



UUCR

Annual Report 2018

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Rockville
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Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Rockville

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Staff

Rev. Lynn Thomas Strauss, Senior Minister
Rev. Rebekah Savage, Associate Minister
Rev. Jack Young, Minister Emeritus
Dayna Edwards, M.A., Director of Religious Education
Sarah Jebian, Interim Director of Music
Adrian L. H. Graham, Director of Communications & Membership
Donna Taylor, Church Administrator
Rena Geibel, Religious Education Coordinator
Justin Furnia, Pianist
Justin Onyeador, Building Sexton

Officers

Steve Eckstrand, President
Colleen Dolak, Vice President
See-Yan Lam, Secretary
Christy Shannon, Treasurer
Eric Burch, Assistant Treasurer
Barbara Harrison, Assistant Treasurer
Ellen Rohan, Immediate Past President

General Trustees

Dana Alzouma
José Clemente
Aaron Pied

Annual Report 2018

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Vital Statistics – as of May 6, 2018

Members: 404

Friends: 151

Religious Education Enrollment: 145

Religious Education Families: 124

New members from May 1, 2017 to May 6, 2018: 40

Carson Bennett, Rachel Bennett, Haley Besner, Claudia Blackburn, Stephanie Bozzo, Thomas Bozzo, Anne Byrd, Benjamin Callison, Anna Helland, Christopher Alan “Kit” Jeeves, Larissa Johnson, Barbara Karpf, Holly Kyles, Sandra Larkin, Melissa Marousek, Sanja Modric, Tia Morton, Norma Noreikis, Jay Olsen, Caroline Pettit, David Pettit, Niambi Powell, Maxine Reger, Ashley Rhinehart, James Rhyne, Susan Rhyne, Carla Rodriguez, Sandra Rodriguez, Breinn Rosenfeld, Nicholas Rosenfeld, Kathy Rupp, Kara Schmidt, Evan Sekeris, Laura Shay, Lisa Sponaugle, Patrick Sponaugle, Alex Tucker, Kendall Watson, Elizabeth Wilder, Andrew Wilson

Members off the roll from May 1, 2017 to April 30, 2018: 29

Jeff Chamberlin, Erin Claxton, Toni Drabant, Stephanie Feller, Rachel Goodrich, Catherine Goodyear, JP Goodyear, Lauren Harris, Adam Heifetz, Cassandra Heifetz, Randy Hertzler, Dainia Langsam, Jonathan Laingsam, Johanna Marshall, Utako Matsumura, Terrie McNulty, Kathryn Noyes, Mylene Ouimette, Steve Ouimette, Melissa Perkins, Neil Perkins, Jeremy Shaffner, Michael Shanker, Tracy Shanker, Meredith Shankle, Emma Taylor, Marlena Wilson, Crystal Wright, James Wright

Members changed to Friends from May 1, 2017 to April 30, 2018: 4

Mark Corfman, Susan Corfman, Gwen Rowe, Tom Rowe

Child Dedications: 2

Gavin Pied
Ethan Rosenfeld

Member Deaths: 13

Frederick Beckner (December 29, 2017)
Phil Benson (February 8, 2018)
Carole Danielson (January 29, 2018)
Ed Garbe (October 18, 2017)
Suzanne Kullgren (January 2, 2018)
Ruth Law (November 17, 2017)
Richard Noreikis (June 17, 2017)

Ruth Pauli (July 6, 2017)
Jan Popp (June 10, 2017)
Melissa Rael (October 11, 2017)
Charles Sheridan (September 18, 2017)
Connie Stover (February 7, 2018)
Gertrude Wetmore (January 17, 2018)

Memberships in Abeyance: 5

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

Report from the President—*Steve Eckstrand*

The UUCR Board of Trustees works with the ministers and the Lay Ministry Council to integrate governance and ministry at UUCR, with the Board having responsibility for managing finances, developing, and implementing comprehensive plans, crafting policies that support the goals of the plan, and ensuring that the congregation is on track to meet those goals.

The Board began the fiscal year focusing on its highest priority: completing a Five-Year Strategic Plan. Several Board members continued to serve on the Future Planning Team and participated in the Third Day of Reflection. The Board voted to support plans to collaborate with the Montgomery County Interfaith Refugee Resettlement Neighbors (MCIRRN) to support a Syrian refugee family and subsequently approved a special collection to provide financial support for the family.

In September, the Board held a retreat and updated its Covenant, accepted the draft Five-Year (2017-2021) Plan from the Future Planning Team and developed the Board goals for the year. In addition to the goal of completing the Five-Year Plan, the Board set three high priority goals for the first year of the plan:

Goal 1

- Support the transition to two services in January 2018

This was a congregational goal to explore having two services for the period January to June 2018. The Board had an oversight role, while the majority of work was carried out by the ministers, Director of Music, Director of Religious Education, Worship Arts Team, Choir, Music Committee, Hospitality Committee, and Two Services Transition Team. During January and February, Board members helped as ushers and greeters to support the transition to two services. About the beginning of June, the Board will make a decision on whether to continue having two services in the near future.

Goal 2

- Create a Stewardship Committee

The Board is working with the Finance Committee to establish a Stewardship Committee, which will promote and nurture the stewardship activities of the congregation.

Goal 3

- Assess UUCR's current IT systems and evaluate future UUCR IT needs and requirements

The Board is working with the staff on this goal. The overall objective is to make UUCR's IT systems more efficient and to find ways to meet future needs. In the near term the highest priority will be on finding a database that better meets the congregation's needs. The next priority will be improvements to the UUCR web site.

The Five-Year Plan was published in early 2018, and these three goals formed the implementation plan for the first year of the plan.

Throughout the year, the Board has worked with the ministers and various committees to carry out the routine activities of the congregation. These include recruiting co-chairs for the pledge drive, developing the canvass budget, approving the hiring of an interim director of music, approving formation of a search committee for a new Director of Religious Education, and organizing town hall meetings and congregational meetings.

The Board has also been working to ensure that the planned kitchen renovations are completed this summer. The goal is to carry out the work during the month of July.

The 2017-2018 fiscal year was the first year of our new strategic plan and our first year with the new mission: “Practice Courageous Love.” Thanks to the efforts of the ministers, staff, and many committees we successfully completed a trial period of two services. This past year we expanded our social justice program to include working with MCIRRN to support refugee families. We also offered the important Beloved Conversations program for a second time.

The Board would like to move toward being a strategic board model of governance. The five tasks of a strategic board are discerning congregational mission/vision, carrying out its fiduciary responsibility, formulating policies, strategic planning, and assessment. As the congregation implements the second year of its Five Year Plan the Board would like to improve its capability to assess how we are doing.

The 2017-2018 Board of Trustees Leadership and Training budget was \$1300; \$265 has been spent.

Board of Trustees for 2017-2018: Steve Eckstrand (President), Colleen Dolak (Vice President), See-Yan Lam (Secretary), Christy Shannon (Treasurer), Dana Alzouma, José Clemente, and Aaron Pied (General Trustees), Ellen Rohan (Immediate Past President and non-voting member), and Rev. Lynn Strauss (Minister and non-voting member).

Report from the Treasurer—*Christy Shannon*

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 Summary for the Board and Finance Committee. The monthly summary is available for any member or friend who requests a copy from the Treasurer, Board Member, or Finance Committee member.

UUCR’s financial condition is sound overall, but this year the Board transferred \$26,000 from last year’s surplus to cover all planned expenses. The General Endowment Fund balance is approximately \$377,000. The General Reserve is approximately \$250,000 or 33% of the annual budget. Due to higher contributions after completing 10 months of the year, we expect to finish out the year with a budget balance.

UUCR’s current operating budget is \$774,608. Payroll costs are the largest expense and will be approximately \$ 498,500 for the current year. Approximately 75% of the 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 our 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*

Mission: 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 provided Lay Ministry training and welcomed six new Lay Ministers: Bonnie Bloomquist, Bruce Basket, Eric Strong, Julie Robinson, Marie Vivas, and Terrie Barr.

Areas of Ministry:

Co-Chairs:	Cynthia Shires-Thurston, Fran Lowe
Spiritual Leadership:	Rev. Lynn Strauss, Rev. Rebekah Savage
Adult Faith Formation:	Bruce Baskett
Communications & Membership:	Marie Vivas
Covenant Groups:	Bonnie Bloomquist
Family Faith Development:	Eric Strong, Fran Lowe
Fellowship & Hospitality:	Julie Robinson
Leadership Development:	Sherry Dittmann, Bonnie Bloomquist, Terrie Barr
Pastoral Care:	Kent Hancock
Social Justice:	Ethel Gilbert
Stewardship:	Mark Shannon
Worship & Music Arts:	Cynthia Shires-Thurston
Board of Trustees Liaison:	Colleen Dolak

Discerned that Lay Ministry is: Being of service, building community and relationships, recognizing the value of ministry, viewing the church as a whole, supporting the strategic plan, facilitating transparency, and recognizing that the process of ministry is equally important as goals or objectives. Asking “What can I do to help?” we might assist a committee/group to formulate and clarifying their mission, goals and plans, acknowledge and celebrate accomplishments, write a covenant, and include an opening reading and chalice in their meetings. Above all, ministry means listening, with compassion, warmth, caring, and willingness to be of help.

Organized the annual Activities Fair, assisted with the annual calendar, brainstormed fundraising ideas, and are in the process of:

- Developing a Stewardship committee, including develop a draft charter for Board approval and looking for additional volunteers.
- Creating a new Leadership Development and Recruitment Plan using the new UUA Leadership Lab, www.uua.org/leadership, a learning center with tips, tools and training for Congregational Leaders.

- Staffing a new Lay Ministry/Program information table on Sunday mornings.
- Organizing the congregational picnic.
- Collating a book on how major events work at UUCR, including a timeline of steps, key players, communication requirements, set-up, needs, timeline, support, and follow-up and evaluation.
- Creating a book for newcomers, members and friends to help them learn about us and find opportunities for service.

The 2017-2018 Lay Ministry Council budget is \$600 of which \$26 has been spent.

Report from the Senior Minister—Rev. Lynn Strauss

PRACTICE COURAGEOUS LOVE!

2017-2018 has been a challenging year in our nation, our UUA Association and in our congregation. Anxiety has been high, and much that we love has seemed to be at risk. In the midst of a changing world, changes in the life of UUCR have created some conflict and grief. Yes, 2018 has brought our congregation a good bit of change as well as the challenge of responding to the voices of Black Lives of UU and exploring the meaning of White Privilege and White Supremacy.

Many areas of study along with just plain living teach us that nothing alive survives for long without adaptive change. To do more than survive, to thrive as a healthy system, adaptive change is a necessity. And so UUCR has responded and reacted to change in a myriad of ways.

In the areas of my responsibility as Senior Minister, I have tried to lead and to manage change with a spirit of possibility and renewal. I have, as always, held the “good of the whole” and trust as high spiritual values. *Practicing courageous love is not meant to be easy.*

My areas of leadership and responsibility include:

1. **Support to the Board of Trustees of UUCR** through monthly Executive Team meetings, board meetings, board retreat, support to fundraising events and fiscal responsibility, right relationship building and emotional support to the board members, visioning strategic planning and program support.
2. **Support to the hired staff.** As Head of Staff and in my supervisory role I lead bi-monthly staff meetings, daily empowerment and support in all programmatic areas, planning and mentoring, hiring and personnel matters. This year problem solving in the Children and Youth programs has been a high priority.
3. **Weekly Worship** oversight and inspiration, working closely with the worship team (Rebekah, Grace & Sarah, Dayna) along with sermon writing, and developing monthly worship themes.
4. **Pastoral Care and Counseling and Memorial Services.** This year, we have experienced the loss of many of our Beloved including: Jan Popp, Richard Noreikis, Ruth Pauli, Charlie Sheridan, Melissa Rael, Ed Garbe, Ruth Law, Fred Beckner, Suzanne Kullgren, Gertrude Wetmore, Carole Danielson, Connie Stover, Phil Benson, Robert Scheiber, and Jay LaMarche.
5. **Shared leadership on these committees:** Committee on Ministry & Conflict Resolution (oversight), Worship Arts Team (training & support), Racial Justice Working Group, Beloved Conversation, Two Services Transition Team.
6. Big Changes this year have included:

- Introduction of Spirit Play and Maker Space in our RE program
- Some changes in the time of 7-8th grade OWL
- Addition of OWL for younger children
- More multi-generational events
- Resignation of Grace Cho as our Music Director (December)
- Hiring of Interim Music Director, Sarah Jebian (January)
- Resignation of Director of Religious Education, Dayna Edwards (February)
- DRE Selection Team interviewing DRE candidates (May)
- MOVING TO TWO SERVICES (January through May)

Each of the changes listed and more have required thoughtful process and the work of many committees and task forces. Systemic change is, by its nature, slow and entails many hours of conversation and listening. All of these changes required hours of staff and board discernment and lay leadership support. All of us have been affected – sometimes in positive ways, sometimes in painful or frustrating ways.

And yet, UUCR continues to grow and thrive. Our Services at both hours have been well attended and well received. Our Middle Hour meets many needs. We have made room for more visitors than ever. Our Canvass reached 92% of its goal, and Action Auction exceeded its goal. People stepped up to help and to lead when asked, and care and support of one another is strong. Walking in on Sunday morning the Spirit of Beloved Community is felt and celebrated. Thank you to all who contributed in so many ways to make this a year of spiritual growth for UUCR.

May next year deepen our love and respect for one another.

Report from the Associate Minister—Rev. Rebekah Savage

Practicing Courageous Love in Beloved Community Together.

Beloveds, I am honored to have completed my first year as your full time Associate Minister. As we continue to grow, my portfolio has continued to shift and expand. I am grateful to have deepened relationships and ministry within this congregation.

I'd like to share highlights from 2017-18.

- Continuing enriching and spiritual theme based worship, led by our gifted worship team
- Supported and co-lead the UUCR Wheel of the Year Circles
- Collaborated with the Arts Committee, meeting with the featured artists and connecting the art with our monthly worship themes, UUCR mission and UU values
- Connected with Rainbow Youth Alliance to provide a UUCR staff presence to this vital service and support to our rainbow youth and community
- Participated in the Montgomery County Interfaith Dialogue circles with hundreds of clergy and lay leaders from our diverse faith communities
- Participated in the Interfaith Transgender Day of Remembrance and Power with Interfaith colleagues across Montgomery Country
- Supported and co-led the NRA Witness Day, gathering UU's and people of faith from across the country to faithful witness at the NRA Headquarters in Virginia

- Provided mentoring as a part of the UUA Commissioned Lay Minister Program to a lay leader from the UU Congregation of Arlington, VA
- Organized UUCR participation at the Holiday Wreath Laying campaign at Arlington National Cemetery
- Led and supported our second annual Intergenerational Poetry, Pajamas, and Pancakes on New Year's Eve Day
- Moved with the gracious spirit of openness with expanding to two Sunday worship services in January
- Attended the Beloved Conversations retreat and provided support to the facilitators guiding this transformative work
- Hosted gatherings for our UUCR Multi-racial Families with International potluck and games night
- Provided trainings to our wonderful generous pastoral care volunteers and continued support to the Pastoral Care Teams; with a new initiative of an intergenerational Love Team to sustain connections for our families and youth.
- Supported the continued leadership of the Lay Ministry Counsel, with increased focus this year on capturing how UUCR runs and increasing access to information so emerging leaders and newcomers are welcomed into our UUCR Family.
- Each month, I create the Small Group Ministry session plans, matching the monthly worship theme with prayers, quotes, and reflection questions to enrich the gatherings and guide the conversations of heart.
- Continued the justice work of the Racial Justice Working Group to support trainings for transformation, providing 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, Iftars, the MLK Observance at Cedar Lane UU.

Report from the Director of Religious Education for Children & Youth

—*Dayna Edwards*

- The summer of 2017 brought with it new Makerspace programming for our children and youth. There was a 46% increase in attendance over all between 2016 and 2017. Prior to 2017 there was no defined separate programming for youth over the summer. In 2017 there was an average of 6 youth in attendance each Sunday.
- We served over 30 children and youth in our expanded Our Whole Lives program
 - 11 children in K-1st
 - 11 children in 4th-6th
 - 11 youth in 7th – 9th
- Sunday School programming was greatly impacted by the move to two services.
 - The need for volunteers increased from 12 adults per Sunday (for one service) to 18 adults per Sunday (for two services)
 - The nursery care was expanded from 1.5 hours per Sunday (for one service) to 4 hours per Sunday
 - Transitioning to two services allowed for a greater depth of programming, in addition to offering 4th-6th grade OWL, we were also able to offer multi-generational programming in the middle hour.

- We transitioned to student-centered programming by offering Spirit Play for ages 3-10 during Sunday School time. This transition also allowed for less preparation needed by the Sunday School volunteers as the preparation for the “story boxes” was shared by many in the congregation.
- We added the “creative listening table” to the sanctuary to make the worship space more welcoming to all. This allowed children and others of different modalities to be present in the sanctuary for the “First Fifteen” three to four Sundays per month.
- We continued many beloved traditions including the yearly multigenerational pageant, the “Getting Ready for the Holidays” celebration, the Mitten Tree, “Trick or Treating” for charity, and the Easter Egg Hunt.
- We offered several opportunities for fellowship and organizing among our large population multi-racial families.
- The youth had three overnights, a fieldtrip to see the new Star Wars movie, and an opportunity for fellowship at the church on a Wednesday night, in addition to their normal Sunday morning programming.
- The children and youth participated in the two “Teach-ins” suggested by people of color in the larger UU community.
- On Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day we hosted over 95 people of all ages in a day of service to benefit the NIH House, Capital Caring Hospice, and the Montgomery County Humane Society. For pictures see [this video](https://spark.adobe.com/video/AF0I4IkeZpxUR). (<https://spark.adobe.com/video/AF0I4IkeZpxUR>)

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

The congregation would benefit from having some conversations, visioning and agreement about what the term “faith formation” means and how they would like it implemented here at UUCR.

Report from the Interim Director of Music—Sarah Jebian

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 current 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:

- Grace Cho (Director of Music) departed UUCR in December 2017. Sarah Jebian joined the staff as the Interim Director of Music in January 2018. The transition was smooth and uneventful.
- The Adult choir continues to grow musically and spiritually. We welcomed back several former members and a handful of new members. Our numbers have grown from approximately 20 regularly participating members to 30-35 members.
- Our repertoire this spring has explored popular and musical theater genres as well as jazz, gospel and hymns from our shared UU music tradition.
- The Adult Choir presented a very successful fundraiser in the fall of 2017.
- Many talented musicians and vocalists within UUCR have continued to share their gifts. We also welcomed guest musicians who presented hand percussion, vocals, violin, and jazz music during our winter and spring worship services.
- Our new Contemporary Worship Band – Bonfire of the Mannakeys – made its debut this year to much enthusiasm from the congregation.

- Lay leaders within the music program continued their excellent work despite some challenges. Wildberry Jam leader Gaynelle Campbell suffered from a health crisis and Julie Graf stepped in to continue leading the group while Gaynelle recovers. Cynthia Thurston continues to thrive as the leader of Sonaria. Bronson Hoover has done a marvelous job with Bonfire of the Mannakeys.
- The Children’s Choir was active in the fall of 2017 under the leadership of Barbara Weis but took a hiatus during the winter and spring season. The Children’s Choir will undergo some changes over the summer and reemerge in the fall of 2018 as the new Family FUUN choir, a family music ministry under the co-direction of the Barbara Weis and Sarah Jebian. The Unisons and the Drum Circle disbanded due to lack of leadership with the departure of Samantha Buckley & Christin Green.
- UUCR welcomed vocal activist Melanie DeMore, who led a workshop, gave a concert and provided music for our Sunday worship services.
- The Music Committee has become more active toward the end of the church year and will be a vital part of the mission and vision of the music department in the coming year.

Goals in the coming year:

1. Grow the Adult Choir by 10 members.
2. Use our music and visual arts program as a social justice outreach tool.
3. Provide more opportunities for growth for our in-house musicians and provide a greater variety of music ministry offerings to our UUCR community.

The 2017-2018 music operating budget is \$3,910, of which \$3,326.92 has been spent to date.
Ethier Fund balance: \$5,456.

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

This fiscal year has been the “year of transitions”. We discussed a transition to two Sunday services, made a plan to do so, and then did it! Much of the work in the area of Communications & Membership has been around helping as much as possible to make these periods of change successful.

Please see the 2017 report for a detailed listing of all the various communications outlets available here at UUCR. In addition to these, this year we have added a television monitor currently stationed in the Corridor leading to the Sanctuary, which scrolls through images taken at recent services/activities as well as providing a visual reminder of both Middle Hour activities available between our two Sunday morning services and notifications of imminent opportunities, and we are exploring additional positioning and/or communications possibilities. Our newsletters, UUCR E-Weekly and Quest, remain robust and informative, with the former undergoing a well-received redesign and the latter requiring a re-assessment of its content and purpose.

We continue to see a steady flow of visitors and newcomers checking out our services on Sunday mornings, several of whom have reported appreciation for the option of two service times to choose from each week.

We have again welcomed a total of 40 members this year, and I am maintaining a list of interested individuals lined up for the next membership classes to be held this summer. The possibilities afforded by the creation of Middle Hour were both a great opportunity and an interesting challenge.

Opportunities: We were able to have regularly scheduled *Newcomer Chats* (Second Sundays), and a newly created *Small Group Ministry for New Members* who joined in the previous year (Third Sundays).

Challenges: An attempt to hold an activity on Fourth Sundays – *How2UUCR* – was ultimately unsuccessful and was later cancelled. Although the intention of this offering was to provide instruction and feedback to the congregation on various logistical aspects of congregational life (like navigating the website, or submitting articles for publication, for example), there was a mistaken belief that these sessions were solely for newcomers and not intended for longtime congregants. If this offering is made again in the coming year, better explanation will be needed around its purpose.

Both: Having to host the spring *New2UU* during Middle Hour was both an opportunity, in that it provided a very clear structure for dividing up course content over four 45-minute sessions, and a challenge, in that it can be difficult in a group of that size (upwards of 15 people signed up) to have the same kind of broad/deep interactions as is possible with longer sessions. A two-session 2+-hour weeknight option was also offered; two people took advantage of these and subsequently joined the congregation. We will continue to experiment with curriculum and format in the coming year.

Although we've had a strong influx of new people, in addition to those who've joined, our overall membership number holds pretty steady despite last year's apparent spike. This is due in part to a very thorough Roll Review process, conducted from late fall through January of this year, which removed many from our tally whose memberships had lapsed long ago; it is also due in large part to the greater number of members who have died or who have moved away from the area.

At the end of my second year here, I continue to introduce slight, incremental, and infrequent changes in our communications platforms. Several goals from last year remain as goals and will receive greater attention in the coming year, when 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
- 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
- Assessment with the Board of Trustees, the IT Committee, and Church Administrator of our database and website and exploration of new possibilities.
- Assessment/improvement of signage in and around UUCR buildings

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 and in religious institutions generally. I am a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Membership Professionals (UUAMP), as well as the DC Chapter of the Religion Communicators Council (RCC). I welcome the addition of Marie Vivas as Lay Minister for Communications & Membership to help me get further along in the goals above.

In order to make all this work happen, I continue to rely on the support of many dedicated volunteers in all areas of congregational life, and especially of staff colleagues. Teamwork is key. Thank you!

Report from the Church Administrator—*Donna Taylor*

We are blessed with the spirit, commitment, and vision of our congregation! I am so grateful for the creative, consistent contributions of staff, contractors and volunteers that keep our operations, grounds and buildings running smoothly and effectively, supporting the many diverse activities of our church.

Did you know that UUCR provides space for over 2200 events and activities every year?

- Nearly 1850 (84%) 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;
- Almost 300 (14%) are rental events from 13 different individuals and groups (not including the Pre-Schools), that bring in around \$25,000 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
 - Community Ministries of Rockville
 - Amnesty International
 - NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness)
 - Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America

In October, we welcomed Justin Onyeador as UUCR's Building Sexton! The Building Sexton's primary responsibilities are to open up the Church every Sunday and insure things are set up and ready for worship, classes, and other activities; to lock up after Sunday morning activities are over; and to provide building and facilities support for rentals. Justin is a student at Montgomery College with an interest in computers and cybersecurity.

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. In addition to cleaning the church buildings and setting things up for us each week, Jay also performs basic maintenance tasks for us on a regular basis. Jay's consistency and reliability is an invaluable resource for UUCR!

The biggest facility (and congregational) initiative of the year was our move to two services. Jay, Justin and I were involved in many aspects of this initiative, from planning building use on Sunday mornings to setting up, resetting, and keeping our spaces welcoming every week.

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

- All sanctuary lights (except the drop-down pendulum lights) were modified and fitted with led bulbs...which will save both energy and money for years to come!
- Carbon monoxide monitors/alarms were installed in the basement of Building 5, the Building 1 Kitchen, and Room 44.

- HVAC units for Buildings 1, 2, 3, and 4 were put under an annual maintenance contract to provide regular routine maintenance for this aging equipment so UUCR gets the longest life possible from these units.
- Lighting struck during the summer of 2017—taking out the fire monitoring/alarm equipment for Building 5! Replacing the panel, programming it to work with all the sprinklers, emergency lights and announcement systems throughout Building 5, and then passing the Fire Marshall’s inspection was a multi-month process that finally concluded in February. Thanks to the work of UUCR’s Treasurer, Christy Shannon, this expensive repair job was covered by UUCR’s insurance.
- Technology improvements during the past year:
 - permanently put a 52-inch HDTV in Room 44
 - moved the storage of our largest 70-inch HDTV to a secure location in Building 1 (so no more navigating the elevator to use this TV upstairs!)
 - positioning of an HDTV in the corridor, to provide information about UUCR events and activities

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—*Marianne Miller and Mark Shannon*

Preparation for the canvass began in early January 2018 with enthusiasm about UUCR engagement to make a positive difference in our greater community. The theme of the canvass, “Shining Our Light Sharing Our Joy,” was reinforced 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 4. Follow-up continued through April and was largely completed by the first week in May.

The canvass goal was set at \$624,645. To ensure achievement of that goal, the canvass team challenged members to increase their pledges by 8 percent. As of May 7, the congregation had received 220 pledges for a total of \$576,267—92.6 percent of our goal. Nearly half of those who pledged increased their pledge from the previous year and the overall average increase was 13.7%.

Communications around the canvass included three gatherings with Rev. Lynn Strauss to reach specific groups of givers with the canvass message. Organized by Marianne Miller, the gatherings were hosted by Christy and Mark Shannon, Colleen Dolak and Matt Zembrzuski, and Marie Reed. The canvass team maintained a presence at Sunday services throughout the canvass to answer questions and receive pledges. Regular articles in *UUCR E-Weekly* publicized progress toward the canvass goal.

The canvass team would like to thank Bruce Baskett for all of his writing assistance with updates in *UUCR E-Weekly* and in the order of service, Andy and Melissa Moore for hosting our annual Fellowship Dinner, and Christy and Mark Shannon, Colleen Dolak and Matt Zembrzuski, and Marie Reed for hosting our canvass gatherings, as well all of those who assisted in contributing their time and talents in support of the annual pledge drive.

In addition, for all the generous pledges, those small, those large, and those many in-between – we are sincerely grateful. The members and friends of UUCR are helping make it possible to live what we value: A Beloved Community, Lifelong Spiritual Discovery, A Just World.

For Shining Your Light and Sharing Your Joy – yes, THANK YOU.

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

Pledge/Canvass preparation for 2019 should begin in the early Fall of 2018 to achieve a successful, well-run pledge drive.

The 2017-2018 canvass budget is \$2,250, of which \$1,817 has been spent.

Committee on Ministry—*Cita Furlani*

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

Major accomplishments:

- Provided Workshop on Conflict Resolution led by Susan Luff. This workshop was offered to the Conflict Resolution Team plus members of the Board and of the COM.
- Advised on revising the Bylaws for two ministers.
- Discussed Covenant of Right Relations with a UUCR member.
- Resolve a conflict brought to the Conflict Resolution Team by a UUCR member.
- Monitored transition to two services, January – June 2018.

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

The 2017-2018 Committee on Ministry budget is \$500; \$500 has been spent.

Committee members: Ricardo Carvajal, Cita Furlani (Chair), Rolf Preisendorfer, and Ellen Rohan. Rev. Lynn Strauss and Rev. Rebekah Savage regularly attend COM meetings.

Finance Committee—*Kent Hancock*

The Finance Committee, which includes the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurers, oversees the financial affairs of the congregation. 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. The committee also provides financial support to other committees and staff, as needed.

In the fall 2017, the Finance Committee contacted church committees and staff and assembled the FY 2018-19 canvass budget for the Board to approve at its January 2018 meeting. In May 2018, following the spring pledge drive, Finance updated the canvass budget to reflect the pledge drive results and presented options to the Board to balance the shortfall. The Board will set the congregation's FY 2018-2019 operating budget at its June meeting.

The Committee also coordinated with the Chairs of Building and Grounds to keep up to date a Board level, 5-Year Facilities Capital Projects Maintenance plan to help assure our facilities remain well kept.

This year, the Finance committee is examining its own activities to clarify roles between the Finance Chair, Board Finance officers, Committee members, and other staff and committee leaders. This information is important in succession planning from one financial chair to another.

The Finance committee meets monthly, reports directly to the Board, and has no allocated budget.

Committee Members: Kent Hancock (Chair); Christy Shannon (Treasurer); Eric Burch (Assistant Treasurer - Receipts); Barbara Harrison (Assistant Treasurer - Disbursements); Martha Taylor (Bookkeeper); Julie Robinson Dave Marks; Marianne Miller; Bill Newhouse and Sharon Fitzpatrick.

Investment Committee—*Steve Reed*

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

In April 2017 the Board approved a new investment strategy recommended by the Investment Committee. The approved strategy included investing UUCR assets into a different mix of investment funds, to be implemented in monthly increments.

The Treasurer began implementation of the investment plan and during the year the Committee reviewed implementation progress, discussed market conditions, and examined performance of the recommended funds. The investment strategy implementation is nearly complete and investment assets will be fully invested in the summer of 2018.

The Committee will meet again periodically next year to review the investment performance and make additional recommendations if needed.

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 is looking for new members.

Committee members: Suzanne Carrillo (Chair)

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.

This year, illness kept our activities to a minimum, mostly informal discussions. The Endowment Fund currently stands at just over \$375,000.

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

The 2017-2018 Planned Giving Committee budget is \$500, none of which has been spent.

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

Congregation-Chartered Committee

Nominating Committee—*Karl Irikura*

The sole task of the Nominating Committee (NC) is to recruit candidates to fill vacancies on the Board of Trustees and on the NC itself. The Bylaws require that the slate of candidates be published at least 30 days before the election. The candidates are elected by the congregation at the annual congregational meeting in May. Usually the slate of candidates runs unopposed. Six members of the NC are elected by the congregation for staggered, three-year terms. The seventh member is the Board representative, who is a one-year, voting member of the NC and has traditionally been the Immediate Past President.

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

Traditionally, the NC has been inactive until October or November. Future committees might consider starting much earlier, to avoid the time pressure that results when several candidates decline one position.

Committee members: Nancy Blum and Karl Irikura (Co-Chairs), Silvia Bolland, Antonio Carrillo, Jon Landenburger, Elsa Powel Strong, and Ellen Rohan (Board Representative.)

Worship & Music

Decorations Committee—*Holly Meyer*

The Decorations Committee provides flowers in front of the pulpit in the Sanctuary every Sunday. We experienced challenges in scheduling this year with the transition to two services that began in January. Carey Gellman who did 5th Sunday moved away, and Carolyn Pooley and Mary Caroline Colletti retired.

This committee pays for the outside decorations at Christmas time; Mark and Jo Wilson put them up. Carolyn Randall managed the poinsettia sale for inside the Sanctuary during the Holidays. Volunteers, so far, pay for flowers they use, or find them in their gardens.

This year Marion Higgins-Bort did the first Sunday of each month, Sue McCall the second Sunday, Holly Meyer, the 3rd, Mary Caroline Colletti, the 4th Sunday, and new this spring are Norma Noreikis and Marga Adiego-Blasco. Ginger Dixon is our substitute.

We had extra summer flowers from Anne McCaffrey, Maude McGovern, Kent Hancock, Marie Reed, Thecla "Teki" Fabian, and Carolyn Randall.

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 church, 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.

Committee members: Sarah Jebian (Interim Director of Music), Mike Holmes (Chair), Jeremy Schuhmann, and Bronson Hoover. Cynthia Shires-Thurston is our Lay Minister.

We had a very successful fundraiser for the Ethier Fund in the fall, planned by our now-former Director of Music Grace Cho. It featured a concert by the choir, dinner, and dancing to music provided by a hired ensemble.

This year saw the departure of Grace Cho and the hiring of Sarah Jebian as Interim Director of Music. Sarah has transitioned smoothly into the role and has been leading the choir in two services each month.

At Grace's suggestion, Bronson Hoover has spearheaded the formation of a new band, Bonfire of the Mannakeys, which will be providing music in one service every third month (more or less). The band has done two services so far and was well received by the congregation.

Julie Graf has left the committee and Bronson Hoover has joined. Thanks Julie for your service, and welcome Bronson!

Ushers—*Patty Walker*

Ushers provide a friendly greeting to congregants and visitors as they enter, prepare the Sanctuary as needed, distribute the Order of Service, collect and count the offertory, answer questions and provide assistance as needed.

Ushers and substitutes for 2017-2018:

Chair: Patty Walker (new chair is being sought)

Members: Liz Zerby, Mary Hoferek, Ginger Dixon, Antonio Carrillo, Gayle Hancock, Len Cohen, Diane Baillie, Claudia Chitty, Paulette Campbell, Maude McGovern, Karla Timmons, Burt Smith, Scott Reilly, Ken Sandin, Alberta Maschal, Elaine Diamondidis, Andy Moore, Melissa Moore, Jane Klag, Melissa Marousek, Sharon Fitzpatrick, Mark Shannon, Mary Carvajal, Anne McCaffrey, Anne Byrd, and Kathy Matay.

Substitutes: Nancy Klag, Suzanne Carrillo, José Clemente, Steve Crawford, Joe Goss, Sue Thomas, and Martha Taylor.

Activities: Train new ushers as needed.

Service: Ushers offer a friendly, consistent presence to both members and visitors. Ushers find seating, answer questions, and perform other services as needed for the service. It is important to note that ushers "keep an eye" on everything and everyone during the service. On a rare occasion, ushers assist when a medical emergency occurs (by finding appropriate care).

Challenge: The transition to two services left ushers short-handed, especially during the second service. Although recruiting a substitute for a particular Sunday or asking a congregant to assist during the offertory is generally not a problem, our “teams” function better if there is consistency.

For next year, we will continue to work on recruitment.

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.

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

The 2017-2018 Worship Arts budget is \$1,500, of which \$1,500 has been spent.

Lifespan Religious Education

Adult Faith Formation Committee—*Maura Malone*

The mission of the Adult Faith Formation Committee is to: offer programs and events that promote and sustain adult faith development; help UUCR members and friends learn about the history and current issues in Unitarian Universalism; build a better world by acting on UU values; and teach the wisdom contained in other world religions.

Our offerings during this fiscal year include:

- Emerson’s Sunrise Café: AFF continued to facilitate this weekly spiritual-themed discussion group, which grew to an average attendance of 20+ persons in Fall 2017. Emerson’s also sponsored an Action Auction item, Emerson’s Sunset Café, in which members provide a light meal and progressive discussion groups. There were 26 participants and AFF members facilitated the discussions. Emerson’s Café is again sponsoring its Sunset Café in the 2018 Action Auction.
- Wisdom Wednesdays: AFF sponsored several sessions, led by Rev. Rebekah Savage. They included seminars on religious rituals (Oct) and Spirituality & Money (Nov); Vespers & Cocoa (Dec); Drum Meditation with guest drummer; Love, Postcards & Donations Night to support Rockville fire victims (Feb); and *Come Sunday* movie and discussion (May).
- UUCR Library Reopening: Led by professional librarian Myra Remigio-Leonard, AFF culled, catalogued, and reconfigured the UUCR library into an inviting reading corner in Fellowship Hall. A grand reopening was held in April 2018 with an “Ask the Librarian” session hosted by Ms. Remigio-Leonard.
- Beloved Conversations: AFF co-sponsored the annual kick-off retreat with a financial donation, and preparation and service of three meals for participants.
- Spirituality in Film: AFF sponsored a viewing of *Crash* and follow-up discussion in October 2017. Tim Francis led the session.

- Two-Service Support: AFF supported the Two-Services Transition Team by participating in listening sessions prior to transition, and in May 2018.
- Middle-Hour Programming: AFF shouldered the primary responsibility for providing varied Middle Hour adult programming for January through May 2018. We developed and facilitated
 - a monthly Ted Talk on the congregational theme, and
 - monthly world religions presentations (UU, Primitive Religions, Islam).
 After the spring trial period, AFF will be considering whether to continue multiple programs during Middle Hour.
- Survey of the Congregation: In March-April, AFF conducted an electronic survey of members in order to determine areas of focus and scheduling for future programming. Based on the results, AFF is currently considering “Aging & Spirituality” as its fall theme for programming.

Upcoming Challenges:

AFF is considering Sunday programming in light of the transition to 2 services. The new programming did not draw the expected audiences, given the number of other offerings and concurrent social hour between services. AFF has also received comments that the shorter timeframe and competing events have disadvantaged the continuity of Emerson’s Café; we will be working to address this issue. Finally, AFF is still looking for ways to provide non-Sunday programming that will draw members.

AFF’s FY17-18 budget was \$850. As of May 1, 2018, AFF spent \$200 sponsoring Beloved Conversations, \$60 honorarium for guest speaker, and \$68 on library renovations. We are still evaluating expenditures for May-June.

Committee members: Maura Malone (Incoming Chair), Anne E. Byrd (Outgoing Chair) Rev. Rebekah Savage, Bruce Baskett, Bonnie Bloomquist, John Dunbar, Thecla “Teki” Fabian, Tim Francis, and Myra Remigio-Leonard. Ms. Byrd, Ms. Bloomquist, and Ms. Fabian retired from the committee during the term; we greatly appreciate their service to UUCR. Mr. Baskett joined the committee this year. Ms. Malone succeeded Anne Byrd as chair in September 2017.

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 Magyarzsákod, 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 Magyarzsákod have been partners since 1992. Rev. Sándor Balázs has been serving as minister 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.

UUCR recently sent \$600.00 for the annual stipend for minister, Rev. Sándor Balázs. It was increased from \$500.00 to \$600.00 in 2017.

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.

2017-2018 committee/group budget is \$800.00.

Social Justice Committee, Groups, Activities, and Affiliations—*Ken Sandin*

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. Alberta Maschal and Ken Sandin co-chaired for 2017-2018. The lay ministry representatives were Bennett Rushkoff, followed by Ethel Gilbert. Following is a summary of activities, events, and community outreach for the year. This year's board-approved Social Justice Committee budget of \$12,200 and was spent primarily through donations to the organizations we support.

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 UCCR Minister 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. The group has a website that advertises the meetings.

During this program year, as in previous years, 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 (Nowruz) to individuals and groups in political disfavor in their countries. We send postcards in the summer. We also take action on cases that are posted online by Amnesty International. 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.

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: 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 and youth 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 (\$600 annually), and who volunteer their time. Community service hours are available to our Senior High youth who wish to participate in Beacon House activities. Marianne Miller has agreed to be the Beacon House liaison beginning in May.

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 and the CMR annual report.

Green Team—*Julia Santerre*

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.

Over the past year: we hosted several family-friendly hikes so that we could enjoy nature together; we showed a couple of films to inform on and discuss environmental issues, including Chasing Coral; and, in partnership with Reverend Lynn, we presented a book discussion on the book Active Hope: How to Face the Mess We're In Without Going Crazy, by Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone. We also continued to collect items to be recycled with our TerraCycle program. Budget: \$450. Amount Spent: \$230

Hunger Relief Task Group—*Dolores Barnes*

UUCR continued its weekly Manna food drive in partnership with the Children's & Youth Worship Committee. We are below tracking with last year's end-of-year total of 2,500 pounds of food delivered, but 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 1,200 pounds to the Manna Food Center in Gaithersburg by the end of April 2018.

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). Eight (8) complete baskets were assembled and twenty (20) additional grocery gift cards were donated to CMR, which serves the Montgomery County community. Money allocated from the Social Justice Committee budget was also donated to Rockville HELP, a volunteer emergency aid service in Montgomery County.

Immigration Action Group—*David Strauss*

The Immigration Action Group (IAG) seeks to educate the UUCR community on the issues affecting immigrants in Montgomery County and throughout the nation, in keeping with the Unitarian Universalist Association's Statement of Conscience on immigration. We also collaborate with other faith-based and community organizations to engage in both service and policy actions on behalf of immigrants. The IAG has about 25 members, many of whom participated in the group's monthly meetings and activities. The IAG is co-chaired by David Strauss and Adriana Brigatti. Our year's main activities: The IAG continued to manage UUCR's successful collaboration with Community Ministries of Rockville's (CMR) Language Outreach Program. Members of the IAG served as mock federal interviewers for CMR clients pursuing their applications for American citizenship.

IAG members also serve as staff and volunteer teachers in CMR's Language Outreach Program, teaching English to Latino and other immigrant adults who live 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. This year the IAG, in collaboration with the Montgomery County Interfaith Refugee Network of Neighbors, supported the resettlement efforts of two refugee families from Middle Eastern countries and provided some financial assistance to a disabled refugee from Africa. IAG members participated in several marches and rallies outside the White House and the Capitol in support of undocumented young people seeking protection from deportation through the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program initiated by President Obama and ended by President Trump. Litigation seeking to reverse the President's rescission of DACA was pending at the time of this report.

The IAG also worked with Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice (UUSJ) to help intensify UU efforts toward a just and equitable immigration reform at the federal level, a huge challenge during this time of ultra conservative majorities in both chambers of Congress and an anti-immigrant President and Administration. Letter writing and Capitol Hill visits were a part of the UUSJ activities that IAG members supported. The IAG will continue to seek opportunities through UUSJ and other groups to protect the rights of immigrants and to support refugees in the coming year. Locally, IAG members supported the move to include a Montgomery County legal defense fund for indigent undocumented immigrants. Immigrants are not entitled to have court appointed attorneys represent them in deportation proceedings, since these are considered civil offenses.

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 refugees, and to keep the UUCR community informed on the issues. The 2017-2018 Immigration Action Group budget is \$1,000.

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. 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, 5200 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. Congregation members volunteer on an individual basis with the Interfaith Clothing Center, Carroll House men's shelter, vocational services at Community Vision, and through IW board leadership positions. In addition, during our "meals week" in June volunteers from UUCR work as a team coordinated by the Social Justice Committee to prepare and serve breakfast, lunch, and dinner for sixty-five women receiving emergency shelter and case management support services at the Wilkins Avenue Women's Assessment Center.

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

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: Timothy Elliott, Yvette Scorse, Co-Presidents; Stephanie Kreps, Secretary; Adrienne Shaw, Fundraiser; Jennifer Carter; Gwen Harter; Rev Rebekah Savage. Jennifer and Rebekah are UUCR members. Patricia Cooper's tenure as RYA co-Program Coordinator continues very satisfactorily into her second year. Activities: LGBTQ Brunch (see service), participation in Rockville, Youth and Capital Prides. Brisk RYA attendance with a core group of regulars continues, with new youth at most meetings. Attendance at monthly movie nights is increasing. Service to UUCR: Rev. Rebekah and Stephanie organized a brunch for UUCR's LGBTQ community, April 22. About 20 people attended. Purposes: to meet socially and to see if the community wishes to organize in the congregation and in the wider community and take over some of Stephanie's duties. Afterwards, Lucy Grinnell sent invitations to attendees to do so. Stephanie represented UUCR's RYA at the following: LGBTQ club

visits at 6 MCPS high schools (1 pending) and 6 middle schools (1 pending) and one private middle school; hosted a GSA sponsors' social event at UUCR, August 2017; held a seminar for MCPS's Outdoor Ed teachers, September, 2017; tabled at MCPS's SCUP (School Community United in Partnership) Day, October 2017; tabled at Youth Pride, October 2017; consulted with a middle school principal on the feasibility of a GSA; participated in Communities Against Hate meetings. Upcoming: Rockville Hometown Holidays' 2-day May 26 - 27 event, RYA's UUCR member-staffed booth, the largest outreach for UUCR AND RYA; Rockville Pride (helping to organize); UUCR participation at Capital Pride. Spiritual growth/learning: Fall 2017: RYA Advisory Council's day-long retreat to examine our purposes, roles and expectations. Disappointment: Fundraising plans are pending and events have not materialized. Interest in reformation of LGBTQ+ Task Group has not yet materialized. Policies and procedures continue to be written by the RYA Advisory Council. Purchases: Grant funds from Brother Help Thyself for books appropriate for an RYA lending library were spent. Hope for next year: The re-formation of the LGBTQ Task Group to consist of members of UUCR's LGBTQ community as its leaders, with Stephanie as a member with responsibility for RYA only. 2017-2018 LGBTQ group's budget is \$900.

Medicaid for Seniors. Mary Hoferek has continued to advocate on this issue. A particular focus has been on the waiver programs which gives seniors support to remain in their homes rather than going into nursing homes.

Partner Plate Program—*Bennett Rushkoff*

On most Sundays, from September through June, UUCR shares the cash received from the offering 50-50 with a community service organization selected by the Social Justice Committee. After soliciting nominations of prospective sharing partners from congregation members and friends, the Committee makes the final selections in consultation with the ministers. Each selected organization shares the plate over a two-month period. The Partner Plate recipients for 2017-2018 were: Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland (Sept.-Oct.), Montgomery Hospice (Nov.-Dec.), Manna Food Center (Jan.-Feb.), Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless (Mar.-Apr.), and Community Ministries of Rockville, Citizenship Application Fund (May-June).

Peace Action Group—*Steve Lapham*

Peacemaking – both internationally and at home – has been a focus of UUCR's Social Justice Committee since 2002, the year the U.S. initiated a war in Afghanistan and prepared to invade Iraq. Members include Steven Lapham, Ken Sandin, Alonzo Smith, although others have participated in various activities. We are part of the SJC coffee-hour literature table and encourage congregational participation in peace demonstrations, petition drives, and peace advocacy directed at local, state, and national legislatures. For example, on December 5, 2017, the SJC published "Affirming Our First Amendment Right to Boycott: A Statement by the Social Justice Committee of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Rockville, Maryland," which garnered some state and national attention through UUs for Justice in the Middle East. (See marylandmatters.org/2017/12/13/guest-commentary-affirming-our-first-amendment-right-to-boycott). The statement called upon Senator Cardin and Governor Hogan "to rescind their respective actions"--the senator's bill, S 720, would punish individuals; the governor's executive order would punish companies. Whether or not one supports any level of BDS (Boycott, Divest, Sanction), Americans' right to boycott cannot be denied. In January 2018, SJC hosted Anna Baltzer's documentary "Life in Occupied Palestine" followed by a moderated discussion and panel. This "encore showing" followed the Voices from the Holy Land film series held the previous fall, which the SJC supports. In April, Jean Athey presented a slide show about the Back from the Brink campaign, which UUA has endorsed, and which aims to reduce the risk of nuclear war and prevent a looming nuclear arms race. The petition table has recently gathered signatures for Rep. Betty McCollum's bill to protect the human rights of Palestinian children held in detention by the

Israeli military and courts, as well as calls for Senators Van Hollen and Cardin to appeal to Israel to halt the shooting of (more than 1,700) unarmed Palestinian protesters in April and May 2018. Looking ahead, we plan to hold a book discussion in September 2018 of Richard Forer's *Breakthrough: Transforming Fear into Compassion. A New Perspective on the Israel-Palestine Conflict*, and to host another showing of a documentary from the 4th annual Voices from the Holy Land film series. Participating in the Poor People's Campaign, which is supported by UUA, may be a rising interest. The 2017-2018 committee/group budget for the Peace Group was \$ 200.00.

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: Allison Kelsey Kuentz, Alonzo Smith, Fran Lowe, Laura Rhodes, Lisa Fredin, Rev. Rebekah Savage and Rev. Lynn Strauss.

Following last year's *Beloved Conversations* program, Lisa and Rebekah led a worship service where participants shared stories of personal struggle and transformation on their journey towards racial justice. Listen at <https://www.uucr.org/sermons/beloved-conversations>

We were pleased to offer the program again in 2018, cosponsored by the AFF and to welcome back our facilitator Dr. Jenice View. wed by eight seminars between February and June. Topics included The Invisible Footprint of Racial/Ethnic History, The Dynamic of Racism and Privilege, Racism Today, Cross-Cultural Skills to Combat Racism, Congregational Relationships with Communities of Color, Power & Process, Prophetic Vision, and Building the Bridge Between Our Present & Our Future.

We are grateful to our facilitators: Cynthia Shires-Thurston, Julie Robinson, Marie Reed and Stephanie Kreps, our organizers: Lisa and Fran, and our ministers Rev. Lynn Strauss and Rev. Rebekah Savage for their participation and support.

We welcomed guest preachers Dr. Mark Hicks (author of *Beloved Conversations*) and Paula Cole Jones (co-author *8th Principle*). Mark delivered the sermon "Drop Your Bucket" and engaged in a *Beloved Conversation* during the middle hour. Paula delivered the sermon "How Strong is Our Faith: Embracing the 8th Principle" and led a "White Supremacy Teach-In" after the service.

We are requesting the congregation to vote to support an 8th Principle and led discussions at a Town Hall meeting, and at 2 small group meetings. Information was provided in *Quest* and the principle was included in a Small Group Ministry session plan. The following motion will be introduced at the May Congregational meeting:

"We, the members of UUCR, support the Unitarian Universalist Association in moving toward incorporating an 8th Principle into our UU Principles that may be as stated below:"

"We the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote Journeying toward spiritual wholeness by building a diverse, multicultural *Beloved Community* by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions."

We are hoping to add new people, continue to bring relevant programs and to encourage our community to engage in racial justice and multi-cultural issues.

Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland—*Alonzo Smith*

The Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland (UULM-MD) is a statewide advocacy network of Unitarian Universalists. We work to educate, mobilize, and coordinate UUs on specific issues before the Maryland General Assembly. Working in coalition with established state and national organizations, we as UUs model a reverence for the interdependent web of all existence which fosters justice, health and equity in society. Alonzo Smith of UUCR is a member of the board of directors, and co-chair, along with Candy Clark of the Annapolis congregation, of the Task Force on Criminal Justice Reform.

On January 15 we held our annual legislative kickoff in Annapolis, where the keynote speaker was Cheryl D. Glenn, a member of the House of Delegates from the 45th District in Baltimore City, and Chair of the Assembly Legislative Black Caucus.

In the 2018 Assembly, which convened on January 10 and adjourned on April 9, UULM-MD supported a variety of bills and opposed some. The following is a brief summary. For a more complete description, go to: UULM-MD.org

Climate Change

Clean Energy Jobs Act of 2018 HB143/SB752. Supported by us, but died in committee.

U.S. Climate Alliance HB3/SB138. Passed both houses, awaiting the Governor's signature. Would make Maryland a member of the U.S. Climate Alliance

Offshore Wind Energy HB1135/SB1058. Would have required wind turbines to be farther offshore, thus making clean energy more difficult. We successfully opposed this bill.

Economic Justice

Healthy Working Families Act Would assure that 750,000 Marylanders have the right to earn sick leave. In 2017 the Governor vetoed HB1, but in 2018 the Assembly overrode his veto, which we supported.

Minimum Wage (“Fight For Fifteen”). HB664/DB543. Would have raised the minimum wage to \$15 per hour. We supported it, but it did not pass.

Health Care

Saving the Affordable Care Act HB1167/SB1011 Was an effort to replace the expiring federal mandate with a Maryland state mandate. We supported the bill but instead the Senate passed SB387/HB1782, which tries to regulate the health insurance industry.

Drug Prices SB1023/HB1194 would have created a Prescription Drug Cost Commission to try to keep down medication costs. The bill passed the House but failed to get Senate approval

Immigration

“SAFE” Act HB1461. Would not require local law enforcement to support the actions of ICE. We supported the bill but it died in the Judiciary Committee

Criminal Justice Reform

This area includes restorative justice, prison education, and crime control.

“Ban the Box” On the first day of the 2018 session the Assembly overrode the Governor's veto of a 2017 bill that sought to eliminate a question about a criminal record from applications to state colleges by universities. We supported the bill and it passed by a veto proof majority.

Prison Education We successfully supported HB291/SB1137, a bill that requires the Department of Corrections to complete an educational, vocational and job interview for each

prisoner, to help them when they are released. Part of this bill was drafted by UU John Linton, and Candy Clark testified before the House Judiciary Committee in favor of it.

SB101. Originally called the Comprehensive Crime Bill of 2018 (SB122), this bill contained several provisions which we, and a coalition of social justice groups, strongly opposed. Although many of the most objectionable parts of this bill were eliminated or compromised, it nevertheless it managed to pass the Senate, and was sent to the House of Delegates. There, it was further amended and presented as SB 101. Although SB101 created a Criminal Gang Task Force, it is not at all clear how this Task Force would approach the complex problem of gang violence, or even how a criminal gang would be defined. A few of the mandatory minimum provisions of SB122 were slipped through on the last day of the session.

UULM-MD is preparing a comprehensive study of Maryland's criminal justice system, from a Unitarian Universalist perspective.

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 and by encouraging individual memberships among members of the congregation.

Unitarians Universalists for Social Justice—*Sean McCarthy*

UUSJ is a membership organization primarily supported by 14 UU congregations in the DMV area. Though the Social Justice Committee budget, UUCR donates \$2000.00 annually to UUSC. In the past year UUSJ has promoted Unitarian Universalist values in three areas, each of which has a supporting committee of UU members and friends: Immigration, Escalating Economic Inequality (EEI), and Environmental Justice.

UUSJ has been active advocating before the US Congress and supporting selected witnessing events. Advocacy has been primarily carried out by the UUSJ Advocacy Corps, an ad hoc group of UUSJ members and friends who gathered the second Tuesday of every month to visit Senators, Members of Congress, and their staffs concerning one of the three issue areas. Lavona Grow, a member of the UUSJ Board from the UU Congregation of Arlington, has coordinated this activity, supported by the issue area committees and interested UU's from throughout the DMV.

This year with the enthusiastic backing of Susan Gray, President of UUA, who attended the UUSJ quarterly Board meeting in September, UUSJ has begun representing UU ideals on a national basis. In addition to occasionally helping UUA with advocacy, UUSJ has reached out to UU congregations outside the DMV and the core of approximately 14 UU congregations in the DMV which provide financial support.

In winter, 2017-18 UUSJ asked for letters to members of Congress calling for passage of a Dream Act. (This law would provide a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants brought to the US as children). In response, UUSJ received letters not only from DMV congregations but also from churches elsewhere in the country. The UUSJ Advocacy Corps delivered all these letters to the appropriate Congresspersons and engaged them and their staffs in discussion.

The Advocacy Corps lobbied Congress on all three issue areas during 2017-18, but its primary focus was immigration due to the heated Congressional and Executive Branch activity on this issue. UUSJ also advocated on EEI issues towards the end of the fiscal year.

UUSJ also supported a number of witnessing events. UUSJ helped provide meals to large numbers of undocumented “Dreamers” who came to Washington, DC in late August and early September to demonstrate at the White House and Capitol Hill and to lobby Congress for a Dream Act. Pablo DeJesus, the UUSJ Executive Director, was particularly active in witnessing efforts.

UUCR hosted the April, 2018 Quarterly Board meeting of UUSJ and provided support to UUSJ on immigration issues in particular.

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.

Accomplishments:

- Re-housed early photos in archival sleeves making sure that they are labeled as fully and accurately as possible. These include pictures of the membership book signing ceremony in 1956 that established the congregation; of services, religious education classes, and coffee hour in the West Rockville Elementary School; and of the groundbreaking ceremony for the building.
- Did some other work on the boxes of materials that still need to be sorted, listed, and organized.
- Provided information and pictures on early African American members to Beloved Conversations and to Dayna Edwards, RE Director, for an assignment in her seminary class. She has shared that information with her professor for inclusion in the Sankofa Special Collection at Meadville Lombard Theological School, a repository of materials about UUs of color.
- Assisted Adult Faith Formation with information for one of their programs.
- Developed a timeline exercise for presenting the history of UUCR in the New2UU class in a more meaningful and interactive way.
- Answered miscellaneous information requests such as one from someone involved with planning a memorial service for a longtime member.
- Have maintained an account of the church history since the publication of the 60th anniversary history noting milestones such as the hiring of Rev. Savage as our first associate minister and the transition to two Sunday services.
- Began a series of articles on church history for *Quest* in May, 2018.
- One thing you’d like your committee or group to work on or improve on next year: While the time line exercise worked very well the one time it was used and only takes about 15 minutes, there wasn’t enough time in the New2UU class in the spring to include it. Perhaps there will be a way to include it in the future. Another possibility is to offer it as part of a standalone program about the church’s history open to anyone.

Committee Member—Maude McGovern (Chair)

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 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.
- Provided content to the Central-East Region General Assembly Orientation (both the session for on-site delegates and the session for off-site delegates).

The Capital Cluster is 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 concerning areas of your interest.

The Board offers some General Assembly support through its budget.

Group members: Eric Burch (Chair), and Judy Rayner

Central East Region 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 Central East Region 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 brochures displayed in Building 1 and an information/sign-up sheet at the annual Activities Fair.

Finance

Action Auction—*Carolyn Randall*

The Action Auction 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 create an entertaining, energized event where fundraising was fun, and to provide opportunities for fellowship throughout the year. The Action Auction was held on Saturday May 5, 2018, from 5 – 8:30pm. This year's auction again kept the Fiesta Cruise theme, “cruising” to Mexico, with a sumptuous Mexican dinner, replete with alluring appetizers, fabulous beef and chicken tacos with every topping imaginable, and a variety of scrumptious desserts. Beer and wine were sold as well. This was not a diet event!

This year's auction was a spectacular success, breaking all previous records and introducing some new elements. Attendees enjoyed a live jazz band for the first two hours, while they perused and bid on

items posted on the walls of the sanctuary, instead of on tables. There were also physical items to bid on displayed on the stage, which was new. There were 202 total items up for bid, 37 more than last year. There were also a record number of attendees; 161 people enjoyed the evening, compared to 147 last year. Finally, the net amount raised by this year's auction was over \$38,700, an increase of 25% over last year. The auction team is analyzing these results to understand why there was such a large increase in attendance and income. However, one reason we do know is that many new members and first time attendees were involved in both donating items and attending the event. It is the auction team's intent to build on the momentum from this year, to put on an even better auction next year.

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. 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. 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.

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

Harvest Bazaar—*Julie Graf*

The Harvest Bazaar, UUCR's fall fundraiser, is a family-friendly event that encourages fellowship and outreach to the larger community and provides for the sale of low-cost, gently used items, as well as items made by members, to raise modest funds for the congregation.

This year's Harvest Bazaar took place on Saturday, October 28, 2017, featuring a flea market with jewelry, toys, bikes, and other items; used books, CDs, DVDs, and vinyl; sewn goods and a quilt raffle; food and bake sales; and activities for children. After expenses, the Harvest Bazaar raised \$7,341.82, slightly short of its \$8,000 goal.

The fall fundraiser has undergone various changes throughout the years. During the Bizarre Bazaar years, the fundraiser was a robust affair that sprawled throughout the main UUCR building. The sustainability of this model was questioned, which led to a rethinking of the concept. During the NovemberFest years, outside craft vendors sold goods in the sanctuary while a reduced number of items were sold throughout the rest of the main building. The sustainability of this model also appeared untenable. However, due to the need for additional funds, the fall fundraiser continued in a reduced form with a modest fundraising goal (the Halloween Hullabaloo in 2015 and the Harvest

Bazaar in 2016-2017). Under this model, sales primarily occur in the sanctuary, with reduced food sales in Fellowship Hall and activities for children in Founders Hall.

Under the current model, organizers have noted several concerns:

- 1) the event remains a labor-intensive effort, and the utility of expending such labor seems questionable given the modest fundraising goal;
- 2) it is becoming harder to recruit volunteers, especially to take on leadership roles;
- 3) the concept behind the event is becoming stale, as cheap goods are plentiful from various retailers, and technology changes have reduced demand for books, DVDs, and CDs;
- 4) the quality and quantity of donated items continues to be a major uncertainty;
- 5) Montgomery County food permit requirements have challenged the ability to hold a traditional bake sale, and offering more food options, particularly healthy ones, would require the recruitment of additional volunteers; and
- 6) attendance at the event has decreased over the past few years, and increasing attendance might require expanding the event back to a form previously deemed unsustainable.

However, the fall fundraiser incorporates some successful fundraising elements, particularly jewelry sales and the quilt raffle. Volunteers have also found value in time spent with other members of the congregation while preparing for the event. Conversations continue on whether to end the fall fundraiser or rethink the concept – ideally, toward a less labor-intensive model with a modest fundraising goal that provides opportunities for family-friendly fellowship.

Harvest Bazaar Co-Chairs: Julie Graf and Aaron Pied

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:

- Ellen Cornett – pastel and carbon pencil
- Emily Pearce – digital finger painting
- Amanda Spade and Jamie Downs – colored pencil and mixed media
- Rick Ruggles – photography
- Anthony Williams – photography

Thirteen 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 2017-2018 Aesthetics Committee budget is \$100, which has been spent on a magnet system for hanging paper-based art like prints.

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 Narcy 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 (Narcy Klag)

Accomplishments include:

- Installation of rubber car stops in the lower parking lot.
- Painted walls at the top of stairwell in Building 5.
- Repaired rust and repainted the door at the top of the stairwell in Building 5.
- Repainted half the walls in the lower hallway in Building 5.
- Rented a scissor lift and replaced all the bulbs in the pendant lamps in the Sanctuary.
- Developed a Scope of Work and obtained eight bids to repair driveway and parking lot cracks. Repairs will probably be made in the summer of 2018.
- Working with staff, developed a striping plan to use after the driveway and lots are re-coated.
- Installed a wooden threshold piece between Fellowship Hall and the hallway leading to Building 5. This necessitated removing the doors and cutting off some of the bottom of each door.

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: Narcy Klag (Chair), Sue Hedges, Jon Landenburger, Phil Lowe, John McIlwaine, Dan Pierce, Tim Francis, and José Clemente.

GROUNDS/LANDSCAPING (Mary Lanigan & Sue Hedges)

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. We attempted to procure several bids from contractors for the design of a plan, but delays and misunderstandings on the part of bidders occurred. Then the need for immediate tree replacement arose, and the plan was shelved for the remainder of the year.
- Planted fifteen native trees on May 5 to replace trees that either died or were removed because of safety reasons last year. We need volunteers to water them over the summer.
- Maude McGovern continues to serve as liaison 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.
- We did not hold Do It Day this year as it was difficult to identify a good time within the new two service schedule. We continue to look for opportunities for volunteer involvement.
- 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.
- 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.
- Consider the feasibility of pursuing state grant funding for storm water management improvements on our property.

Grounds Committee members: Wayne Crump, Irene Eckstrand, Tim Francis, Martin Haber, Barbara Harrison, Sue Hedges, Mary Lanigan, Steve Lapham, Maude McGovern, Bill Newhouse, and Jo Wilson. The Committee does not currently have a Chair.

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.

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 UUCR Staff, Finance Committee, and Board of Trustees to strategize on 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 (Windows 7 workstations and laptops), projectors, large-screen HDTVs, facsimile, printers, scanners, a mobile phone, and networking equipment such as switches, cable modems, and WiFi routers.

Major accomplishments for the year:

- The staff purchased two new TCL HDTVs. One is a scrolling info kiosk in the corridor to the Sanctuary. The other resides in Room 44.
- Continued use of church database to cloud based <https://www.churchdb.com/uucr> especially by the Canvass Team.
- 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.
- Provided email for new staff.
- Upgraded Communications and Membership director's computer to a faster, more powerful, higher memory PC.
- 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.
- Pushed the staff to implement cloud storage reducing the dependency on our server.
- Replaced power supply in the server in May.

Next year, goals for the IT Committee include the following:

- Full migration of staff files to cloud storage, enabling the elimination of the UUCR server.

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. We have added at least two new volunteers since last year's report. The existing equipment continues to work well, and there have been no major purchases required this year.

We are planning to purchase a specialized battery charger designed to work with the receivers for the listening assistance system. The charger accommodates 12 receivers and charges NiMH rechargeable batteries installed in them (currently we are using disposable alkaline batteries). This system will prevent receivers from failing due to dead batteries, but will require some additional effort on the part

of the ushers and/or sound volunteers. The headsets will need to be removed from the receivers after use, and the receivers returned to the charging base. The cost for this purchase (including the NiMH batteries, two new receivers and some headphones) will be approximately \$670, to be charged against the current FY budget. We are also considering the purchase of additional NiMH batteries and a charger for use with the wireless microphones. This will eliminate the risk of mixing alkaline and rechargeable batteries, which can damage the equipment. The additional cost for these batteries and charger will be about \$80.

The garden speaker that is installed outside of the sanctuary is not working and needs to be replaced. This speaker should cost less than \$200, which will also be charged against the current FY budget.

The 2017-2018 Sound Committee budget is \$1,090 and \$64.50 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*

The mission of the Pastoral Care Team (PCT) is to provide care and support to members and friends of our congregation as needed.

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. The coordinator of this activity has been Sue Thomas; this has now been taken on by Sharon Fitzpatrick.
- 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

This year’s special events and activities:

- Members of the PCT attended workshops given by Hospice and other UU churches this year, but we did not host any workshops at UUCR. One of the Hospice events attended was the film *Alive Inside*, which we will be showing at UUCR on June 24, 2018.
- Several members attended a joint workshop with Cedar Lane. The sharing was very valuable and we hope to repeat this, inviting Pastoral Care Teams from other congregations next year.

Team members: Jill Asman, Marilyn Briant, Paulette Campbell (Co-Chair), Judy Eisenhower, Sharon Fitzpatrick, 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.

Spirit of Life Sangha—*Liliane Floge*

The mission of the Spirit of Life Sangha is to assist those interested in improving their practice of mindfulness using the methods recommended by the Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hahn and others who practice mindfulness. The Sangha is managed by a Caring Council who lead the meetings and choose readings. This year the members of the Council were: Robert Campbell, John Dunbar, Liliane Floge, and Ethel Gilbert.

Since we began the Sangha in 2010 the number of persons interested in the Sangha has increased considerably. We now have over 70 persons (up from 40 in 2016) who have attended at least one meeting and have chosen to be on our Sangha group email list. More than 30 persons on our email list attend our meetings regularly. This year attendance has increased with between 15 and 20 persons sitting with us weekly. Our meetings are open to persons who are not part of UUCR and a few regularly attend our meetings. We periodically have a Sangha lunch at a member's home, instead of meeting at UUCR. These lunches have strengthened ties among our members.

The Sangha met most Sundays in 2017 after services to meditate, study readings and have discussions about aspects of mindfulness practice. We usually met in Building 2 from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. We spent the first 20 minutes in Sitting Meditation, sometimes with a guided meditation. This was followed by a Dharma reading, with all members engaged in the reading, which would often take about 15 minutes. The final 25 minutes or so were spent discussing the reading. In order to allow more discussion we began, the first Sunday of the month, to extend our meetings for an extra 15 minutes.

Since the advent of two services in January 2018, the Sangha has met during the "Middle Hour," starting at 10:15 a.m. We have often reduced the meditation period to about 15 minutes because we have found that many of our members are involved in the second service or are attending the second service and thus leave the meeting at 11:00 a.m., shortening the meeting time for them. Thus, the entire Sangha usually only meets for 45 minutes. To accommodate this shorter time period we have also tried to keep our selection of readings somewhat shorter so we all have some time to engage in the following discussion. For those persons who may wish to contemplate for a longer time period before speaking, this may mean they seldom share their thoughts with the group. For these reasons the Sangha has felt that meeting during Middle Hour has somewhat diminished its effectiveness.

We believe that participation in the Sangha has deepened the practice of its members and led to a more positive spiritual outlook. Many of the mindfulness practices encouraged are identical to Unitarian Universalist principles, such as: the inherent worth and dignity of every person; compassion in human relations; and respect for the interdependent web of all existence.

Documents prepared: We have prepared a description of the workings of a Sangha; of the particular workings of our Sangha; a document listing the updated Five Mindfulness Trainings (authored by Thich Nhat Hanh, based on Buddha's precepts); a list of suggested readings; and a one page general descriptive document. During the week these and other items are kept in our Sangha Box located in the large closet next to the kitchen.

Group Improvement: From September to December we lengthened one session a month by 15 minutes – until 12:45 p.m. – to provide more discussion time. We found that many of our members were eager to continue our Dharma discussion during this extra time.

Women’s Open Spiritual Connection Group—*Sahar Dawisha*

The WOSCG is open to all women interested in exploring spirituality together while gaining creative insights and connection with each other.

A typical meeting consists of introductions/check-in, guided meditation, creative self-exploration activity, sharing of insights, and closing. This is our 4th year of fostering self-awareness and connection through meditation, creative self-expression, and mutual support. Some of our activities this year included: focusing intentions for the New Year, sharing Women’s Retreat experiences, Sacred Circle dance, using the “I Am/I Am From” template to create and share poems about ourselves, walking the outdoor Labyrinth at St. Luke’s Episcopal Church followed by a lunch outing with sharing of insights, exploration of 5Rhythms dance, and a summer social potluck. 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.

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

We would like to foster additional leadership of activities from regular members, and to further explore the feminine divine.

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

Fellowship

Craft Group—*Sherry Henry*

The Women’s Craft Group consists of anywhere between 2 and 10 ladies who meet on Tuesdays from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. to share arts & crafts and conversation. At one time the group took on ambitious projects, such as creating jewelry and cards to put up for sale, to benefit the church. Gradually, the group has shifted to working with adult coloring books. For some, this gathering might be the only outside socializing for the week. Reminiscing is a favorite pastime for the group; for a couple of months, a 1923 Sears Catalog sparked off a lot of lively memories. Ages range from the mid-60s to the mid-90s. The ladies have formed tight friendships, and look forward to chatting about the past, current events, and the most recent sermon. Membership in the group usually results from one member who approaches new members who indicate they are looking to connect on a regular basis.

The 2017-2018 Craft Group budget is \$100, all of which has been spent.

Hospitality Team—*Jon Landenburger*

The purpose of the Hospitality Team is primarily to organize the distribution of coffee, other drinks, and accompaniments after service on Sundays. Hospitality also offers various levels of assistance in events staged by other groups when there is a need for coffee. Our adaptation to the two-service schema has been to make preparations in the morning and to leave out an available carafe until 1:00

p.m. or until we run out. It has been difficult to sign up enough volunteers to sustain all the procedures. A number of volunteers have had to work for extended and additional periods.

Team leaders: Mary Lanigan, Sue Hedges, and Jon Landenburger sign vouchers for purchases. These three and April Pulvirenti do the shopping for coffee, tea, milk, and containers.

Literary Fiction Book Group—*Marialyce Sherr*

This group meets monthly on the second Monday of each month at the church to discuss fiction of well-recognized works of literature. The group is always open to new members who desire to concentrate on good fiction, including the development of memorable characters, challenging plot lines, and pleasing prose. The discussion lasts for two hours, currently from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m., and membership at this time is holding at 13 members. Near the end of each meeting, which has focused on the discussion of the literary work, the group members draw on their Unitarian Universalist values and relate those values to the major themes of the book. Although we have bonded as friends do, we have welcomed new members without hesitation. Ideally the group cannot become too large, however, because of the nature of a good discussion which includes equal participation of each member.

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 37th annual quilt, called “American Heritage,” which was raffled at the Harvest Bazaar on Saturday, October 28, 2017. Raffle tickets (760) were sold at \$2 each or 3 for \$5. Net profit was \$1,273.00. Brian Haugen was the quilt winner.

This 2017 quilt, “American Heritage,” was inspired by a quilt from 1880. It was composed of classic nine-patch squares, with contrasting light and dark fabrics that created strong diagonal patterns. The hand quilting reinforced the diagonals in the design. The colors were soft with a few bright ones for liveliness. The overall feel was comforting and designed to induce a good night’s sleep.

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, note cards, knit items, and more. A profit of \$915.00 was raised for UUCR from these crafts.

2017-2018 committee/group budget was \$275.00, for both quilt and assorted crafts. Amount that has been spent as of May 13, 2018 is \$162.10. We are currently working on the 2018 Raffle Quilt, our 38th.

Committee members include Carol Dangel, Jo Wilson, Lynne Goss, Barbara Harrison, Marge Holmes, Louise Friedenberg, Alberta Maschal, Lisa Reed, Gwen Rowe, Anne Spicknall, Christina Ginsberg, Pat Chapin, and Louise Lovell.

Socrates Café Rockville —*Ken Sandin*

Socrates Café Rockville, a philosophical discussion group started in 2006 by Kyle Hedges in 2006; Ken Sandin succeeded them in 2008. Originally an exclusively UUCR group, we went public on Meetup.com in 2010, and non-members now constitute the majority of the 16-20 monthly participants. Some of the latter have become UUCR members and friends. Jon Landenburger succeeded Ken in April 2018. We receive no UUCR funding; Tom Rowe pays the Meetup.com membership fee. 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 —*Liz Hedges*

The Young Adults Group provides opportunities for people ages 18-35 to connect through social and spiritual development. Elizabeth Hedges and Sean Hickey are the current group organizers.

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 movie nights as part of our film and discussion series called "Power to the People."
- Held Game Night potlucks.

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 2017-2018 YAG budget is \$100, which has not been spent.

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Bylaws Task Force—*Steve Eckstrand*

The purpose of the Bylaws Task Force was to evaluate proposed changes to the UUCR's Bylaws and recommend a revised set of Bylaws to the Board of Trustees.

The Task Force met on March 15 and April 12 and developed a final set of recommended Bylaws via email. The Task Force submitted its recommended changes to the Board of Trustees at its meeting on April 17, and the Board of Trustees discussed the recommended changes and approved a final version for submission to the Congregation. The recommended changes were posted on the Board of Trustees bulletin board on April 20 and distributed to the congregation via *UUCR E-Weekly* and *Quest*. The congregation will vote on the recommended changes at its annual meeting on May 20, 2018.

The job of this task force will be complete when the congregation votes to accept the recommended Bylaws.

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