

# First Universalist Church Annual Meeting Agenda

June 4, 2017

Following the church service: establish a quorum (If you are a congregation member, please remain seated)

10 minute break

Chalice Lighting/Opening Words

Rev. Celie

Approval of 2015-2016 Annual Meeting Minutes

President's Comments

Treasurer's Report

Vote on Proposed Budget for 2017-2018

Elections: Board of Trustees : Kitty Forbush, Tim Mullins, Karen Ruganis (2<sup>nd</sup> terms)

Board President: Nancy Gaede

Nominating: Kate Fluery

Committee on Ministry: to be established

Vote on Settled Search Team: Howard Spindler, Christine DeGolyer,

Katherine Flynn, Suzie Syta Gutierrez, Bridget Watts, Moritz Wagner,

Steve Munson

Update on Interim Minister Search

Special Recognition

Other Business

Adjournment

Closing Words/Extinguishing the Chalice

Rec. Celie

## FIRST UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF ROCHESTER

### MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING

June 12, 2016

The Annual Meeting of the First Universalist Church was called to order after today's church service, and a quorum of members was established. The chalice was lit and Rev. Katovitch gave the opening reading.

**Approval of Annual Minutes of June 6, 2015:** M/S/P (Motion made, seconded and passed) with no objection.

**President's Comments:** Ed Deller, outgoing President of the congregation, urged people to read through the Annual Report to see all the amazing work being done by various committees and ministries of the church. He noted that we have had a 20% increase in membership in 2 years and attendance at services has also increased. Due to our stability, the Board was able to focus more on our mission and future, as we established visioning priorities, examined our governance structure and took steps to identify church wide social justice initiatives.

**Treasurer's Report:** Dick Shroyer, Treasurer, reviewed the current financial picture. He noted we have a surplus in the 2015-16 budget, and that the proposed 2016-17 budget is balanced. The new budget provides for staff pay increases as well as paying full fair share to the UUA and our District. We also have reliable parking rental income again. Ann Rhody, Finance Chair, presented the 2016-17 proposed budget. She explained several items in the budget and addressed the following questions.

1. Is the minister fairly compensated? Does her salary reflect pay equity and is it in line with UUA guidelines? (M.J. Curry)  
Answer: Compensation for Rev. Katovitch (as well as other staff) follows the Fair Compensation Guidelines from the UUA (and may be in the higher end of the range suggested). The Board is comfortable with the compensation offered, and Rev. Katovitch noted the staff feels "well cared for." Joy Leccese noted the total compensation includes the benefits.
2. Comment made to urge all who use the microphone to speak directly into it to enable those who have hearing impairment to hear the discussion (Harvey Rothbeind).
3. Is the deteriorating plaster going to be fixed in the sanctuary? (Paula Marchese)  
Answer: Plaster repair is slated for this summer.
4. Is the church considering using utility suppliers who use greener sources of energy? (Lois Baum)  
Answer: Yes. This is a discussion that will continue with House, Finance and Social Justice committees.
5. How many spaces are rented in the parking lot? (Nancy Gaede)  
Answer: There are 5 spaces rented.
6. Please clarify the NYSCU loan for PACT 2014 noted in the Balance Sheet. (David Gloss)  
Answer: This is a \$50,000 loan we took out to help with cash flow for the PACT campaign and did not need to use. We have been repaying it yearly.

After discussion, the 2016-17 Budget was passed, all in favor with one person declining to vote, citing his hearing difficulties.

Ed thanked the Finance Committee members for their work.

**Elections:**

Shirley Bond, Co-Chair of the Nominating Committee, put forth the nominees for various positions.

For the Board of Trustees, M/S/P unanimously to approve Erich Van Dusen to fill Mike VanArsdale's vacated seat. Nancy Gaede was approved as President.

For the Nominating Committee, M/S/P unanimously to approve Joy Leccese and Chris DeGolyer to fill Glenda Brayman's and Marcy Klein's vacated seats.

For the Committee on Ministry, M/S/P unanimously to approve Marti Eggers for the seat vacated by John Wellin.

**Special Recognitions:** Ed Deller thanked all the members of the congregation who give so much to the church. The leaders of all the committees were named and recognized. In particular, Ed recognized the special contributions of Ann Rhody in the financial realm, Mike VanArsdale for his 6 years on the Board, and Nancy Gaede for her role in Membership and hospitality. They received bouquets of sunflowers. Ed Deller was also recognized for his leadership as Board President with an assortment of plants. Also, Lois Baum was recognized as our congregation's nominee for the Faith in Action award from the Greater Rochester Council of Churches.

**Other Business:** Lois Baum wondered if the new Chair of the Social Justice Committee was determined. Answer: The Board has not yet appointed a new Chair.

Closing reading was offered by Kitty Forbush. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Ruganis, Clerk

## Board of Trustees Annual Report

2016-2017

The members of the Board of Trustees for the 2016-17 church year were: Nancy Gaede (President), Ed Deller (Vice-President), Karen Ruganis (Clerk), Kitty Forbush, Tim Mullins, Eric Van Dusen, Janet Rothbeind, and Reverend Celie Katovitch (Minister, ex-officio).

At each monthly Board meeting, we review the finance report and the Minister's report, and approve the previous month's minutes. Minutes are available for church member review. As an on-going study topic for the year, we read and discussed chapters from Dan Hotchkiss' book *Governance and Ministry: Rethinking Board Leadership*. We periodically shared our findings in Outlook articles.

Here are some highlights of Board activities:

**June:** We completed our second formal evaluation of Reverend Katovitch at a special Board session and shared it with her. The House committee was asked to look into making changes in the Clara Barton Lounge to address congestion and noise issues. We discussed changes to the draft of the Social Justice Task Force Charter and approved the amended Charter. We appointed a Social Justice Task force: Connie Valk, Dick Gilbert, and Eric VanDusen. These appointments were later approved by the congregation. We held our annual meeting on June 12. We set a policy regarding church funding for delegates to General Assembly and District meetings. We approved the purchase of additional hymnals. We set October 1, 2016 as the date for Leadership Assembly.

**July:** We elected the following Board positions: Nancy Gaede (President), Ed Deller (Vice-President), Karen Ruganis (Clerk). We set "Church Finance 101" as a focus for the October Leadership Assembly. We approved our Nominating Committee. Our vision is that this committee will begin to help us identify and nurture new leadership in our congregation.

**August:** We set meeting dates for this church year. The Social Justice Task Force engaged the Board in a focus group session. We discussed security issues.

**September:** We discussed the possibility of Washington Square Park neighborhood music festival in September, 2017. We reviewed the recommendations received from the Committee on Ministry concerning committee structures. We finalized the agenda for the Leadership Assembly.

**October:** A task force was established to investigate modifications to the Clara Barton Lounge. We approved the hiring of a child-care assistant. We approved delegates to NYSCU. We began a discussion on a policy for snow day closing.

**November:** We began to look into having an independent church audit. We established priorities for the revamping of the lounge. These were shared with the task force. We approved a snow day policy.

**December:** We discussed and approved the Social Justice Task Force report and made plans to share it with the congregation. We set January 15, 2017 as the date to hold a question/answer session with the congregation and January 29, 2017 for a congregational meeting to vote to approve adopting the recommendations.

**January:** We met with members of the Washington Square Park Neighborhood Association to learn of their vision to improve our neighborhood. We approved replacing sanctuary lights with LED bulbs. At the Congregational meeting on January 29, the Social Justice report and the Faith in Action Council were approved.

**February:** We discussed hosting NYSCU in October. We looked to see if any by-law changes needed to be made because of our newly adopted Social Justice framework (no changes were thought to be needed at this time.) We had an in-depth budget discussion with Finance.

**March:** We meet with the Lounge Renovation Task Force to review proposals. We approved the proposals and the funding necessary for implementation. We discussed the progress of the Faith in Action Council. We decided that, for reasons of privacy, we would not post Board minutes on the church web site. We approved the Eco-Justice group's participation in the Rochester People's Climate Coalition under the church's name. We learned that Reverend Katovitch would be ending her ministry with us in June. In a special Board meeting on March 29<sup>th</sup>, we approved a motion to enter into a search for an interim minister for a term of one year.

**April:** We established an Interim Ministry Search Team and began the search process. We received a proposal from the Faith in Action Council to set racism as the focus for Social Justice. We began calling congregation members to ask for names of trusted individuals to contact to be on the Settled Minister Search Committee.

**May:** We entered the second round of Interim Ministry Search. We completed our slate of Settled Minister Search Committee names. We approved delegates to General Assembly. The Faith in Action Council's proposal was approved at a Congregational meeting on May 21, 2017. We approved additional funds to re-carpet the hallway between the lounge and sanctuary. We approved the proposed 2017-18 church budget.

Respectfully submitted,  
Nancy Gaede, President  
Karen Ruganis, Clerk

## President's Report 2016-2017

It has been a very busy year at First Universalist! Our Social Justice Task Force completed extensive information gathering and developed a new framework that will allow us to better focus and evaluate our Social Justice efforts. The congregation approved the framework. The newly formed Faith in Action Council received congregational approval to move forward with a focus on examining systemic racial injustice. I thank everyone who worked so hard on this.

In March, we learned that Reverend Celie would be ending her ministry at First Universalist in June. Interim and Settled Search Teams were formed. The Board wanted to be certain that everyone had a chance to give names of trusted individuals to serve on the Settled Search Team. As I compiled a list, I was astounded at the number of names I received. Some folks responded simply: I trust everyone here. I think that this says a great deal about this congregation. We will work with our regional representative to make this transition a smooth one.

In spite of this unsettled situation, I was delighted to see so many new people become congregation members. In addition, we had a very successful Stewardship campaign.

The Board's work on Governance and Ministry has taken a back seat because of our need to organize for the search for both an Interim and Settled minister, but it will be back on our agenda as we move forward. We want to become the most effective Board of Trustees possible.

My deepest thanks to all of you for making First Universalist the special place that it is. We have so many dedicated and talented people here! You are an amazing group of people. I look forward to meeting next year's challenges and opportunities with you.

Sincerely,

Nancy Gaede, President

## Annual Report - 2016-17 - Minister

As always, it is quite a challenge to paint a picture of a year of ministry here at First Universalist Church, in the space of just a page! That challenge is a tribute to the vibrant life of our community. I am grateful to all of you for being a part of that.

What follows is just a handful of highlights from the year.

**Nurture the Spirit.** Our worship life was nourished by talented Worship Associates, singers, musicians (including our new music director Stacey Yang), ushers and greeters and coffee hour hosts- and by all of you, who in word and silence, prayer and song, participation and presence, created the sacred time that anchors us as a faith community. Faith Development flourished under the leadership of Michelle Yates and many lay leaders - and flourished in many forms, from classes to groups to Cozy Suppers to retreats. Our kids - and all of us - benefitted from the leadership of our teachers, storytellers, and youth group mentors, and of course our wonderful nursery leader, Carol Williams. Our building, financial, and human resources were carefully and faithfully stewarded by our Finance, Stewardship, House, and Personnel leaders, as well as by our administrator Melissa Davies and sexton Brandon Fagan. Our caring and membership ministries have reached out in love to friends both old and new among us. Behind the scenes, your Board has done a tremendous amount of important big-picture work and discernment, that has already made us stronger as an organization and that will continue to bear good fruit going forward. This year, we have honored the cycles and seasons of life: the transitions and losses, as we grieved the passing of beloved friend of the church Jim Eckberg, and as my time with you comes to a close; and the ever-present renewal of hope and promise - as we welcomed 25 parishioners, and celebrated a Child Dedication ceremony in June.

**Serve the Community.** Many of us were coping with greater stress this year following November's election, and here at church we have given needed strength to one another. We have also attended rallies, marches, and moments of witness - as a church, and as individuals. We have re-committed ourselves to practicing justice, mercy, and humility. We have continued our important ministries - from RAIHN to the food collection to the garden to racial justice to the Homelessness Task Force - and we saw the formation of a new Ecojustice group, and much activity centered on Clara's Cupboard as an outreach to our neighbors. And of course, we began the transition to a new social justice approach, and following the recommendation of the Faith in Action council, approved our first 2-year congregational focus.

On a personal level - it has been one of the great privileges of my life to serve this church, to learn from you, and to walk with you these past three years. I will be cheering for you from wherever life may lead me, and will be forever grateful for our time together.



## Communications Committee 2016-2017 Annual Report

Committee members: Dolores DaLomba, Melissa Davies, Rev. Celie Katovitch, Marcy Klein, Connie Valk, Lisa Gwinner- Chair

The Communications Committee has a mission to facilitate smooth communication within the church and congregation, by making sure the church web site, ebulletin ("This Week at First Universalist", which arrives every Monday by email- subscribe by emailing [office@uuroc.org](mailto:office@uuroc.org)), Our Outlook (the monthly newsletter, available online at [uuroc.org](http://uuroc.org) & on paper at church), & bulletin boards are maintained, updated, and upgraded regularly. We also help to reach out to the community by advertising church events, supplying posters & signs for church participation in community events, and making sure the church and web site are friendly to visitors.

Here's an overview of our activities this past year:

We collaborated with the House Committee to update and increase the number of signs inside & outside the church, which, in particular, helps visitors and newcomers to find their way around and makes the church building more accessible to all.

We created a new church web site which is more attractive, has active links to the ebulletin, and is easily updated to add news and activities as they occur. We also added an online room reservation form that allows members to easily reserve spaces for meeting and activities. The new site went live on September 4th.

Melissa and Celie reconfigured the Sunday orders of service to have reusable covers, with unchanging information printed on the covers and weekly information on smaller, lighter paper inserts, similar to what we use for summer services. These have been in use since mid-September 2016.

We advertised the church and church activities in the following venues: The Rural and Migrant Ministries annual banquet program, RocActs annual banquet program, placed Music Sunday and Christmas Eve service ads in City Paper and The Empty Closet We also participated in United Way's "Roc the Day" campaign for fundraising and awareness of the church in the community.

As a follow-up to the UUA's Love Reaches Out workshops, which we ran in 2015, we have made an effort to consolidate the image used to represent our church in internal & external publications, in order that we may be more easily recognized We have chosen the flaming chalice logo that is on the sign on the front of the church as this image, and it has been a part of all advertisements that we've placed in the past year, as well as in the header of the eBulletin and on our web site.

We led a short program in the annual church Leadership Assembly in October, to let committee chairs know how we can help them to advertise their activities outside the church community. We offer financial support as well as assistance with ad design.

We sponsored this year's mitten tree, in the Sanctuary at Christmas, and co-ordinated donations of warm winter accessories to School 7 and the BRIDGE home. We were delighted by the amount of donations and made sure a thank you was printed in the ebulletin after the holidays.

Melissa and Celie share Facebook posting duties on the church's page, posting church activities and inspirational words almost daily. We encourage our church community to share & like these posts, to spread the word about First Universalist.

We were in dialogue with the House Committee on the bulletin board spaces as the Clara Barton Lounge remodeling was planned, balancing the communication needs with the esthetic needs of the church.

Melissa and Marcy worked with Howard Spindler on a new sign for Eastman at Washington Square that is lighter & easier to store.

The Outlook editorship was transferred to Melissa as of the February issue. Many thanks to David Damico for his years of service & for bringing Our Outlook into the 21st century. Melissa has added hyperlinks to the PDF version of the Outlook to make it easier to follow-up on information and activities reported on in each issue.

Connie shared with us a welcome sign that she found on the internet, made from an original design by the Immanuel Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg, VA, and placed in the public domain, which has gone viral around the country. The sign says "No matter where you are from, we're glad you're our neighbor" in English, Spanish, and Arabic. We decided to have some made (duplicates in case they blow away) and one was placed in the front of the church in February. This was lost in the March wind storm and has since been replaced.

We are exploring the idea of having a library of protest signs available in the office for church members who want to take one to a rally. They would say "The First Universalist Church of Rochester, NY supports justice for all" and would be made of lightweight & durable materials. The Board is discussing this idea, along with the question of how to determine which causes the church officially supports, so that we may move forward on this project.

We've had a busy and productive 2016-2017 and look forward to another year of good communication at First Universalist.

Respectfully submitted- Lisa Gwinner

Finance Committee Annual Report  
2016-17

**Committee Members:** Ann Rhody (chair), Richard Shroyer (treasurer), Bill Jones (collector), Paula Marchese, Dave VanArsdale, Karl Abbott (assistant treasurer), Katherine Flynn, Beth Ares (payroll and benefits coordinator)

We began the 2016-17 church year with the following goals in mind:

- Add to the committee with some newer church members
- Review our fundraisers and perhaps eliminate some. Church members are regularly asked to contribute to special service collections and monthly plate offerings, and at the same time, the church's financial stability has reduced the need to raise funds in additional ways.
- Explore ways to streamline the financial operations of the church, including but not limited to
  - Quickbooks online
  - Increased use of online banking and automatic check payments
  - ACH transfer availability for people paying pledges
  - Increased use of the time of our office administrator for finance-related tasks.

The Finance Committee is pleased to report that major progress has been made on all of these goals, as well as others!

**Finance personnel:**

- We welcomed Katherine Flynn and Beth Ares to the committee during the course of the year, and Kate Young will be joining us going forward.
- Karl Abbott is transitioning out of the role of payroll coordinator, and Beth Ares has taken on the newly created position of Payroll and Benefits Coordinator
- Katherine Flynn and Paula Marchese worked with Karl Abbott to assist with payroll input
- We bid farewell to our bookkeeper, Monica Blank, who had served the church for six years. The bookkeeper role was phased out as a result of our move toward electronic banking and bookkeeping.

**Fundraisers:**

- We did not hold a change drive or a Holiday Shoppe this year. We offered the concept of a change drive to committee leaders as a way to fund a special project or discretionary fund, but none took it on. We continue to think this could be an easy way for a committee to raise some needed funds.
- A successful service auction was held on February 5, raising over \$5,400 (and a whole lot of fun!) to support church programs. Many thanks to Paula Marchese and Katherine Flynn, who did the heavy lifting of organizing and coordinating a large group of volunteers, and to Tim Mullins, who organized the lunch.

**Streamlining of Finance operations:**

This was a complex and wide-reaching task, and tremendous progress has been made. Treasurer Dick Shroyer worked diligently to plan, change, organize, and document the various operations involved in this large transition, and the day-to-day financial operations of the church look quite a bit different than they did a year ago. Dick would be happy to provide detailed information upon request, but here is a summary:

- The church now uses Quickbooks online. This allows the Finance leaders to work, pay bills, see invoices, etc. from home.
- The vast majority of payments occur either through electronic funds transfer or a check issued directly from the bank through online bill pay. Paper checks printed at church are the rare exception.

- Many vendors are able to send invoices electronically to the office and the newly established treasurer's email account.
- A Dropbox account has been established for the Treasurer, and this takes the place of the bulky paper files we have needed to store in the past.
- Since bills are paid via secure connection directly with the bank, there is no longer a need for a bookkeeper. The funds are spent instead on the monthly fee for the Quickbooks program.
- Check requests can now be done online via the "members" section of the website. This feature has been slower to catch on, and the finance team needs to continue to work on communicating about this feature, encouraging use, and making it as user-friendly as possible.
- The office administrator has provided important assistance in forwarding any electronic communication which may come in, as well as with scanning and sending receipts and other pertinent information.

**Other 2016-17 notes:**

- The 2017 Stewardship Campaign had the theme, "We'll Build a Land" and was led by co-chairs Rachael Baldanza and Heather Jones. As of this writing, we had 95 pledges totaling \$197,248, with several more expected. The overall total is the highest in our history, and we would like to work toward expanding the pledge "base" to include more members and friends. Thanks to Rachael and Heather and the stewardship team, especially Bill Jones who heads up the production of the stewardship brochure, cards, and materials.
- A large budget surplus at the end of last fiscal year enabled us to support new hymnals, office equipment renovation, and extra funds toward our loan from the endowment. As of this writing, it appears that we may have a significant surplus at the end of this fiscal year as well, and the finance team will work with the Board of Trustees to plan for how these funds can best be used to ensure future financial stability and full funding for our mission.
- Our endowment remains strong and well-managed by Bob Reeves with Geovest Advisors. Bob met with the Finance team for a portfolio review in September, and we expect to meet with him again later in 2017 to review the church's investments.
- The 2014-19 PACT Capital Campaign pledges continue to be paid, and Ann Rhody is doing the accounting and statements for this. Unused funds from the campaign are going to the Beryl Haas Building Fund, housed in the endowment.

For the 2017-18 church year, we would like to make progress on the following goals:

- Continue to solidify, streamline, and communicate about our paperless office procedures
- Increase user-friendliness in reporting, funds requests, and budget development
- Work with the Board and House committee to fund lounge renovations and other building improvements
- Work with the Board and search teams to finance the search, interim, and settled minister needs
- Better organize, document, and store information relating to Payroll and Personnel

Many, many thanks to the committee members and to the congregation for their work and support.

Respectfully submitted for the committee,

Ann Rhody, Chair

First Universalist Church of Rochester  
**Report from the House Committee 2016-2017**

May 2017

This year's committee started with Tom Ruganis, Mike VanArsdale, Marty Vyverberg, Sarah Singal, Marcy Klein, Karen Dau, Michael Scott and Ed Deller as members. Marty left in June and Mike VanArsdale and Karen Dau have transitioned off the team but continue to be valuable resources. Shirley Bond joined in the spring and already added to a great team.

All of the plans laid out last year were successfully accomplished. These were:

- The church office was completely renovated. The floor was re-finished, the ceiling dry-walled, the walls painted, new furniture purchased and the door repaired.
- The benches were installed in the Clinton Avenue vegetable garden area.
- New signs were installed throughout the church
- Plaster was repaired in the sanctuary and the RE stairwell.
- Plans for the improvement of the Clara Barton Lounge were completed and a project in make the improvements a reality has started.

In addition to the major plans for the year the following various tasks issues were completed or addressed.

- Two successful clean-up days were completed during the year. Thanks to all who helped out with cleaning, inspecting and completing small repairs.
- The transition to LED bulbs in the Sanctuary was completed. The Sanctuary is brighter and is saving money. The church's energy footprint was reduced by over 6000 watts!
- The energy supplier for the church was change from RG&E to the Energy Cooperative of America. We are now using 100% of our electricity from renewable sources.
- A defective pump in the heating system resulted in loss of heat in the Clara Barton Lounge and the RE wing during the Sunday service. Steps were taken to avoid frozen pipes until the replacement pump could be ordered and installed.
- The spreader used for salt in the winter was been repaired at no cost! The manufacturer was contacted and they provided free replacement parts.
- The church elevator was inspected twice and two minor problems were identified and corrected.
- A cracked and leaking toilet in church basement bathroom was replaced.
- The exterior lights at both the Court and Clinton street doors were put on photocells and will enhance the appearance and security of our church.
- The snow plowing contract for the winter season was signed and a new snow-blower was purchased.
- Two problems with the dishwasher in the kitchen were corrected. A leak was repaired followed by replacement of the detergent feed tubes.
- A defective thermostat was replaced outside the church office.
- A new vacuum cleaner was purchased.
- New clips for the lapel microphones were purchased.

First Universalist Church of Rochester

**Report from the House Committee 2016-2017**

May 2017

- A defective motion sensor switch was replaced in one of the RE wing restrooms.
- The church's sexton has been out on disability since early February. As it was initially expected that this would be a short term situation, volunteer and other staff were used to fill in. Since it is still unclear how long the disability will continue a temporary person was hired and started on May 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Plans for the upcoming year include:

- Complete the Clara Barton Lounge renovation over the summer of 2017
- Investigate the possible installation of a bicycle rack for the church.
- Review the overall painting need of the church and start addressing the areas of greatest concern.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Ruganis

Annual Report  
Lifespan Faith Development: Children and Adult 2016-2017

It has been another active year for Lifespan Faith Development.

Our Children's Programming:

- In the first half of the year, Children's Worship, while available each week, had success in focusing on gathering a critical mass of children (4-6 average) and families on one Sunday per month (Second Sundays). Since January 2017, we have consistently had 2-6 children attending every Sunday. This is an exciting shift, and we find ourselves in need of more Children's Worship leaders and assistants for the coming church year.
- "Wonderful Welcome", a Tapestry of Faith curriculum, was used along with the monthly themes (derived from the Affirmation of Faith) to develop our Children's Worship programming.
- This Fall we revived our Youth Group, and recruited several new advisers to provide programming for five High School Aged youth who came to us. We also devised a "Bridging Group" model that we hope to use next year for recent high school graduates. This spring we will be "Bridging" all five of the youth, as each of them will be heading to a four-year college in the coming Fall.
- The Nursery has been open and active all year long, and will continue through the summer again this year.
- Message for All Ages has been a consistent and energized portion of our worship.
- Per our volunteer screening policy we completed two (2) background checks in Spring of 2016, and upon discovering they were not as expensive as originally expected eight (8) were completed this church year (2016-2017)
- The DLFD Michelle Yates worked with Rev. Celie Katovitch to design/support three Intergenerational Services, and Rev. Celie will coordinate an Intergenerational Flower Communion/Child Dedication service in which six (6) of our children will be dedicated!!
- This year the board approved our request to hire a childcare assistant to serve as our second adult in the nursery.

A Big Thank you to our Children's Worship Leaders & Assistants (Chris DeGolyer, Charlie Courtsal, Beth Ares, Becky Elwell, Karl Abbot, Rachel Irato, Kathi Milch, and Connie Valk) ,  
our Nursery staff (Carol Williams) & Childcare Volunteers (Ann Rhody, Janus Mary Jones, Ruth Fitzgerald, Charlie Courtsal, Paula Marchase, Eileen Fernandez, Kathy Flynn, Patti Goodwin, Heather Jones, Beverly Lynn, John Morgan, Elizabeth Osta, Barbara Ward, Tom Williams, Beth Ares and Jessie Bowen),  
our Youth Group Advisers (Heather Menzies-Jones, Alyssa Swanson, Tess McFarland-Porter, Shirley Bond, Connie Valk, and Suzie Gutierrez),  
our Message for All Ages Storytellers (Janet Clark-Hazlett, Catherine Coates, Shirley Malone, Bridget Watts, Bill Elwell, Elizabeth Osta, Lew Ward-Baker, and Charlie Courtsal),  
and ALL the others who have made all this happen!!

## Our Adult Programming:

- Monthly newsletter articles focused on faith development themes were contributed to the **Outlook** by Michelle.
- Four Cozy Night Suppers were held with an average attendance of 25 per evening this year. The themes for the evenings included the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Sources, the Empty Bowls Project, and Racial Justice. The Empty Bowls Project featured a speaker from Foodlink and 43 participants! Many thanks to the facilitators, guest speakers, and the generous food/hospitality volunteers! It wouldn't be 'cozy' or 'supper' without you!!
- Michelle led a three-part workshop in the Fall during the daytime that was open to the community at the Irondequoit Public Library using the UUA curriculum based on the book, Age-ing to Sage-ing: a New Paradigm for Age-ing in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Attendance included an average of 10 church members, and 5 community members. It was offered in the evenings in four-parts in the spring with an average attendance of 2 church members and 7 community members.
- Two "Race to Justice" classes were co-led by Michelle and Suzy Gutierrez meeting November through June. Classes met once or twice a month with an average attendance of 6 members
- Seven (7) church members participated in the 3-part "Sacred Conversations on Race and Action" curriculum facilitated by RocACTS in the spring.
- Seder service was coordinated by Lou Ward-Baker
- A Beginning Meditation Series (10 Wednesdays) led by congregation members was held in the fall.
- Four Saturday monthly Mindfulness and Meditation Workshops were held this spring led by Joy Leccese with participation ranging from 4 to 12 each session.
- One Small Group Ministry Group was added this year; another long running group continues
- A 3-part discussion group on the UU Common Read, The Third Reconstruction, was co-led by Michelle, Phil Ebersole and Suzie Gutierrez with an average attendance of 3 church members.
- The Sunday Morning Discussion Group, the Book Group, Library and Bookstore continue to be vibrant and essential parts of our community!

Thank you to all who make Faith Development programming happen in our church! Thank you for sharing the Grace and Love of Unitarian Universalism with the world!

Respectfully Submitted,

Director of Lifespan Faith Development, Rev. Michelle Yates  
Children's Faith Development Chair, Connie Valk  
Adult Faith Development Chair, Kathy Russell



## Membership Committee Year-End Report, May 2017

The committee started the year with the following members: Nancy Gaide, Connie Valk (Co-Chair), Kitty Forbush, Patti Adams, Margaret Gallagher, and Peter Perine (Co-Chair). Early in the church year Patti and Margaret left the group, and Peter took over as the Chair. In the spring of 2017 Janus Mary Jones and Janine Casillo joined us.

In order to keep pace with the increased attendance at Sunday services, 20 additional gray hymnals and 10 additional teal hymnals were acquired. Purchases of additional UUA-provided brochures were made to ensure that an adequate supply of UU literature is available for Members and Visitors. Much of this material is also distributed in Visitor Information folders and New Member folders. Kitty has continued to create Name Tags for New Members and Friends of the Congregation.

Throughout the year we continued with the consolidation of Greeters and Ushers at each Sunday service, with a team of 3 Greeters/Ushers welcoming Members and Visitors each Sunday. Ruth Fitzgerald has very helpfully continued to make welcoming phone calls to Visitors who have asked to be contacted. Plans for the installation of an expanded literature display rack to be located near the Welcome Table at the foot of the Clara Barton Room entrance ramp, with completion of the new rack expected during the summer.

Our annual Path to Membership program was held on April 1, followed by New Member Sunday on April 2. Connie handled the planning and coordination of both events. 10 new members attended the Path to Membership session; we welcomed a total of 18 new members who had joined the church since our previous Membership Sunday in 2016. As a point of interest, our total Active Membership count provided to UUA this year was 154, vs the 2016 number of 149.

On a related topic, the committee plans to introduce periodic informational sessions to be made available to anyone interested in learning more about UU-ism in general and First Universalist in specific. It will be essentially a condensed version of the 2-hour Path to Membership program, offered three or four times per year. We are targeting September for the first offering.

The current computerized record-keeping process for Membership information is somewhat fragmented across multiple computer systems, making accurate tracking of Active Members, Inactive Members, Visitors, and Ex-members somewhat difficult. Peter is working with Melissa to upgrade our present out-of-date software (a software package called PowerChurch) to provide a single, accurate data source for all congregational reporting purposes. This effort will not impact any Financial data. Changeover to this new system is planned for September of this year.

For the Membership Committee,

Peter Perine, Chair

**2016-2017 Annual Report for Caring Committee  
Becky Elwell, Chair  
Marcy Klein, Secretary**

**Committee Members:**

**Becky Elwell, Chair; Eileen Fernandez, Marcy Klein, Secretary; Cathie Grisly, Connie Valk, , Katherine Flynn, Janet Clark-Hazlett, Greg and Lois Baum, Paula Marchese, Eunice Eckberg, and Rev. Celie Katovich (ex officio).**

**We were happy to welcome Lois, Greg, Eunice and Paula to the Committee this year.**

**Officers for 2017 - 2018: Co-Chairs Paula Marchese and Becky Elwell Secretary,  
Constance Valk**

**Goals:**

**To continue providing care for those in our congregation who are in need.**

**Activities:**

**Services provided include memorial service reception, visits and phone calls to members and friends in hospitals, nursing homes and at home. Meals for members who need help. 70 cards in 2016 and 30 cards to date in 2017 were sent to those in need and those who had recently moved and left the area. Rides were provided to the sick when needed. The Committee continues to coordinate the Christmas and Easter Plants projects. Sunday Service flowers were provided when approved by the Committee. Flowers were then given to shut-ins or to unsung heroes in the congregation.**

**Administration:**

**The committee continued to review and revise the policies. This year's acts of nature had brought to our attention new needs of care for the congregation.**

**We are looking forward to another year of service to our beloved community. The reward of serving on the Committee is joy.**



## 2016-2017 Music Committee Annual Report

Committee members: Stacey Yang- Music Director, Lisa Gwinner- Chair, Glenda Brayman, Dolores DaLomba, Theo Munson, Peter Perine, Howard Spindler, Keith Stott, Lew Ward-Baker, Martha Welch, Kitty Forbush- Board Liaison

The Music Committee assists, advises, and supports the Music Director and helps to guide the music programming of the church. In September 2016 we welcomed Stacey Yang, a second-year Masters of Organ Performance student at The Eastman School of Music, as our new Music Director.

Our main activities for the Fall were supporting Stacey as she learned her new job. Stacey began her tenure with the choir at the usual potluck and first rehearsal at Lisa Gwinner and Charlie Courtsal's, on Saturday, September 10th, to prepare for the first Sunday back on the 11th. As the Fall progressed Stacey made contact with our organ tuner, David Peckham, to arrange for the pre-Christmas tuning. She also chose the music for Music Sunday, which was scheduled for December 4th.

The music sung by the choir for Music Sunday was:

Elizabeth Alexander (1962): **Into the Silent Darkness** Commissioned by Joyce Gilbert with words by Richard Gilbert

Randall Thompson (1899-1984): **Choose Something Like a Star** Howard Spindler- Piano, Stacey Xiaoyu Yang- Conductor

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897):

**Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen** from *A German Requiem*  
English text adapted by Howard Spindler, Stacey Xiaoyu Yang- organ

Bring, O Morn, Thy Music! (based on the original hymn tune Winton Place) Text by William Channing Gannett Music by Howard Helvey, Stacey Xiaoyu Yang- organ.

The choir also sang the Victoria **O Magnum Mysterium** on Christmas Eve.

The choir gained two new members this year, soprano Elizabeth McFarland-Porter and tenor Kyle Kafka.

Unlike the previous two winters, the organ had no major issues over this past winter. Stacey met with David Peckham in early April when he came to tune the organ for Easter and he told her that she is keeping the organ in excellent condition. There have been occasional cyphers, but Stacey has been able to fix them.

In March, Stacey informed us that she had been accepted into the doctoral program at Eastman, to continue her studies here in Rochester. We are very pleased that she'll remain with us after she graduates with her Masters this year.

The choir sang the following pieces for Easter Sunday:

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1525-1594): **Sicut cervus** - *a capella*

William Harris (1883-1973): **Come Down, O Love Divine**, Stacey Xiaoyu Yang- organ

GF Handel: **Hallelujah Chorus** from *Messiah*, Stacey Xiaoyu Yang- organ, members of the congregation joined the choir in the loft.

Most of the choir also sang at Jim Eckert's memorial service in April.

A topic that we discussed during the Spring was the choir's music library, and the UU-inappropriateness of some of the older pieces. It's not very convenient for the Music Director to have pieces in the library that are not consistent with our UU beliefs or too secular to enhance a religious worship service, because it makes it difficult to navigate and choose anthems. Stacey, Dolores, and Lisa plan to begin evaluating the current music library in June, before Stacey goes away for the summer.

Ann Rhody has once again, graciously agreed to organise the summer music volunteers.

Stacey will be gone for about 8 weeks in the middle of the summer, but will be back in August so that we can begin planning Music Sunday, which will allow us to begin rehearsing the music even earlier this year.

Many thanks to Howard Spindler, Martha Welch, Paul Swiatek, & John Akers for their many musical contributions this past year. Our two vocal quartets, Voices of the Spirit (Glenda Brayman, Ann Rhody, Howard Spindler, & Lew Ward-Baker, with Martha Welch & Theo Munson as accompanists) and Gathered Here (Lisa Gwinner, Kitty Forbush, Ed Deller, & Charlie Courtsal), our recorder group, The No Hell Players (Howard Spindler, Charlie Courtsal, & Sarah Singal), and the Stott Family (Keith, Pat, and Mary Ann) also made wonderful musical contributions throughout the year. Thanks also to the choir, who arrive every Sunday morning at 9:00 am ready to rehearse!