a new and improved Coming of Age program
  - and much more...

There is a renewed energy and enthusiasm in religious education for children and youth that will guide us in the coming year.

## **Report from the Director of Music—*Grace Cho***

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. The mission of the music department of UUCR is to support and enhance the spiritual life of the congregation, and the mission of UUCR, through music.

Major accomplishments this year:

- The Adult Choir continues to grow musically and spiritually and welcomed 4 new members.
- The repertoire of the Adult Choir has expanded to include more world music, which presented challenges of learning to sing in foreign languages such as Spanish and Zulu. This tradition will continue as we promote diversity through music.
- We explored sonic diversity by presenting the women and men of the Adult Choir separately, respectively on Earth Day Sunday and Mother’s Day, with enthusiastic response from the congregation.
- Many outstanding musical talents within the congregation continue to participate in the worship service, which includes instrumentalists (piano, guitar, violin, trumpet, drum, etc.) and vocalists of various styles.
- We welcomed guest musicians who presented Mexican folk songs, tango, and jazz.
- Two outstanding local musical/spiritual groups joined to enhance the worship experience: Sanctuaries and SongRise DC.
- Volunteer leaders continue to thrive with their groups: Cynthia Shires-Thurston with Sonaria, Gaynelle Campbell with WildBerry Jam, Barbara Weis with the Children’s Choir, Samantha Buckley with the Unisons, and Christin Green with the Drum Circles.
- This year, the Adult Choir did not present their annual choir fundraiser due to late planning and scheduling issues. Instead, the Adult Choir will present a fundraiser in the fall of 2017.

***WILDBERRY JAM (Gaynelle Campbell)***

WildBerry Jam is a quartet of women's voices that strives to present vocal music that captures the UU spirit of inclusiveness and caring. The members originally sang together for a one-time event and all enjoyed the experience so much that they continued to sing together. The group rehearses as schedules permit and sings at UUCR about five times a year.

WildBerry Jam has no conductor or leader; the members collaborate, with each contributing her own unique skills. The group strives to produce quality music that enhances the theme of the worship service or other event. Its goal is to present a musical experience that supports and encourages the Congregation and each other in a loving environment.

WildBerry Jam has no budget; it operates with the encouragement of the Music Department.

***SONARIA (Cynthia Shires-Thurston)***

Sonaria is an ensemble composed of members and friends of UUCR who self-identify as women and enjoy singing together. It is an open group, in that members join as their time, energy, and schedules permit, with no commitment to any period of time. We meet twice a month and sing in the worship service several times a year. We are a noncovenanted group, but we do strive to be supportive and encouraging of each other in making music and in our personal and spiritual growth. We have no budget of our own but are under the umbrella of the Music Department, which provides us with music folders and other supplies as needed.

***DRUM CIRCLE & SHAMANIC MEDITATION CIRCLE (Christin Green)***

The purpose of the UUCR Drum Circle and Shamanic Meditation Circle is to provide opportunities for the community to participate in and experience rhythm and vibration as a spiritual practice.

This year has been ripe with spiritual growth and development in both the Drum Circle and the Shamanic Meditation Circle. Each group meets monthly and draws a unique community. There are regulars as well as newcomers almost every month. This keeps each monthly event fresh and unique with no expectation of continuity. This is a truly free activity that allows people the opportunity to simply "show up."

In the Drum Circle, participants are guided by the facilitator to explore the instruments and sounds, starting with the simple heartbeat rhythm. The heartbeat connects us to each other as well as to the earth and the rhythms of life. Unfortunately, a djembe (drum) donated by our former music director, Jennifer Rogers, went missing this spring and has not been returned. Paulette Campbell donated a very nice cow skin drum that multiple people can play together. This has provided a wonderful new addition to our Drum Circle.

Participants of the Shamanic Meditation Circle meet in a circle first to become centered and establish their own personal intention or question for the session. Everyone is then encouraged to find a comfortable place in the Sanctuary to sit or lay down to receive the rhythms played for them by the facilitator. The facilitator leads a guided meditation to assist in their journey, drums for approximately 20 minutes, and then invites them gently back into a space of sharing and processing. It is common for participants to have deeply meaningful epiphanies or realizations during these meditations. Some experience simple relaxation and leave feeling more prepared for the coming week ahead. It is an honor to share these vibrations with this beloved community.

Due Christin Green's enrollment in seminary and upcoming internship requirements, it would be helpful to identify co-leaders for the monthly Drum Circle since there seems to be a demand. In addition, it might be helpful to reduce the monthly Shamanic Meditation Circles to a quarterly or seasonal schedule.

The 2016-2017 music operating budget is \$3,700, of which \$2,650 has been spent to date.

## **Report from the Director of Communications & Membership—Adrian Graham**

The year that I have been here at UUCR as your new Director of Communications & Membership has been educative and fun! The position was created in 2012 in order to allow for dedicated staff time to be focused on these two areas critical to UUCR's growth; I have spent this year learning the ins and outs of our congregational programming, and beginning to build upon the strong foundation left by my predecessor, Nancy Gregory. I look forward to further assessment of our communications needs, maintaining growth in membership, and increased tracking of congregational engagement in the coming year.

In the area of communications, I produce or oversee all of UUCR's print and electronic media, as well as our presence on social media platforms. These include:

- Orders of Service for every Sunday of the year and for occasional special services
- Our monthly newsletter, *Quest*
- Our e-mail newsletter, *E-Weekly*
- "Sunday Signs" posted throughout Building 1, announcing service details
- UUCR's Annual Report and Directory, and occasional publications such as this year's *60th Anniversary History* written by Maude McGovern
- Professional business cards for UUCR and members of the staff
- UUCR flyers and information sheets
- UUA pamphlets on UUA history, theology, and practices
- The UUCR website, [www.uucr.org](http://www.uucr.org)
- A public-facing Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/uu.rockville](https://www.facebook.com/uu.rockville)
- Two closed, congregant-only Facebook groups:
  - Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Rockville: Members and Friends
  - Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Rockville: Parents
- UUCR's Twitter feed, @UU\_Rockville ([www.twitter.com/UU\\_Rockville](https://www.twitter.com/UU_Rockville))
- **\*NEW\*** UUCR's Instagram feed, @UU\_Rockville ([www.instagram.com/UU\\_Rockville](https://www.instagram.com/UU_Rockville))

In order to make all this happen, I have enjoyed learning how to navigate Drupal to create content on our website and to operate a duplicator for our heavy duty copying; I even learned how to operate both our sound systems. I am grateful to our Webteam – Bill Newhouse, Eric Norris, Lisa Petrovich Smith, and Tom Rowe – for being much more knowledgeable than I am about our technological needs and for their dedication to keeping everything up-to-date. Thanks are due also to our *Quest* editors, Alberta Maschal, Beth Irikura, and Libby Sullivan; and to Eric Burch, for keeping me (and therefore, UUCR) apprised of goings-on in the wider UU world; and to Mike Holmes for organizing and training our Sound Volunteers, allowing me to post recordings of our services to our website. I am indebted to our Church Administrator, Donna Taylor, for more support than I can enumerate here.

In the area of membership – or, more broadly, congregational engagement – we have seen a steady flow of visitors and newcomers checking out our services on Sunday mornings and even at other times, with a particular surge following the presidential election. Each Sunday, our stalwart Greeters have welcomed them and made connections, answering their varied questions and creating opportunities for them to become integrated in the life of the congregation. I extend a word of gratitude to our ongoing Greeters – Bob Campbell, Paulette Campbell, Judy Eisenhower, Jewell Golden, Lynne Goss, Sue McCall, and John McIlwaine. Special thanks to Greeters who have concluded their Sunday morning service this year – Jill Asman, John Dickson, and Rachel Shaw. After an expansive recruitment effort, we welcomed four new team members – Rick Simpson, Mary Beth Woodin and her sons, Sovann and Luke. Several additional new volunteers are lined up for training this summer. Thanks go to Jon Landenburger for heading up our volunteers on the Hospitality Team, who work hard to set up our weekly coffee hour and clean up afterwards, and provide the coffee/tea setups for membership events; and to Patty Walker for organizing our wonderful Usher team, whose members are often the first to greet and assist newcomers to the congregation.

We have welcomed a total of 40 members so far this year, and already have a sizeable cohort of interested individuals lined up for the next membership classes, which will be scheduled sooner than later. This year we held only two Newcomer Brunches with the ministers and two, two-part Path to Membership sessions – all of these were well-attended and very successful. Of these 40, many are already deeply integrated in congregational life and some are stepping into leadership positions. As of this writing, attrition through death or resignation is relatively low, leaving our overall numbers higher than they have been in recent years, and we are poised for further growth. In the coming year, there will be an increase in the opportunities for newcomers to learn about Unitarian Universalism and to become involved, allowing them to discern more quickly the appropriate next steps on their spiritual paths.

In my first year, I have not been very innovative with the membership process and with member engagement, and I have introduced only slight, incremental, and infrequent changes in our communications. I assisted the Board of Trustees in assessing and updating both our Membership Policy and our Roll Review Policy. In the coming year, we can look forward to:

- Establishment of a Congregational Engagement Team\* (a.k.a. Membership Committee)
- Establishment of a Communications & Outreach Team\* (a.k.a. Publicity Committee)
- Expansion of Greeter Team in multiple stations across the UUCR campus
- Improved use of our database, ChurchDB, for collaboration, communications, reporting, tracking, and for up-to-date secure directory information for congregants, among other functions
- “How to UUCR” workshops for hands-on experience for newcomers (and others!) to learn their way around UUCR
- Additional opportunities in member development beyond introductory sessions, perhaps in collaboration with the Adult Faith Formation Committee or other congregational groups
- More robust use of social media platforms already in use, and exploration of new opportunities

Between now and the start of our next program year in September, I am looking forward to assessing more closely the events of this past year, and to professional development opportunities to meet with colleagues and learn about best practices in UU congregations. I am a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Membership Professionals (UUAMP), meeting regularly with colleagues in the Capital area. I intend to make similar connections with UU colleagues in the communications field.

I am grateful to have joined the wonderful staff of this warm and lively congregation! I appreciate each of my colleagues and their contributions to the spirit of the congregation. Additional thanks go again to Jill Asman, without whose deep acquaintance with UUCR's members, friends, and practices I might have found myself in a pickle! And also to Pat Einhorn, Lay Minister for Membership, for her can-do spirit and joyful creativity.

## **Report from the Church Administrator—*Donna Taylor***

The spirit, commitment, and vision of our congregation is amazing! I am so grateful for the outstanding and consistent contributions of staff, contractors, and volunteers that keep our operations, grounds, and buildings running smoothly and effectively, supporting the diverse activities of our church.

Did you know that UUCR provides space for over 2000 events and activities every year?

- About 1300 (66%) are UUCR events and programs – including worship services; religious education for children, youth and adults; music rehearsals and programs; and all variety of social justice, fellowship, and church business meetings;
- Nearly 700 (32%) are rental events from 18 different individuals and groups (not including the Pre-Schools), that bring in around \$35,000 of additional income to UUCR; and
- About 40 (2%) are local non-profit philanthropic organizations sharing our commitment to social service and justice, that UUCR provides space at no charge. A few of such organizations this year were:
  - Montgomery County Health & Human Services Housing and Homelessness Providers
  - Interfaith Clergy of Montgomery County
  - Interfaith Works
  - Non-Profit Montgomery
  - Community Ministries of Rockville
  - Amnesty International
  - NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness)

Jay Stewart, UUCR's part-time contract custodian, works along with me to ensure our church facilities and grounds support your programs and UUCR's mission. Jay 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. And we both appreciate when UUCR members (and long-term renters) are able to do some of their own table and chair set up, to save Jay's time and effort for the big things.

Bryant Taylor, UUCR's Rental Attendant and Facilities Coordinator, left UUCR last fall. Bryant's responsibilities for general building maintenance has been assumed by Jay (with able assists from our Building and Grounds Team!), and I have picked up most of the rental and Sunday building attendant duties. We continue to evaluate UUCR needs and whether to search for a replacement Facilities person.

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

- To make better use of office space, over the summer we fixed-up and re-arranged Building 4 office space. A big THANK YOU to our wonderful tool-time volunteers.
- Additional storage shelving was installed in Building 4 to accommodate music, office and RE supplies, thanks to Dave Bennington and the Power Tool Gang.
- Founders Hall Improvements include:
  - Replaced all lights with LED bulbs,
  - Freshened the entire room with fresh paint and trim,
  - Replaced carpeting on both the pulpit and choir loft stages, and
  - Took delivery of 136 new chairs (and sent the old ones to A Wider Circle)
- Replaced our four different fire prevention and monitoring contracts with a single, consolidated contract for fire prevention and monitoring services with Guardian Fire, a locally owned company with strong reviews that is also used by several other UU congregations in the area. We transitioned to the new Guardian service as of Sept 30—a seamless process for us. The new arrangement will also save about \$1000 a year.
- We (and the City of Rockville) identified a significant water runoff issue on our property last summer also. Our B&G folks worked with expert contractors to address the runoff problems, and made significant headway. We still have some work to do, which is targeted for the coming months.
- A new software package supporting demographics, donation tracking, religious education, and event scheduling—ChurchDB—was licensed and installed in the past year. With support from Marianne Miller we entered all of our 2016-17 calendar events into this new software; and with creative technical support from Tom Rowe, the ChurchDB calendar data now is displayed through the UUCR website. A great success all round!

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—*Nancy Blum and Bill Hurlbut***

Preparation for the canvass began soon after the 2016 presidential election and it launched in an atmosphere of heightened anxiety about the state of the country mixed with enthusiasm about UUCR engagement to make a positive difference. The theme of the canvass, “What Matters Now,” was reinforced by colorful collages created by our youth, in inspired canvass moments from the pulpit, and in the canvass communications and messaging.

The Fellowship Dinner, hosted by Andy and Melissa Moore, launched the canvass with the usual feast of delicious food, lively conversation, and good cheer. As in recent years, pledges were gathered at the Pledge Sunday service, this year on March 5. Follow-up continued through April and was largely completed by the first week in May.

The canvass goal was set at \$601,923. To ensure achievement of that goal, the canvass team challenged members to increase their pledges by 10 percent. As of May 19, the congregation had received 228 pledges for a total of \$575,336—95.6 percent of our goal. The amount pledged was above that pledged in the preceding two pledge years and the highest percentage of goal achieved in at

least three years. Nearly half of those who pledged increased their pledge from the previous year and about a third of those who pledged met or exceeded the 10 percent challenge.

Communications around the canvass included three brunches with Rev. Lynn Strauss to reach specific groups of givers with the canvass message. Organized by Marie Reed, the brunches were hosted by Steve and Irene Eckstrand, Bennett Rushkoff and Karen Whitesell, and the Reeds, with catering by Paulette Campbell. The canvass team maintained a presence at Sunday services throughout the canvass to answer questions and receive pledges. Regular articles in the *E-Weekly* publicized progress toward the canvass goal.

The canvass team emphasized gratitude this year and ensured that all who pledged were thanked. The gratitude circle would not be complete without thanking those who contributed their time and talents to support the canvass. The success of the canvass would not have been possible without the assistance of Jill Asman, Terrie Barr, Eric Burch, Paulette Campbell, Ricardo and Mary Carvajal, José Clemente, the Dolak-Zembrzuski family, Steve and Irene Eckstrand, Adrian Graham, the Hall-Zabinski family, Kent Hancock, Karl Irikura, Andy and Melissa Moore, Bill Newhouse, Aaron Pied, Marie Reed, Ellen Rohan, Bennett Rushkoff and Karen Whitesell, Donna Taylor, and of course, Rev. Lynn Strauss.

One thing that can be improved is the overlapping of various fundraising efforts. In a year when we had already had a Miracle Sunday, it may have been too optimistic to expect a large pledge increase, even though it was warranted by a drop-off in income. In addition, the Action Auction also occurred in April. Such issues might be better managed if the congregation had a Stewardship Committee to coordinate various fundraising activities.

The 2016-2017 canvass budget is \$2,250, of which \$1,711.92 has been spent.

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

Allen, David and Amy	Burch, Eric and Arlyn Sanchez
Alzouma, Karim and Dana	Butler, Kris
Anderson, Marty and Chuch Peden	Buzy, Joel and Wendy
Asman, Jill	Byrd, Anne
Baillie, Diane	Cahill, Kelly and Patty Walker
Barnes, Andrew and Dolores	Campbell, Bob and Paulette
Barr, Terrie and Jim Fein	Campbell, Gaynelle
Baskett, Bruce and Emily Untermeyer	Campbell, Polly
Bauerle, Cynthia and Robbie Reasoner	Carrillo, Antonio and Suzanne
Bertka, Connie and Yingwei Fei	Carvajal, Ricardo and Mary
Beyers, Matthew and Pamela West	Cerny, Lana and Louis
Blackford, Corinne	Chamberlain, Irv and Sherry Henry
Bloomquist, Bonnie	Chitty, Claudia and Richard
Blue, Jim and Lee	Clemente, José and Kathy
Bolland, Silvia	Cohen, Len
Boyd, Gayle	Colletti, Mary Caroline
Bozzo, Stephanie and Tom	Congdon, Laura
Brandt, Susan	Crawford, Steve and Liliane Flöge
Brigatti, Adriana	Crump, Wayne and Annmarie
Bright, Roselie and Mark Lewandoski	Culbertson, Susan and Stephen Wright
Brooke, Mary	Dangel, Carol and Dick
Buck, Janet	Danielson, Carole

Dauler, Jeff  
Dawisha, Sahar  
Delavan, Deb and Bronson Hoover  
Dittmann, Sharrill  
Dixon, George and Ginger  
Dolak, Colleen & Matt Zembrzuski  
Dunbar, John  
Earle, Katherine  
Eckstrand, Steve and Irene  
Einhorn, Pat and Steve  
Eisenhauer, Jack and Judy  
Enceneat, André and Marga Adiego-Blasco  
Fabian, Teki  
Facemire, Jon  
Fenimore, Chuck and Natalie  
Fitzpatrick, David and Sharon  
Folsom, Ginny and Norman Rave  
Forrest, Julie  
Fox, Joan  
Francis, Tim  
Friedenberg, Louise and Paul  
Fritz, Terri and Ron Cancelose  
Furlani, Cita and John  
Gaitan, Juliette  
Garbe, Edward  
Gellman, Carey & Richard  
Gilbert, Ethel & Richard  
Gilfrich, Bob  
Golden, Jewell  
Goodyear, JP & Catherine  
Goss, Lynne & Joe  
Graf, Julie  
Green, Christin and Kevin Power  
Griffin, Glenn and Jane  
Grinnell, Lucinda and Leah Sneider  
Grissom, Nancy  
Haber, Martin and Valerie  
Hall, Andrea and Dan Zabinski  
Hall, Karen  
Hancock, Kent & Gayle  
Harrison, Barbara & Dan Pierce  
Harrison, Beth & Todd  
Haugen, Brian and Shani  
Hayes, Allen  
Hedges, Susan and Kyle  
Helton, Don & Shana  
Higgins-Bisnett, Cathy  
Higgins-Bort, Marion  
Hines, Spencer and Nita  
Hoferek, Mary & Susan Wilson

Holmes, Marge & Michael  
Huff, Laura  
Hurlbut, William & Nancy Blum  
Irikura, Karl & Beth  
Janowski, Bob and Heidi  
Johnson, Myles & Ruth  
Joseph, Stephanie  
Julka, Clarice & Chris  
Karras, George  
Kawamura, Barbara & Dale  
Klag, Jane & Narcy  
Kohout, Nick & Chris  
Kreps, Stephanie & Gary  
Lam, See-Yan  
Landenburger, Jon  
Langbehn, Claudia and Marcos  
Lanigan, Mary  
Lapham, Steve & Cheryl  
Larkin, Sandy  
Larson-Rabin, Zach and Leah  
Lee, Doris & Jeremy Martin  
Leonard, Ody & Myra Remigio-Leonard  
Leonard, Suzanne  
Lewis, MaryBeth and Jeffrey  
Libert, Judith  
Lippert, Dory  
Lorms, David & Alberta Maschal  
Lowe, Phil & Fran  
Luce, Marsha  
MacIntyre, Karen  
Malley, Karen  
Malone, Maura  
Marks, Dave & Diane  
Martzloff, François & Madeleine  
Mascardo, Jennifer  
McCaffrey, Anne  
McCall, Susan  
McCarthy, Sean  
McClelland, Martha and Peter Shaw  
McGovern, Maude  
McIlwaine, John  
McNabb, Chris and Samantha  
Meyer, Holly and Robert  
Mignano, Michael and Jaime Chao Mignano  
Miller, Marianne  
Mondelo, Susan  
Moore, Andy and Melissa  
Mukherjee, Mary and Jay  
Newhouse, Bill and Kay  
Norris, Eric and Karen

Parker, Karen & Dan Zimble	Shires-Thurston, Cynthia & Ginny
Partington, Leigh	Simpson, Richard
Paulson, Louis	Smith, Alonzo
Petrovich Smith, Lisa and Jeff Smith	Solberg, Larissa
Pied, Aaron and Erika	Sosa, Julio & Rebecca
Pinard, Courtney	Spicknall, Anne
Pittleman, Karen & Steve	Steel, Elizabeth & Sam
Plumb, Don & Judy	Stiles, Mark & Barbara Weis
Pollack, Lane and Kenan	Stolz, Richard
Popp, Jan	Stover, Connie
Preisendorfer, Rolf & Dominic Russoli	Strauss, Lynn & David
Pulvirenti, April	Taylor, Donna
Randall, Carolyn	Taylor, Jack & Pamela
Rathbone, Donna	Taylor, Len & Martha
Rayner, Judith & Dennis Wellnitz	Thomas, Frank & Susan
Redd, Ken	Timmons, Karla & Burt Smith
Reed, Lisa	Tolgyesi, Eva
Reed, Marie & Steve	Toth, Judy
Reilly, Scott	Uffelman, Abbey
Reinsberg, Carol	Watson, Kendall and Carla Rodriguez
Reuther, Pat & Ted	Watts, Angie & Glenn
Richards, Ann	West, Bryan
Riley, Bryan and Marla	Wheeler, Stephen
Robbins, Kenneth and Teresina	White, Robin & Chris
Roberts, Luci & Jim Carleton	Wicker, Dorothy
Robinson, Julie & Alex Chauche	Wilcock, Daniel & Takako Maeda
Rohan, Ellen & Steve Greene	Wilcox, Steven
Rosen, Steve and Allison Cox	Williamson, Victoria
Rosewater, Mary	Wilson, Mark & Jo
Rowe, Tom and Gwen	Witt, Kevin & Duyen Truong
Runko, Virginia and Erik	Wood, Marilyn "Mandara"
Rupp, Kalman and Kathy	Woodin, Mary Beth
Rushkoff, Bennett & Karen Whitesell	Yates, Jenny and Marie Vivas
Ryan, Ellen	Yoder, Greg
Sandin, Ken	Young, Celia
Santerre, Julia & Tyler	Young, Joe & Melissa Scholes Young
Schmitt, Gail	Youngman, Michael and Monica
Schrack, Roald	Zarrett, Sue
Schuhmann, Jeremy	Zatman, Andrew & Marilyn Briant
Scott, Anne Hope	Zerby, Elizabeth
Shannon, Christy & Mark	Zetts, Terry
Sherr, Ted and Marialyce	Zimmerman, Patrick and Elana

\*List is complete as of May 16, 2017

## **Committee on Ministry—*Cita Furlani***

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

Major accomplishments:

- Engaged the Reverend Rebecca Parker to give the keynote address for the public event on the afternoon of the 60th Anniversary celebration on October 16. Outreach extended to other UU congregations, liberal Jewish congregations, the Interfaith Community Network, civic leaders, etc.
- Reviewed and revised the UUCR Conflict Resolution Policy which is now available at <http://www.uucr.org/sites/default/files/document-archive/confpolicy032617final.pdf>. Formed a Conflict Resolution Team, as described in Step 3 of the newly revised policy. The members of this team are Wendy Buzy, Marianne Miller, Rolf Preisendorfer, Mark Stiles, and Sue Thomas. This team will be trained in conflict resolution and be available as needed.
- Published a paragraph in *Quest* and *E-Weekly* designed to inform about the work of the COM and to invite comments from the congregation.
- Supported Senior Minister's role in filling staff positions.

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

The 2016-2017 Committee on Ministry budget is \$990; \$500 has been spent.

Committee members: Ricardo Carvajal, Steve Einhorn, 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, in partnership with the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurers, oversees the financial affairs of the congregation. The Finance Committee reports directly to the Board and has no budget for carrying out its activities. An important function of the Finance Committee is to gather church-wide budget information for the annual canvass and to advise the Board of Trustees as it sets the operating budget each year.

This year, the Finance Committee reviewed the Board's eleven financial policies and with Board guidance/approval updated five of these policies. The policies are included in the "Board Book" for reference, and are available electronically from the Finance Committee chair. The key policies are posted on UUCR's website under "Resources" and "Policies and Procedures".

The Finance Committee assisted the Board in developing an Investment Policy for church assets and in establishing an Investment Committee that reports directly to the Board to oversee the Congregation's investments. The Investment Committee developed recommendations for major changes to UUCR's current investments, and the Board approved their recommendations. The Finance Committee is now implementing those recommendations.

We also coordinated with the Buildings & Grounds team to update a 5-year forecast of capital project needs.

Next fiscal year, the Finance Committee will support the Board in its future planning. We will work with church leaders on a 5-year budget that includes the cost of programs and initiatives contained in UUCR's upcoming strategic plan.

Committee members: Kent Hancock (Chair); Julie Robinson (Treasurer); Eric Burch (Assistant Treasurer – Receipts); Barbara Harrison (Assistant Treasurer – Disbursements); Martha Taylor (Bookkeeper); Dave Marks; Marianne Miller; Bill Newhouse.

### **Future Planning Team—*Terrie Barr***

The purpose of the Future Planning Team is to develop recommendations to the Board of Trustees that outline primary strategic directions and goals for the congregation over the next five years.

The highlights of UUCR's "Year of Reflection" were two intergenerational, all-congregation gatherings to draw out the stories, hopes, dreams, and common purpose of our congregation.

November 20, 2016 was the First Day of Reflection. The goal of the first day was to help us explore and express how we see ourselves and to discern our challenges, strengths, and resources. The Sanctuaries, spiritual artists, led small groups using music, movement, poetry, and writing. There were many who engaged in a discussion of five questions for reflection. The process created the felt sense of the heartbeat of UUCR, its values, its feeling of community, and what being a part of UUCR offers to congregants.

April 2, 2017 was our Second Day of Reflection and was led by Rev. Megan Foley, our UUA consultant, who challenged us to reflect together on our common purpose.

The wonderful thoughts gathered during both days of reflection allowed the Team to draft a vibrant Mission statement and UUCR values. The Board of Trustees approved these May 2; they will be presented at the May 21 Annual Meeting. UUCR's mission is to practice courageous love. We value lifelong spiritual discovery, beloved community, and a just world.

Each day of reflection was designed to include everyone, including youth, to imagine UUCR's future and its necessity in that future, and to reflect on its legacy and history. We chose to inspire the congregation with creative activities that brought deep thought and strengthened the bonds of community. We encouraged many voices and considered choices about where UUCR devotes its time and energy in the future. We are grateful for all the voices we heard.

Staff and Board of Trustees, Lay Ministry Council members and Social Justice committee chairs and group leads have been invited to participate in a Courageous Love Leadership Summit on June 17, where we will work together to identify our visions for each value, lifelong spiritual discovery, beloved community and a just world.

Future Planning Team plans for next year:

Our goal is to have leadership produce visions, directions, and goals for the next few years to share in the service on July 30 and with the congregation after the service for their input. By mid-August, we plan to provide a draft of recommendation to the Board of Trustees for action.

Team members: Ellen Rohan, Christin Green, Lisa Reed, Bill Newhouse, Rev. Lynn Strauss, Jose Clemente, Terrie Barr; new member, incoming Board Vice President, Colleen Dolak; former members, Scott Reilly and Mary Carvajal

The 2016-2017 Future Planning Team budget is \$8,000, of which \$2,000 has been spent.

### **Investment Committee**—*Steve Reed*

The Investment Committee holds the responsibility for reviewing and recommending investment vehicles for all long-term and mid-term financial assets of the Congregation.

The committee was re-established by the Board in October 2016. Committee members were identified and the committee started meeting in January 2017 to review UUCR investment policies and procedures and to evaluate alternative investment options because the rate of return from the existing funds was very low. The committee evaluated a variety of investment funds for the Endowment Fund, Site Beautification Fund, and General Investment Fund. A report was submitted to the Board proposing that these funds be invested in different specific investment vehicles than were used previously. The Board approved the proposal. The Treasurer is responsible for executing the new investment strategy.

The committee will monitor the performance of the investments and consider possible asset allocation modifications as necessary.

Committee members: Steve Reed (Chair), Jim Blue, Alex Chauche, Dave Marks

### **Personnel Committee**—*Suzanne Carrillo*

The mission of the Personnel Committee is to provide personnel support for the administration of church employees to the Minister and the Board. 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. The committee partnered with the Finance Committee to develop Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) guidelines for church employees.

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.

Our major focus this year was our annual awareness campaign involving an article in Quest, a table for three Sundays around the Legacy Sunday service, and the celebration of Legacy Sunday. This year, four new members were inducted into the Legacy Society, bringing the total to 32. Several of the members are deceased, and their bequests plus gifts have brought the fund to over \$325,000.

Next year, we plan to be more active in approaching members to ask them to consider including UUCR in their estate plans.

The 2016-2017 Planned Giving Committee budget is \$500, of which \$65 has been spent.

Committee members: Len Cohen, Sharrill Dittmann (Chair), and Sue Roth

## **Congregation-Chartered Committee**

### **Nominating Committee—*Clarice Julka***

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 three Board positions (Vice President, General Trustee, and Treasurer) as well as candidates for two Nominating Committee positions, and submitted our recommendation to the Board for the replacement of one Nominating Committee member (Collen Dolak) who is our candidate for Vice President.

Biographic information, obtained from the candidates, was published in the April issue of *Quest*. We found excellent candidates and thank them for agreeing to run for office.

Committee members: Terrie Barr (Board of Trustees representative), Nancy Blum, Ricardo Carvajal, Karl Irikura, Clarice Julka, Antonio Carrillo, and Colleen Dolak.

## **Worship & Music**

### **Decorations Committee—*Holly Meyer***

The Decorations Committee provides floral decoration in front of the Sanctuary every Sunday, 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 and Anne McCaffrey were substitutes.

### **Music Committee—*Mike Holmes***

The mission of the Music Committee is to support the 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.

We have had another successful season of the Tree of Life Cafe. The final show was on Friday, May 12. We have decided not to continue the Cafes in their current form, in order to give a break to the volunteers who have been the mainstay of the events. We would like to thank all of the volunteers who have helped run the events as well as everyone who has come to listen and support local musicians! Some of the volunteers who deserve special mention include Jeremy Schuhmann, who has been our

talent wrangler and sound person for every single performance; Julie Graf and Mike Holmes for publicity and other support; and Ginny and Cynthia Shires-Thurston for their help with so many of the Cafes. We may be bringing the Cafe back in a different form that is yet to be determined.

We did not have our usual fundraiser for the Ethier Fund this year, but Grace is planning to have one in the fall.

Committee members: Grace Cho (Director of Music), Mike Holmes (Chair), Jeremy Schuhmann, and Julie Graf.

### **Ushers—*Patty Walker***

Ushers prepare hymnals prior to service, distribute the Order of Service, collect and count the offertory and greet congregants and visitors as they enter the Sanctuary.

Ushers and substitutes for 2016-2017: Diane Baillie, John Beach, Susan Beach, Paulette Campbell, Antonio Carrillo, Susanne Carrillo, Claudia Chitty, Jose Clemente, Len Cohen, Steve Crawford, Elaine Diamondidis, Ginger Dixon, Pat Einhorn, Steve Einhorn, Joe Goss, Gayle Hancock, Mary Hoferek, Nancy Klag, David Lorms, Alberta Maschal, Maude McGovern, Scott Reilly, Ken Sandin, Burt Smith, Martha Taylor, Sue Thomas, Karla Timmons, Patty Walker (Chair), and Liz Zerby

For next year, we will work on recruitment. We shall have three usher openings as of the end of June. Prior recruitment efforts in *Quest*, *E-Weekly*, and the Order of Service have not been successful.

### **Worship Arts Team—*Jim Blue***

The Worship Arts Team is charged with supporting the ministers in planning and creating high-quality worship services. We provide a Worship Steward to prepare the Sanctuary each Sunday and a Worship Associate to assist in the pulpit as needed. We coordinate the lay-led services and the Sunday services with guest speakers as needed. We meet periodically with the ministers for training and planning.

This year the team was in charge of two services, one led by Christin Green in November and one led by Jim Blue in June.

In the coming year we will work with the ministers in the planning for going to two worship services each Sunday.

Team members: Jim Blue (chair), Wayne Crump, Ginny Folsom, Julie Graf, Christin Green, Glenn Griffin, Scott Reilly, Cynthia Shires-Thurston; Rev. Rebekah Montgomery, Rev. Lynn Strauss

The 2016-2017 Worship Arts budget is \$1,500, of which \$1,400 has been spent.

# Lifespan Religious Education

## Adult Faith Formation Committee—*Anne Byrd*

The mission of the Adult Faith Formation Committee is to offer programs and classes that encourage UUCR members and friends to learn about history and current issues of UU; build a better world by acting on UU values; and learn the wisdom of other world religions.

Anne Byrd became chair after Shira Ehrlich resigned in June. The committee wants to thank Shira for her hard work and many contributions to the committee's efforts. Our offerings during this fiscal year include:

- Eight-session Wednesday night class, "Building Your Own Theology Part I", led by either Rev. Lynn Strauss or Rev. Rebekah Montgomery
- October Friday night "Poetry and Music Coffeehouse," superbly organized and led by Celia Young
- Wisdom Wednesday, November 30 – "Mystery, Majesty, Science and Our Spiritual Paths: A Night with Artist and Visionary Shanthi Chandra Sekar," led by Rev. Rebekah and Shanti
- A fall and spring "Spirituality in Film" session, created and presented by Tim Francis
- Co-sponsored the Beloved Conversations day and a half retreat – provided support services, offered prerequisite viewing of *Gran Torino* movie, and prepared and served 3 meals during the retreat
- Two-session Wednesday night class, "Ethics and the Body," led by Rev Lynn Strauss
- Emerson's Sunrise Coffee Circle is now held every Sunday morning before the worship service and is led by either Rev. Lynn, Rev. Rebekah, or an AFFC lay leader (Bonnie Bloomquist, John Dunbar, or Tim Francis)
- An opportunity in June to watch several of the UUA General Assemble events such as Welcoming Celebration and Ware Lecture is being organized.

The committee has been working to revitalize the UUCR library under our own professional librarian, Myra Remigio-Leonard. The collection has been reviewed and updated; duplicates or irrelevant books are currently being offered to the congregation to take home. A wish list for publications to be added is being prepared to identify those books to be purchased or that the congregation may donate from their own collection. By September, the library will be moving to the other side of Fellowship Hall to improve accessibility to the books and also provide some seating.

As part of the library project, the RE children will be making little free lending library houses to be placed on UUCR grounds, and materials for those houses will be funded by AFFC.

A total of \$226 of our \$850 budget line has been spent for food and beverages for Wednesday evening events and includes a loss of \$34 on book sales. The remaining balance will be used to fund the free lending library construction costs and new books for the library.

Committee members: Anne Byrd (Chair), Rev. Rebekah Montgomery, Bonnie Bloomquist, John Dunbar, Thecla (Teki) Fabian, Tim Francis, and Myra Remigio-Leonard

## **Children & Youth Religious Education Committee—*Karen Pittleman***

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 most significant accomplishment this year was the arrival of our new Director of Religious Education, Dayna Edwards. Dayna's philosophy that the congregation is the curriculum is closely aligned with the Vision for UUCR's Religious Education program, as outlined by the Religious Education Transition Team. The RE program has already begun to integrate and collaborate with other UUCR groups and committees, promoting multi-generational experiences. A highlight from the past few months would be the two family nights set aside for pizza and postcards – one night to MD state delegates, and the other for postcards of support to our Muslim neighbors.

Ongoing work of the committee includes recruitment, support, training and recognition of RE Volunteers.

Highlights from this past year include:

- Developed and implemented a one day local UU Heritage trip to engage 6th grade youth while 7th and 8th grade youth were on the Boston Heritage Trip
- Implementation of a new Makerspace summer curriculum.
- Began implementation of the Safe Congregations policy to protect our children, youth, and adults.
- Orientation to Spirit Play curriculum which will be implemented in the Fall

In the coming year we will continue to develop a more comprehensive Coming of Age program curriculum to include mentorship from adult congregants, leadership development, and community service. We will look at the potential to re-formulate the bi-annual Boston Heritage Trip for 7th and 8th graders. We will work to expand the OWL program to include a 4th-6th grade level program.

Committee members: David Lorms, Karen Pittleman (Chair), Judy Rayner, Tom Rowe, and Dayna Edwards (DRE)

## **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 congregation's monthly worship theme and function as a point of contact between the children and members of the congregation who share with the children how they are putting their faith into action.

- *Bi-monthly Youth Worship services for middle and high school students, held downstairs near the Youth RE classrooms.*  
This year our Youth Worship was re-vamped with a small group of adult volunteers (Deb Delavan, Andrea Hall, Karen Heilman, and Mary Carvajal) to help facilitate the set-up and organization of the worship.
- *Social justice projects for the children and youth:*
  - Our year-long food collection for Manna Food Center typically raises over 2,000 pounds of non-perishable food for our friends and neighbors here in Montgomery County.
  - As part of an “all morning” Children’s Worship service, we made lunches for the homeless women’s shelter.
  - During the holiday season, the treasured Mitten Tree – our annual collection of hats, gloves, scarves, and mittens – supports 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.

Goals for next year: With our new DRE’s vision, Children and Youth Worship will be completely re-vamped, to be a monthly full morning, multi-age worship experience.

The 2016-2017 Children’s and Youth Worship Committee budget is \$625.

Committee members: Gwen Rowe (Chair), Dayna Edwards (DRE), Silvia Bolland, Wendy Buzy, Melissa Moore, Karen Parker, and Marla Riley

## **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 Magyarsákod, 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 Magyarsákod have been partners since 1992. Rev. Sándor Balázs has been serving as minister in Magyarsákod 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. Balázs helped secure, is very helpful. The children made Christmas presents for the elderly, delivered them, and sang Christmas carols to them.

UUCR recently sent \$500 for the annual stipend for Rev. Balázs.

We are seeking new members for this 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 2016-2017 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, Groups, Activities, and Affiliations—*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 SJC Chair for 2016-2017 was Alonzo Smith. The Lay Ministry representatives were Bennett Rushkoff, followed by Ethel Gilbert. Bennett has been very active in the Partner Plate program. Following Ethel's advice we have adopted a covenant for the conduct of our meetings.

The following is a brief summary of major events and activities for 2016-2017, as well as outreach to other congregations and other community groups.

### ***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 congregation. 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 a world-wide campaign against torture, and focusing on refugees, the travel ban, etc. We also work on human rights abuses involving women and Indigenous Peoples. We are actively engaged in anti-death penalty work under the guidance of Cathy Knepper.

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 send postcards in the summer. We also take action on cases that are posted online. One of our prisoners of conscience is a young Kurdish woman in Iran, Zeynab Jalalian. Our member Ferrah Pourahmadi, originally from Iran, is in charge of the case. Our new prisoner is Dawit Isaac, a journalist imprisoned since 2001 in Eritrea. We are now in contact with Reporters Without Borders, which is actively engaged with Dawit's case. Our long-time member, John Welton, attends the Mid-Atlantic Regional Conference and the Annual General Meeting of AIUSA each year.

### ***BEACON HOUSE (Alberta Maschal)***

The purpose of 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, D.C. The primary goal of Beacon House is to provide at-risk youth with opportunities for positive educational and culturally-rich programs; 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.

This year at Beacon House has been eventful and filled with change; the board hired a new executive director, Kevin Hinton; Beacon House celebrated its 25th anniversary; Athletics Director Rodney Cephas was honored by the DC Department of Parks and Recreation as one of its 2017 Volunteers of the Year; Beacon House teen authors spoke at a national literary conference where they discussed their book, *The Day Tajon Got Shot*; Beacon House renewed its partnership with For the Love of Children (FLOC) and will resume the structured math and reading tutoring program in the fall. After serving the Edgewood Community for more than 25 years, Reverend Donald Robinson is retiring.

In addition to providing funds for scholarships for Camp Leap, the summer day camp sponsored by Beacon House which serves about 200 children for 6 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: <http://www.beaconhousedc.org> or go to its Facebook page at <https://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, who donate new unwrapped gifts for the children, youth and seniors at Edgewood at Christmas time, who make financial pledges to UUCR, which enables support for Beacon House to be funded as part of the Social Justice Committee budget, and who 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 (Ken Sandin)***

Community Ministries of Rockville (CMR) is an interfaith coalition of twenty-one Rockville-area congregations founded in 1967 to serve those in need in Rockville and Montgomery County. UUCR annually contributes \$2,000 to CMR and \$1,000 directly towards the Mansfield Kaseman Health Clinic (MKHC) from the Social Justice Committee budget, and individual members and friends donate funds and volunteer time.

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. More detail about the programs and budget is available through [www.cmrocks.org](http://www.cmrocks.org) and the CMR annual report.

#### ***GREEN TEAM (Julia Santerre)***

UUCR Green Team Annual Report 2016-17. Our mission is to (1) continuously find ways to reduce our negative impact on the earth (i.e. 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. Chair: Julia Santerre

Over the past year: we showed a couple of films to inform on and discuss environmental issues, including *Fracking Maryland*. We also coordinated with RE to lead the youth in our adopt-a-road cleanups; we led two environmental children's worship, and a full-day RE program about our stream run-off issues; we have continued our TerraCycle program, which gives congregants a place to recycle items which would otherwise go in a landfill; and we ran a Carbon Footprint Game to engage the congregation to reduce our collective carbon footprint. We also have a blog to help educate and inform the congregation of our efforts to live in harmony with the earth. Over the next year we hope to have more events and activities that all members and friends can participate in, better communicate opportunities for advocacy on environmental issues, and find ways to work jointly with other committees and groups within the UUCR. Budget: \$900. Amount Spent: \$517

***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 1,500 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). Fourteen 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***

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 third annual Greater Washington Immigration Film Festival. The festival took place over the four day period of October 20-23, 2016. The IAG showed the film, *Under the Same Moon*. For the first time, we showed the film in the UUCR Sanctuary, whereas in previous years we had screened the films at Montgomery College. This proved to be a good venue, and we had over 90 attendees. Following the film, Adriana Brigatti moderated a panel of immigrants living in Montgomery County, some of whom recounted stories of extreme difficulty crossing the southern national border. Overall, the festival reached over 1,000 people in eleven 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 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 CASA's Rockville site to assist legal permanent residents (Green Card holders) in their quest to become citizens.
- The IAG conducted information gathering activities to consider ways of assisting recently-arrived refugee families and to explore ways of helping undocumented immigrants who face intense threats from the federal government.
- The election of a much more conservative President and a continuing ultra conservative majority in Congress following the national election in November 2016 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 2016-2017 Immigration Action Group budget is \$800, which we expect to spend by mid-June.

### ***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 shelter, vocational services at the IW Empowerment Center, 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 provide meals for seventy women receiving emergency shelter and case management support services at the Interfaith Works Women's Center.

### ***JUSTICE FOR JUNIORS***

This project is an example of our outreach to external community organizations. Justice for Juniors is a DC-based organization that works with juveniles who are incarcerated by the DC Youth Authority. It utilizes area college students as mentors and role models for the teenagers in the system, and works to assist them in educational programs once they are released. Justice for Juniors is headed by the Rev. J. Siafa Johnson. During 2016-2017, SJC members Shira Ehrlich and Sean McCarthy worked with this organization.

### ***LGBTQ TASK GROUP (Stephanie Kreps)***

LGBTQ Task Group's mission 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. Stephanie Kreps is the chair

Rainbow Youth Alliance (RYA) Advisory Council: Jennifer Carter, Beth Irikura, Charles Farmer, Timothy Elliott, Stephanie Kreps, Adrienne Shaw and Bobby Bangert. Jennifer and Beth are UUCR members. Brisk attendance at RYA sessions continues, with new youth at most meetings. Monthly movie nights are poorly attended. Continuation of this series will be revisited.

Patricia Cooper's tenure as RYA co-Program Coordinator (PC) begins in June. She will be the PC in July. Robert Bangert tendered his resignation as PC in March 2017, staying through June, 2017. Stephanie represented UUCR's RYA: visits to LGBTQ clubs at 11 MCPS high schools; the launch of the county's Communities United Against Hate; 'Time to Thrive' Human Rights Campaign 3-day LGBTQ youth support seminar in DC; and speaking at Women's March DC 'Power in Unity' seminar. Upcoming: Rockville Hometown Holidays' 2-day May event. RYA's UUCR member-staffed booth is a major outreach for UUCR AND RYA. UUCR members are recruited to join area UU's in the June 2017 Capital Pride Parade and Festival. The DC Youth Pride organization postponed their event until July, 2017. Stephanie functions as co-facilitator at the Germantown PFLAG group, displaying UUCR and RYA flyers at meetings. Donations to RYA are steady. Our annual Brother Help Thyself grant was \$3,000.

The RYA Council evolves a fundraising strategy and nears completion of its RYA PC duties document. Timothy Elliott created a document detailing expectations of Council members, approved by the Council. A fall 2017 Council retreat is being planned. In progress: contact with the new Gender and Sexuality Alliance student clubs formed in several MCPS middle schools.

Last year, a Spanish-speaking RYA was discussed with Rev. Archene Turner until she withdrew the project. Another disappointment is that our planned Spring Concert was postponed until 2018 because of scheduling problems. The choir's concert date was changed from January to only one week ahead of our planned date of April 1. Another disappointment was that the choir date was then moved again to fall 2017. As the only two entities in the congregation which plan benefit concerts, more communication and coordination between the choir and RYA would help prevent these problems. 2016-2017 budget: \$900; \$816 spent. Remainder: UUCR Capital Pride participation

### ***MEDICAID FOR SENIORS***

Mary Hoferek has been very active in advocating on this issue, and especially in asking people to contact state legislators on enlarging the Maryland Medicaid regulations. Her letter to the editor was published by the Washington Post on November 29, 2016.

### ***PARTNER PLATE PROGRAM***

The Partner Plate recipients for 2016-2017 were; September-October, East Coast Migrant Head Start Project; November-December, International Rescue Committee; January-February, Beacon House; March-April, Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice; and May-June, Church of the Larger Fellowship.

### ***PEACE GROUP***

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. We host a coffee-hour literature table and encourage congregational participation in peace vigils, petition drives, demonstrations, and peace advocacy directed to local, state, and national legislatures. This year, our efforts focused on advocating with UULM in Annapolis (e.g., reform of our broken justice system); organizing for single-payer, universal health care; and holding a series of monthly evening study sessions, "Pivot Homeward," a title that reflects our desire to human and material resources be redirected away from foreign military adventures and devoted to real security -- to meeting human needs -- here in the United States. Although Friday evening attendance was often poor, new ties were made with Cedar Lane UU member Ralph Krause (library of DVDs on Palestine-Israel) and organizers (from many faiths) of the "Voices from the Holy Land" film festival held each March-April at the National Cathedral.

–Submitted by PSG members: Steve Lapham, Ken Sandin, and Alonzo Smith

### ***RACIAL JUSTICE WORKING GROUP (Fran Lowe)***

The Racial Justice Working group will lead the congregation to study and learn together to create opportunities for personal and systemic transformation toward racial justice. Members: Alonzo Smith, Alberta Maschal, Kevin Power, Cynthia Bauerle, Karim Alzouma, Rev. Rebekah Montgomery, Fran Lowe, Hellen Oketch, Luke Smith, Jenny Fei, and Rev. Lynn Strauss.

Initiated at UUCR last year, the Racial Justice Working Group continues to encourage the community to engage in multi-cultural and racial justice issues by attending UU racial justice and other relevant workshops and events, hosting book discussions, and bringing significant programs to the Congregation.

Following up on last year's book discussions of *Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson, and *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates, Kevin facilitated a discussion on *The Third Reconstruction: Moral Mondays, Fusion Politics, and the Rise of a New Justice Movement* by the Reverend Dr. William J. Barber II.

For continual learning and engagement, Kevin, Alberta, Fran, Rev. Lynn and Alonzo (remotely) are planning to attend the UUA General Assembly. Members also attended the Central East Region (CER) Better Together Leadership Day which included workshops and a forum for the three UUA Presidential Candidates; a CER Capital Cluster UU Racial Justice Gathering where we shared our congregational stories and discussed strategies around skills and actions for growing our multicultural ministries and partnerships. Last year Fran and Hellen attended the 10th Leading Edge Conference "Revolutionary Love" led by the Rev. Jacqui Lewis, pastor at Middle Collegiate Church in NYC. Our group was particularly pleased to provide two outstanding programs to the congregation: The "Building Authentic Diversity" half-day workshop on intercultural communication led by Rev. Rob Keithan was attended by more than 30 people.

“Beloved Conversations, Teaching Hearts and Minds to Open for Multicultural Change”, is a curriculum provided by the Meadville Lombard Theological School Fahs Collaborative. The purpose is to learn to live better in our multi-racial, multicultural, and often theologically diverse communities, locate our assumptions about race and ethnicity, and prepare ourselves to take effective action. During the opening retreat led by Dr. Jenice View, we formed into three small groups of 10 people each, including 2 facilitators. Each group participated in eight seminars with topics including Racial/Ethnic History, Dynamic of Racism and Privilege, Micro-Aggressions, Interrupting Racism, Race & Ethnicity in our Community, Legacy of Racism, How Can We Be-in-the-World? And Collecting our Wisdom. We are very grateful to our facilitators: Cynthia Shires-Thurston, Dayna Edwards, Fran Lowe, Lisa Fredin, Sharrill Dittmann, Stephanie Kreps, and our ministers Rev. Lynn Strauss and Rev. Rebekah Montgomery for their ongoing support. We also thank the Adult Faith Formation Committee for co-sponsoring the program, providing publicity, planning, set-up and food for the retreat.

The RJWG also provided leadership for the discussions, “Racism in our UU House,” and the “White Supremacy Teach-in”.

Unfortunately, a few members have had to leave the group. We are hoping to add new people, continue to bring new programs and provide leadership to encourage our community to engage in racial justice and multi-cultural issues.

#### ***SANTE TOTAL***

Sante Total means “complete health” in Haitian Creole. On Saturday, March 25 a celebration was presented for the program Sante Total: One-Step toward Improved Health Care Access in Rural Haiti. We celebrated with Haitian food, music and stories, followed by a short program on the state of health in Haiti today, and efforts to improve health care access there. Speakers included; Gabriel Thelus, the Haitian Coordinator for Sante Total, and Barbara Weis, MD, MPH and TM, pediatrician, and executive director of Sante Total.

#### ***SOCIAL JUSTICE TOWN HALL***

More than 50 people took part in the Social Justice Town Hall on March 12. We learned about current UUCR’s Social Justice (SJC) activities and ways that we could participate, and also had an opportunity to suggest new ideas for future consideration. The program, which was moderated by Rev. Lynn Strauss and Jack Eisenhauer, included presentations on issues in four major areas: LGBTQ (Stephanie Kreps), Immigration (Adrianna Brigatti), Green Team (Julia Santerre), and Racial Justice (Karim Alzouma and Rev. Rebekah Montgomery). If you missed this meeting, you can still learn about UUCR’s SJ program by reading the SJ material in the 2016 Annual Report (on UUCR’s website) or stopping by the SJ Table during coffee hour. The meeting elicited a wide variety of ideas, many related to the four major areas noted above. Interest was also expressed in healthcare issues, women’s issues, and income inequality. Several mentioned working with other groups with common interests as a way of increasing our effectiveness.

As we move to the future, we note that UUCR has a Process for Approval of Congregation–Wide Social Justice Programs. The process requires meeting several criteria including identifying “a suitable number of leaders and committed members willing to make a multi-year commitment.” Copies of the process were available at the SJ Table.

#### ***STATEMENT ON THANKSGIVING***

In November the SJC issued a statement, which read in part: “The UUCR Social Justice Committee supports the UUA Business Resolution on ‘Thanksgiving Reconsidered,’ at

<http://www.uua.org/statements/thanksgiving-day-reconsidered>.” We added to this the thoughts that, in keeping with Native American values, food is not just a commodity to be marketed and consumed but a vital part of life, produced by humans for other humans, and that we are in solidarity with the people of Standing Rock, North Dakota.

***UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST LEGISLATIVE MINISTRY OF MARYLAND (UULM-MD)***

UULM-MD advocates for legislation that reflects UU values in the Maryland General Assembly. For 2016-2017, Andrea Hall and Alonzo Smith were members of the UULM-MD Board.

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

On January 28 the UULM-MD annual Legislative Kickoff was held in Annapolis. Over 150 UUs from around the state were in attendance and the featured speakers were Maryland Attorney General Brian Frosh, and Kathleen McTigue, director of the UU College of Social Justice. In addition to Andrea and Alonzo, five other members of the UUCR congregation attended.

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. The work of UULM-MD brings together UUs from across the state. UULM-MD works with established coalitions, and it gives UUCR members and friends the opportunity to work with other diverse faith communities and nonprofit organizations.

During the legislative session (January 11 to April 10), Alonzo informed members of the social justice committee about opportunities to contact their state legislators to express support for our priority legislation, and urged congregants to call, email, or visit their legislators, and he testified in Annapolis. On January 15, Alonzo and Andrea organized a forum on criminal justice at UUCR, with a focus on bail bond reform. There were four speakers in addition to Alonzo: Liz Bobo, former state delegate and member of the Columbia UU congregation; Eleanor Piez, intern minister for the UU Church of Annapolis and UULM-MD; Candy Clark, UU activist with the Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform, and Jonathan Wesley Hutto, longtime community organizer in PG County. The event was well-attended and stimulated a very lively conversation. On January 28 the UULM-MD annual Legislative Kickoff was held in Annapolis. Over 150 UUs from around the state were in attendance and the featured speakers were Maryland Attorney General Brian Frosh, and Kathleen McTigue, director of the UU College of Social Justice. In addition to Andrea and Alonzo, five other members of the UUCR congregation attended.

At the close of the 2017 session of the Maryland General Assembly at midnight on Monday, April 10, we can report that all of our priority issues have been acted upon by the Legislature, and some have also received Executive action. Most of these actions have been positive. The Social Justice Committee allocated \$300 for UUCR’s annual membership in the Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland. In the coming year, we would like to encourage greater congregational involvement, as well building coalitions with organizations in Montgomery County.

***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, through a \$100 annual

donation from the Social Justice Committee budget; encouraging individual memberships; and, with the Children & Youth Religious Education Committee, collecting for UUSC's annual Guest at Your Table fundraiser.

### ***UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE (UUSJ)***

(Pablo) Pavel DeJesus, Exec. Director, UUSJ-National Capital Region, engaged us in a conversation at our November monthly meeting. Gary Magnusson introduced Pablo DeJesus, the newly-appointed Executive Director of UUSJ, Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice in the National Capital Region. A graduate of Oberlin College, he has served on the staff of the Governor of Puerto Rico, as well as in several offices in Washington. Pablo briefly reviewed the history of UUSJ, noting that it had been recently restructured. Pablo told us that the three UUSC task force groups now being formed center around the issues of immigration, (environmental issues?) and escalating economic inequality. Pablo's long-term vision is to move the UUSJ into a national organization. The UUCR SJC is hoping to assist him in this work.

### ***WOMEN'S MARCH***

On January 2, 2017 thousands of women from around the USA marched in Washington, D.C. In addition to several major American cities, there were similar demonstrations in European capitals. The theme was justice and equality, and a UUCR contingent was led by Dayna Edwards and Roselie Bright. Congregational follow-up activities also took place.

## **Membership & Communications**

### **Archives & History Committee—*Maude McGovern***

The mission of the Church Archives and History Committee is to 1) preserve, organize, and document UUCR's history and 2) use the archives to answer staff and member questions and educate the church community about our history.

Since mid-2015, the committee has worked on organizing church archival materials including photographs, Board minutes, annual reports, newsletters, and orders of service. These were stored (and forgotten in some cases) in various places until they were moved to one location in recent years. Thus the first step has been basic sorting; for example, putting all the board minutes in one place and arranging by date. A "Finder's Guide" is being developed; this is simply a list of materials so that someone searching for information on a topic knows what resources are available. A great deal of organizational work has been done, but much, much more remains.

An effort is made to keep updating and expanding the collection. For example, information was collected about the involvement of UUCR members and friends in the historic Women's March on Washington in January 2017. Donation of relevant materials such as photos and oral histories is encouraged.

The key accomplishment in 2016 was the writing of *UUCR at 60: UUCR 60th Anniversary History*. It is the only narrative history of the church to date (as distinct from timelines or lists of milestones) and summarizes in booklet form the church's history from its founding to 2016. It was very well received by staff and members, many of whom purchased copies. It is also available on the website.

The committee makes a brief presentation to each group of prospective members in the Path to Membership class and has prepared a handout summarizing UUCR's history that participants receive.

The committee also researches questions on church history from staff and members asking things such as the dates a former music director served to when a section of parking lot was put in. Recently the committee provided facilitators of the Beloved Conversations program with background information on race relations and civil rights activity in Rockville and Montgomery County in the 1950s-60s, as well as specifics on some of the activities undertaken by members of the Unitarian Church of Rockville to promote desegregation.

It is the committee's belief that a knowledge of UUCR's history deepens appreciation and understanding of our church community.

Committee Member—Maude McGovern

### **Denominational Affairs—*Eric Burch***

The purpose of the Denominational Affairs Group is to connect the people of UUCR to the larger UU movement, and to connect the UU movement to the people of UUCR.

Major accomplishments for the year:

- Maintained UUCR's connection into the Capital Cluster, the dozen-or-so District and suburban Maryland congregations near us, attending quarterly meetings and monthly web conferences. Eric Burch is the UUCR Representative on the Capital Cluster Council.
- Notified interested UUCR members and the Director of Communications of new Capital Cluster events, as well as some events in the Northern Virginia Cluster, the Central East Region, or the Unitarian Universalist Association.
- Tracking the evolution of the Central East Region as it folds in the old Joseph Priestley District.
- Coordinated after-GA activities of the UUCR members who attended the 2016 General Assembly in Columbus, and also preparing our delegates for the General Assembly in New Orleans this coming June.

The Capital Cluster is the level of organization where UUCR members and staff can interact routinely with UUA staff on new initiatives. If you are interested in getting more involved in Cluster, Regional, or National denominational activities, please contact Eric Burch and you will receive UU-wide emails concerning areas of your interest.

The Board offers some General Assembly support through its budget.

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 an *E-Weekly* article and an information/sign-up sheet at the annual Activities Fair.

## ***Quest Newsletter—Alberta Maschal and Adrian Graham***

*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. Adrian Graham 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 Adrian Graham. Louise Friedenbergl is the Wednesday mailing crew coordinator. Nancy Grissom, Gwen Rowe and Jo Wilson are the regular crew. Thanks to all.

## **Finance**

### ***Action Auction Fiesta Cruise—Carolyn Randall***

The Action Auction Fiesta Cruise is an annual event that doubles as a fundraiser and a community building event. Our focus, as always, was to include all members and friends, as well as any visitors who were interested. The goal was to make fundraising fun, and to provide opportunities for fellowship throughout the year.

The Action Auction was held on Saturday May 6, 2017. This year's auction again kept the Fiesta Cruise theme, allowing us to reuse much of the materials from previous years. A new logo was created, which we will reuse next year. Donation items were solicited from outside businesses, as well as congregation members and friends. This year's auction had 165 items up for bid, and exceeded last year's attendance with (another) record number of attendees. There were 147 total attendees at the event, 25 of whom had not attended before. In addition, 15 families had proxies bidding for them.

The donations for this year's auction included many ethnic and innovative dinners, such as An Evening of Gemütlichkeit, and a Progressive Dinner where five UUCR families live on the same block. There were many gift cards to local businesses and restaurants. Many wonderful bakery and gourmet items included scones, carrot cake, plum pudding, peach chutney, UUCR granola, to name a few. There were services, such as tie-dying dish towels, tree trimming, hand-picked fruit, and home tech support; wonderful entertainment, including an afternoon of live jazz and a winter afternoon coffeehouse; and old favorites like the Classic Hen Party and Family Game Night.

The food this year was in line with our cruise theme – a buffet that highlighted food from two Mediterranean ports of call, France and Lebanon. Beer and wine were sold as well. We repeated last year's successes with the Fine Wine Raffle and the Big Beer Raffle.

Action Auction planning starts in December, and the leadership team is in place by January. In early February online donations are open, and the first pulpit announcement and donations kickoff is in early March. Ticket sales begin four weeks before the auction, and the catalog is produced two weeks before the auction. All of these activities require much planning, coordination and participation from

congregation members and friends. There were over 65 volunteers participating in publicity, business outreach, ticket sales, computer and website work, decorations, set-up, clean-up, solicitations of donations, catalog preparation, and more. 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.

Following are lessons learned, including changes that would help the Action Auction achieve its goals in the future:

- The auction needs a minimum of four Sundays with a Donation table in Fellowship Hall. This year the middle two of those Sundays had scheduled events for the congregation in Founders Hall right after the service, which meant no one stopped at the donations table to talk about or make a donation. Making a donation takes time, involves conversation, often looking at previous catalogs, and that can't happen when there are compelling events going on elsewhere that the congregation is urged to attend.
- This year, with only 10 days from the donation deadline, we had only 81 donations, less than halfway to our goal. This was significantly less than last year, when we had over 100 by that same time. It took a large effort by the team, including many emails and phone calls to previous donors, to reach our goal.
- This year the auction had five Sundays scheduled to take donations, but postponed the start by one week to allow the canvass to make another request from the pulpit. In retrospect, we needed the five weeks, and will keep to that next year.
- We will increase outreach to RE families to encourage more participation and attendance at the auction.
- Two of the key team members this year were new to the church, not yet members. Both were very effective and enthusiastic, and we will increase our recruitment of new members and friends next year.
- We are working on a written, repeatable process for putting on the auction, to help volunteers in the future benefit from past lessons learned.

Net of expenses, the Action Auction Fiesta Cruise *raised over \$31,000 this year.*

Action Auction Fiesta Cruise Co-Chairs: Carolyn Randall, Claudia Chitty, Liz Zerby, and Sandy Larkin

## **Harvest Bazaar—*Aaron Pied***

The fundraiser was re-named the Harvest Bazaar because the fundraiser did not fall on Halloween again as in the previous year. The Harvest Bazaar was however, still designed to emphasize fun and games and create incentives for the public, members, and friends of our congregation to bring their families, and to allow parents to shop longer while providing activities for their children. We updated some of the carnival games but otherwise kept the same format as last year: Halloween/Autumn inspired 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.

The Harvest Bazaar was relatively successful, netting about \$7,600, which was about the same as last year despite the perceived decline in attendance. It is hard to determine the reason for a perceived decline in attendance because traditional marketing efforts were maintained and social medial efforts

increased. Other possibilities for the decline include: the competition for donations and promotion with another major fundraiser 2 weeks prior (Miracle Sunday), other similar fundraisers happening throughout the community around this date, and possible weariness for this Bazaar formatted fundraiser.

The Harvest Bazaar format is marked by two major uncertainties: the quality and quantity of donated books, jewelry, toys, and white elephant items can't be estimated; and the uncertainty of attendance for the event. These two variables make the potential success of the event independent from the immense time and effort from volunteers needed to execute this type of fundraiser. Most of the lead volunteers have been leading their section for years and new volunteers will be needed for the continuation of this type of event. Finally, the bake sale (which brought in \$573) may no longer be able to take place in the future as the Montgomery County health inspector stated that goods baked off-premises was not allowed under the acquired food permit. Investigation with the County is needed to resolve this question.

Finally, we feel that if this fundraiser is to continue using this Bazaar format, it should remain family-focused with games and activities for children and promotion should be early and frequent, within UUCR and in the greater community.

Harvest Bazaar Co-Chairs: Richard Chitty, Aaron Pied, and Julie Graf

## **Buildings & Grounds**

### **Aesthetics Committee—*Sharrill Dittmann***

The purpose of the Aesthetics Committee is promote a beautiful and welcoming worship and meeting space at UUCR. The Committee members organize several art shows each year and consult with committee and staff on matters of color and design as requested.

The committee mounted several shows during the year:

- Marily Mojica – acrylics and various media
- Jamie Peterson – oils
- Glorida Valdes “Tarasca”, Carmen Torruella, and Francisco Loza – various media
- Sheila White Guevin – photography
- Jean Hirons – pastel

Seven works were sold, from which UUCR realized 20% of the sale price.

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

The 2016-2017 Aesthetics Committee budget is \$100, which has not been spent.

### **Buildings & Grounds Committees—*Narcy Klag***

The mission of the Buildings & Grounds Committee is 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 work 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 HVAC, 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 staff, contractors, the Power Tool Gang (volunteers led by Dan Pierce and Nancy Klag) and the Grounds Group (volunteers led by Mary Lanigan, Sue Hedges, and Jo Wilson).

Third, there are major capital improvements projects, of which funding must be approved by the Board of Directors. These projects are usually contracted out.

### ***BUILDINGS***

Accomplishments include:

- Installation of 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.
- Fixed broken window cranks in Room 44.
- Patched and painted drywall at top of stairwell in Building 5. Installed a new gate stop.
- Installed new handicapped parking and visitor signs.
- Repaired major cracks in the ceiling of Founders Hall.
- Repainted Founders Hall including ceiling and walls.
- Obtained contract to replace the ramp leading into the hallway near Founders Hall.
- Repaired several sections of broken fence off the back driveway.
- Repaired ties along the entrance driveway.
- Obtained bids to repair driveway and parking lot cracks.
- Revised the list of capital expenses needed to upgrade or replace building equipment or structures over the long term.

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. 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.

Buildings Committee members: Nancy Klag (Chair), Sue Hedges, Jon Landenburger, Phil Lowe, John McIlwaine, and Dan Pierce.

### ***GROUNDS/LANDSCAPING (Mary Lanigan)***

The Committee 1) manages routine maintenance of the landscape (the grounds); and 2) develops and oversees implementation of the landscape plan to enhance the beauty and accessibility of the landscape, implement green solutions where appropriate, and sustain the designated forest conservation areas in accordance with guidelines from the City of Rockville. Also oversees expenditures from the Site Beautification Fund when funds are available.

## Major accomplishments:

- Grounds Master Plan Task Force, chaired by Sue Hedges, developed a UUCR Grounds Master Plan Guidance Document outlining principles, priorities, and proposed process. Task Force members were Matt Beyers, Richard Noreikis, Barbara Harrison, Irene Eckstrand, Martin Haber, and Marianne Miller.
- Identified a liaison, Maude McGovern, to communicate the committee's landscaping recommendations to the landscaping company that performs lawn mowing, periodic pruning, and snow removal. The contract is managed by the Church Administrator. The Landscape budget includes the cost of the annual maintenance contract.
- Researched and identified a contractor to perform re-grading/stormwater management remediation near the ECC playground. Effort led by Irene Eckstrand. Work completed in August 2016.
- Held annual Do It Day in April to celebrate Earth Day and give everyone an opportunity to plant flowers, dig out wild onions, remove invasive plants, etc. Jo Wilson chose perennials this year for the Sanctuary Courtyard to make this a perennial garden, friendly to butterflies and bees. Many thanks to the families and children who helped and to April Pulvirenti who organized our annual Do It Day vegan lunch.
- Scheduled Weeding and Gardening workdays one Saturday morning per month during the growing season to weed and supplement the work of the landscaping contractor. Identified several people to maintain a small portion of the grounds on their own time – our Adopt a Plot program.
- Planted five serviceberry trees (native trees) in the median strip between the two lower parking lots to replace the dogwood trees that all died over time.
- Tim Francis and Steve Lapham continue their volunteer tree pruning and care.

## Goals for next year:

- Identify and hire a landscape designer or architect to design a new landscape plan based on the recommendations of the Task Force.
- Begin to implement the new landscape plan.
- Ask the City of Rockville forester to assess trees that appear dead and have the forester authorize removal of dead trees that pose safety or liability problems. Plan for required replacement of trees removed.

Grounds Committee members: Matt Beyers, Wayne Crump, Irene Eckstrand, Tim Francis, Martin Haber, Barbara Harrison, Sue Hedges, Mary Lanigan, Steve Lapham, Maude McGovern, Bill Newhouse, April Pulvirenti and Jo Wilson.

A special thanks to all the Tool Time Gang and Grounds volunteers who put in many hours to keep our buildings and grounds in top shape. We hope to recruit more volunteers to both of these groups this next year as our numbers have been dwindling over the last several years.

The 2016-2017 Building Maintenance budget is \$27, 360; through 10 months, \$14,167 has been spent. The 2016-2017 Grounds Maintenance budget is \$14,300; through 10 months, \$11,392 has been spent.

## **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 for the year:

- Migration of the church database to cloud-based <https://www.churchdb.com/uucr>.
- Added a 50" HDTV on a cart to our AV inventory.
- Established new mailing lists and aliases for all the churches 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 committee such as canvass or a search committee.
- Updated mailing lists.
- Continued to ensure that all systems are patched with the latest software and firmware releases.
- Continued to provide remote access for treasurers to the Treasurer PC on which they run QuickBooks.
- Maintained backups for staff files saved to the UUCR server shared and personal directories.
- Began to explore cloud storage options for staff files (personal and shared).
- Achieved the desired performance of VOIP system, improving sound quality and eliminating phantom incessant ringing by successfully tasked Comcast to replace cable modem and configuring UUCR routers to better support VOIP.
- Ensured that staff computers were set up properly and functional after office moves.
- Set up accounts for new staff members and trained them when necessary about UUCR's IT infrastructure.
- Replaced Ethernet switch in finance office (this switch connects our Comcast modem with Building 4, so it is a vital piece). It is now of the same type as other Ethernet switches in Building 4 Rooms 45 and 42.
- Switched the domain name registrar for uucr.org from Network Solutions to Google.
- Verified that new Ricoh copier/printer would support staff needs for scanning and printing just like its predecessor.
- Replaced dual monitor setup for Adrian Graham, Director of Communications & Membership.

Next year's goals:

- Full migration of staff files to cloud storage.

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, and Eric Burch (database)

## **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. The volunteers have learned to use the new sound mixer. We could use one or two additional volunteers.

Shortly after last year's annual report was prepared, sound-dampening acoustical panels were installed on the raised back wall of the Sanctuary. These have made a noticeable improvement to the intelligibility of speech in the room. They are also attractive and unobtrusive, and I'm sure that many members are not even aware that they are there.

Over the summer, we accepted delivery of the desk that houses the new sound mixer, completed the purchasing of cables and other hardware and installed the mixer. This involved the installation of patch panels to make the connection between existing hardware in the sound closet and the mixer, through a multi-connector audio "snake" cable that runs from the mixer to the patch panels. Special thanks to Jeremy Schuhmann and Mike Holmes for designing the signal routing, and to Jeremy, Mike, and Sean Hickey for the installation work. Thanks are also due to our wonderful Church Administrator, Donna Taylor, who helped with purchasing and the logistics of the desk delivery.

The new mixer has allowed us to customize the equalization of individual microphones, and this has contributed greatly to the clarity of speech in the room. (Equalization is basically like a highly adjustable tone control.) It has also made it much easier for the sound volunteers to quickly mute unused microphones and make volume adjustments while seated facing the pulpit.

Over the summer, one of the power amplifiers failed and blew out the speaker drivers in both of the front speaker enclosures. We sent the amplifier away to the manufacturer for repair, and hired American Amplifier to replace the speaker drivers. We also had them replace a power supply component in the other main power amplifier as a preventive measure. The added expense of these unexpected repairs accounts for our going over budget this year.

The 2016-2017 Sound Committee budget is \$1,160, and \$2,790 has been spent.

Committee members: Mike Holmes (Chair), Jeremy Schuhmann, Dennis Wellnitz and Steve Greene.

## **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*. Judy Eisenhower served as editor this year. If you have joys and concerns that you would like to appear in *Quest*, please contact Judy.
- Greeting cards: The Pastoral Care Team sends 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.
- The Pastoral Care Team bulletin board is installed in Fellowship Hall. 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:

- Rev. Rebekah Montgomery did a workshop for us on April 6, 2017. We did some hands-on exercises to improve our listening and communication skills. She also presented insight in getting in touch with ourselves and our own outlooks.
- Members of the PCT attended workshops given by Hospice and other UU churches this year, but we did not host any workshops at UUCR.

Team members: Jill Asman, Marilyn Briant, Paulette Campbell (Co-Chair), Sonali Desai, Judy Eisenhower, Jewell Golden, Kent Hancock (Lay Minister), Jane Klag (Co-Chair), David Lorms, Fran Lowe, Susan McCall, Marianne Miller, Marie Reed, Marialyce Sherr, and Sue Thomas

## **Women's Open Spiritual Connection Group—*Sahar Dawisha***

Our goal is to connect by learning about ourselves and each other, while deepening our spirituality together.

We continue to explore spiritual growth through meditation, creative self-expression, and mutual support. Some of our activities this year included: fostering self-awareness and connection through exploration of color and shapes, movement, heart cards, nature, Goddess Oracle Cards, Zentangle drawing, and creating and updating our spiritual timelines. We examined two Spiritual Themes from the UUA's Church of the Larger Fellowship's (CLF) *Quest for Meaning* (<https://www.questformeaning.org/spiritual-reflections/spiritual-themes/>) which included Wholehearted Living and Freedom/Struggle, with a culminating activity of creating and sharing a vision board/collage to reflect upon our strengths and to guide our future path.

We have participated in community outings and service activities such as attending a New Year's Eve labyrinth walk at Cedar Lane UU as a group, followed by a get-together; and, preparing and delivering meals twice to the Wilkin's Avenue Women's Assessment Center. Our spiritual growth and learning has occurred by generating questions and sharing insights, which has enhanced our appreciation and enjoyment of each other as well as other UUCR spiritual activities, such as Emerson's Cafe.

By utilizing UUA and other resources to enhance our spiritual journey, we will continue to explore creative activities to enhance our spiritual lives; participate in community outings and service activities; experience additional labyrinths walks together; and, attend inspiring performance(s) followed by personal insights.

Committee members: Sahar Dawisha (Chair), Diane Baillie (Co-Chair), Bonnie Bloomquist (Co-Chair), and Julie Robinson (Co-Chair).

### **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***

Our craft group provides a welcoming setting for women to share conversation and crafting each Tuesday from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. We host anywhere from 2 to 10 women who meet weekly to socialize outside the home and to share an enjoyment of arts and crafts. Most of this year was spent getting acquainted with adult coloring books and various materials used for coloring (inks, pencils, markers). The conversation usually includes current politics, last Sunday's sermon, personal reminiscing, and any other topics that are mutually enjoyable. All of the \$100 annual allotment was spent on coloring books, markers, and colored pencils. The group enjoys small projects occasionally, such as coloring in posters that will be used by one of the RE classes. Our ages range from sixty-something to the mid-nineties (and proud of it!)

We are always looking for ways to welcome newcomers who would like a social outing each week.

### **Literary Fiction Book Group—*Marialyce Sherr***

There are two book discussion groups at UUCR. The Literary Fiction Discussion Group was formed in April, 2016. It normally meets on the second Monday of each month from 1:30 p.m. until 3:30 p.m. in Room 50. UUCR members are welcome to join one or both groups.

The Literary Fiction group confines its discussion to fiction and to those works, past and present, that 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 over a dozen UUCR members to form a group that focused on outstanding prose and in-depth character

studies within the context of well-developed plots. Some examples of the books selected include: *Love in the Time of Cholera* by Gabriel Garcia and *The Sense of an Ending* by Julian Barnes.

The group has been strongly attended. Twice we have invited authors to come to the group and discuss their work; each author accepted the invitation. We operate without a budget.

### **Quilters**—*Louise Friedenberg*

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

Our group created its 36th annual quilt, called “Winter Maze,” which was raffled at the Harvest Bazaar on Saturday, October 29, 2016. Raffle tickets (920) were sold at \$2 each or 3 for \$5. Net profit was \$1,571. Julie Siegal, a music friend of Lisa Reed, was the quilt winner.

“Winter Maze” is a queen-sized quilt, both pieced and appliquéd, and hand-quilted. Our inspiration came from a photo we saw on Pinterest, a quilt designed by Ngaire Brooks from New Zealand. It consisted of lots of vines and leaves, flowers, and birds. The pieced blocks consisted of 12 pinwheel blocks, and 6 square in square blocks.

We also made many hand-crafted items for this fundraiser, including quilted table runners, pillows, potholders, wall hangings, tree ornaments, crayon and pencil roll-ups, notecards, knit items, and more. A profit of \$465 was raised for UUCR from these crafts. We also sold these hand-crafted items after the Worship Service on December 4, 2016, the “Getting Ready for the Holidays” Sunday. A profit of \$378 was raised at this event.

The 2016-2017 Quilters budget is \$275, for both quilt and assorted crafts. Amount that has been spent as of May 16, 2017 is \$129.42. We are currently working on our 2017 Raffle Quilt.

Group members include: Margaret Chalkley, Pat Chapin, Carol Dangel, Louise Friedenberg, 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 20-25 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 is the group organizer.

This year, members of the Young Adults Group:

- Had monthly brunch outings after service
- Provided an email group through which young adults can coordinate attending UUCR events together. This year, these events included the Fellowship Dinner and movie nights.

As a large portion of our membership from the last 5-10 years is aging out, we are hoping younger, newer members will step up into leadership.

The 2016-2017 YAG budget is \$200, which has not been spent.