

# 2014 Annual Report

First Unitarian Church



Albuquerque | East Mountains | Socorro | Carlsbad

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884-1801

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## **Part I—State of the Church**

### **Christine:**

The 2001-10 era of our church's life was an era of major growth in our church...we grew from a little under 500 members to around 800 members. We've stabilized since then in membership but we've had to keep on scrambling to organize ourselves and our program to be a church that is comfortably serving that many members and continuing to welcome new UU's. In other words: we've been learning to act our size. The biggest and most visible of those projects, of course, was this sanctuary, which continues to be beautiful, functional, and almost always...warm. Although it was finished in 2013, we were still spending a good deal of energy finishing it and adjusting to it and figuring out how to budget for it in 2014, especially in the first part of the year.

Churches that grow...and by the way, it is so unlike an established, suburban, 50 year old church to start growing that there are few guidebooks, but anyway, churches that grow have to learn to live their new size. In 2013 we worked on new bylaws for a church our size, and last year we worked on policies for a church our size...and we'll work on that in 2015 and probably longer, because that's a big job! Bringing Paul Brown onto the staff as Director of Finance and Operations was a part of acting our new size, and with the retirement of Kathy Keller, he's taken over the financial side of our church's life and brought his business and finance experience to helping us move beyond what was a sort of big household kind of budget and financial reporting into something more in line with small businesses of our size. The bankers like that sort of thing.

### **Angela:**

Another area where we are growing into our size is in our music program. At the beginning of this year, our Music Futures Task Force took a look at what musical components we had and compared the breadth of our program to that of other congregations our size. They discovered a world of possibilities that could infuse energy into and deepen the experience of Sunday services, such as instrumental ensembles, acapella groups, children's choirs, guided congregational singing, and—one of my favorites—pastoral care singers, who use the loving power of music transform hospital rooms and heal the spirit in times of illness or injury. Every musical group and event is also an opportunity for connection and community—two things that

many in the congregation have expressed a longing for. A more developed music program is also an opportunity for multigenerational and multicultural connections. It would have transformative rippling effects.

The task force conducted a survey to get the congregation's input and ideas, and drafted a vision statement that is included among the annual reports.

In a few months, JoAnn Rice will finish her time as our interim choir director. We've been lucky to have had her for twice as long as she originally planned, but she really means it this time—she's going back to retirement. So we are at a fork in the road: will we hire a quarter time choir director, as is currently budgeted? Or will we find a way to make the leap and live into our potential?

One way to do it might be for a small group of visionaries to make a financial pledge to enable us to recruit a full time director this year, feathering the full cost into the budget by 2018. That's a proposal I'll be bringing to the board next month to consider.

### **Christine:**

One thing we learned in 2014 was that our programs for families and children were not meeting the needs of those families as well as we would like, and we started addressing concerns, including communicating better with families who have their kids in RE and better serving those who prefer to keep children with them during the service. Our family room is full for many services, and there are children working pretty quietly at craft projects at the back tables at most services, AND there are reinvigorated children's classes going on in the RE building. Mia Noren, our new RE Director, is well known to parents and is making a great start, James has brought a more professional approach to our youth programs, and Angela and I have a few ideas to experiment with in the next year that we hope will both help all of our children be more comfortable in the sanctuary and help all of our children try out RE classes. Now...I know that kids in the sanctuary make noise, and that adds to the noises that adults make and the result is a sanctuary that is not as quiet as it used to be and for some folks, that's a loss. It's a loss that is not often felt in a 65 year old church, most of which don't have very many younger people and their children. Thanks for embracing and enjoying the energy they bring! The state of This church is healthy, lively, and multi-generational!

**Angela:**

And... this congregation is making plans! In a few minutes you'll be hearing from the strategic planning task force, who worked with great care in 2014 to ask as many people in the congregation as possible about their hopes and dreams for First Unitarian. The result is a set of inspiring directions we move in. In a way, they are marching orders for ministers—and we love them! But they more than that. They are dreams that staff, board, volunteers, and everyone will help the church live into over the next several years.

**Christine:**

Another piece of the state of the church which we can't neglect is the financial state of the church. You've heard the numbers, how we ended in the black last year and how we pared our budget down to balance this year. One day in December I went into our new bookkeeper's office. His desk was covered with stacks of checks and papers and I said that it looked like the money was rolling in. He said that it was. And then he said, "You know, I've worked a lot in non-profits and I've never seen anything like this. This is really inspiring." I agreed with him. It was inspiring. Thank you all for your help. We're ready to go to the bank with a clean bill of financial health and all kinds of black ink. And we've trimmed our expectations so we don't have a repeat next year. We'd much rather that next year's year end appeal be for something new and interesting! In return, could you help us by not waiting 'till December to give to your church? And spare me more gray hair? June, for instance, is a fabulous month to give! Thanks!

**Angela:**

June is also a great month to come back from sabbatical.

**Christine:**

That's right! I'll be on sabbatical from next week 'till June 1! Thanks for the opportunity to recuperate from Angela's sabbatical!

**Angela:**

The last time Christine went on Sabbatical I had just started here as Assistant Minister...and I think we all wondered how it was going to go without her so soon after my arrival! I'll admit it...I was a little nervous. But we did well!

This time, as your Associate Minister, I'm not so nervous. I know you and this church much better now. Not only that, we have James Galasinski on board this time. He has been our youth director and ministerial resident since September. And here's another piece of news: James, who was going to depart in June, will be staying with our teens and helping Christine and me out with ministerial tasks for another school year; so he'll be with us until June 2016. We're glad to have the continuity, and he is too, for reasons he will explain to you!

**James:**

It has been great to be here: to be part of a healthy large congregation, to learn from Christine and Angela, to work with the youth, and to be part of some exciting small group ministries. It was a risk to move here with my wife, Ulrike, and we have no regrets. Our initial intention was to spend this summer in Europe and that I would eventually get another position at a different UU church in September. But life happens, and I mean that quite literally. Ulrike is pregnant; she is due in May. You may have not seen her around here that much because she is having a very complicated but overall healthy pregnancy and is often very tired. I consider it an honor and privilege to serve this assembly of religious seekers over the next year and half while we try to figure out parenthood.

**Christine:**

Something else will be new: in September, we will be promoting Angela from Associate Minister to simply "minister." In the minister world, a senior minister and a minister are on more equal terms than a senior and an associate, and we felt that captured our own growing relationship and her growing experience. It comes with a nice raise, too! Congratulations, Angela!

**Angela:**

Thank you. The state of our church is big, bold, and beautiful. We are growing, learning, dreaming, singing, and adding more children by the minute! We are glad to be part of it, and glad that you are part of it, too.

## **Part II—Board and Staff Reports**

### **President's Report**

**Martha Ketelle**

After moving into a beautiful new Sanctuary in 2013, our focus in 2014 has been on “wrapping up the details” and charting the future of our congregation. At our Annual Meeting in January, the congregation made two very important decisions—directing the Board to pursue the purchase of the East Mountain branch’s meeting place in Edgewood and to enter into a new mortgage to cover the outstanding cost of the new Sanctuary. After due diligence the church acquired the Edgewood property, with an April closing and August building dedication ceremony. Acting on the congregation’s approval for a mortgage of up to \$750,000 has required considerable effort of Board and staff and will be finalized in early 2015. As part of the requirements of the Credit Union for the new mortgage, we are undergoing an external audit of church finances that should be completed during February 2015.

We continued to work on projects to complete the Sanctuary. Generous gifts were received to fund a new audio/visual system and for the purchase of the 100 additional chairs and hymnals we needed in time for Easter. In the fall a collection of Native American works of art were placed in the Sanctuary nichos, adding to the sense that our space is coming together. Sunday morning attendance has continued to grow and we have begun to share our new space with the community, both through the rentals program and hosting citywide gatherings such as the Interfaith Service of Lamentation in June to acknowledge the community’s grief over APD shootings and the lives lost.

We had a few events to celebrate in 2014. Christine passed her 25-year milestone as our minister and in March we threw a party for her. A few past presidents of the congregation planned the event and had an idea that one of Christine’s life “bucket list” goals is to see the Northern Lights. So together we raised a monetary gift to enable Christine and William to spend time in Fairbanks, Alaska in March.

In June, a few of us attended General Assembly in Providence, Rhode Island, where we proudly watched our Associate Minister, Angela Herrera, receive her Final Fellowship as a UU minister at the Service of the Living Tradition. After marking that milestone, Angela began a four-month sabbatical.

Again through generous gifts from members we were able to continue our intern program. Bryan Elwood was with us from September 2013 to June 2014, adding to our efforts to build social bonds through his interest in the one-to-one conversation initiative and the Christian Spirituality group he formed. In November James Galasinski joined us as a Ministerial Resident, serving as our Youth Coordinator and continuing his journey to UU ministry.

We had a very special visitor in September. Josphat Mainye, the minister of our sister church in Kitengala, Kenya, traveled to the US and spent almost two weeks with us. Many of you came together to help us host him and give him an experience he will not soon forget including playing music with our band, speaking with us from the pulpit and in one-on-one conversations, attending the NM State Fair, and enjoying cuisine far different from the diet of a modest Kenyan.

A Music Futures taskforce was formed to evaluate and gather input from the congregation on the future needs of the music program. Following Alan Stringer's retirement, as we plan for the future, JoAnn Rice has done a marvelous job as interim choir director. We had a change in our pianist when Stu McKaskie left in October and we were fortunate to find our previous pianist, Wojciech Milewski, able to return to our music program. The big news in the music program has been the creation of two children's choirs, which gave their introductory performance with 20 members in late November. We have included funds in the 2015 budget to continue and grow our children's choir.

Continuing our commitment to Green Sanctuary we installed a second set of solar panels, this time on the roof of the new sanctuary. Earth Web, with a grant from the Social Justice Council, has mounted a monitor in the Social Hall to allow us to follow our solar system's power generation. The new sanctuary has gotten recognition in the building community for its LEED Platinum Certification. In November Linda Skye and Geri Knoebel travelled to Phoenix to receive an award from the *Engineering News Record* for the Best Cultural/Worship Project. In

December we won the NAIOP, Commercial Real Estate Development Association, Best Worship Project for 2014.

This all sounds like such good news, but of course, there are always more that needs to be done. We have several buckets around collecting water from leaks in our oldest roofs that must be replaced, and in the sanctuary we would still like to install a security system to protect the artwork and buy new platform furniture. In last year's Annual Report, Pat Diem listed a dozen or more additional projects, only some of which we have been able to undertake this past year. Perhaps most notably, improvements are gradually being made to the Social Hall, including new lighting that is being installed next month, and work has begun on a new website for the church. We hope to be moving to the new website this spring.

We continue to have staff turnover and evolution, saying farewell to long time members of the team, and welcoming new faces. Kathy Keller, our bookkeeper for the past 15 years, retired in August and was replaced by Paul Browne, who became Director of Finance and Operations, assisted by Alan Clausen, Bookkeeper. Candy Lindquist, Religious Education Director (DRE) for the past two years, retired in November and is being replaced by Mia Noren. RE lost another valued staff member as Libby McDonald, our Youth Coordinator for several years, joined the Peace Corps and is now living in Fiji.

Our Mission Covenant conveys our commitment to be a positive force for social, environmental, and economic action. Our ministers and Social Justice Council lead us this year in our fulfillment of this objective. In response to the APD crisis that drew considerable public outrage in 2014, our Senior Minister, Christine, helped reconvene a clergy group in Albuquerque. Our Associate Minister, Angela, helped plan and host the service of Lamentation that was held at First Unitarian and attended by several clergy and community leaders. Angela also continued her work with the Center for Reproductive Rights, attending a seminar in Washington, D.C. and serving on the Advisory Board of the New Mexico Chapter.

We continue to support a wide range of Social Justice programs. The Social Justice Council held a successful fundraiser in February and along with previous funds was able to award \$7,100 to 12 groups and individuals requesting support for projects. Our Change for the Future collections totaled just under \$8,000, which aided other Albuquerque nonprofits. In addition to such

programs as the Food Pantry which distributes 84 bags of groceries every week and the After School Tutoring and ESL programs that serve families in our neighborhood, we provided \$14,625 in scholarships to the children in our Kenya sister church and supported Fair Trade coffee and chocolate production through UUSC and Café Justo.

First Unitarian joins with other churches and non-profits in Albuquerque as a member of Albuquerque Interfaith, building strength through relationships and working to improve public education, job training, and fairness to immigrants in our state. In 2014, First Unitarian started fundraising with several other churches in Albuquerque to build an Interfaith Habitat for Humanity house that will be constructed in 2015.

Our RE program established itself in the building we had previously shared with *La Puerta*. Volunteers refurbished the building, painting the walls and finding furniture for the classrooms. This year our RE program served approximately 200 children with 60 adult volunteers, three staff and 11 paid child care workers. In addition to Sunday morning activities, highlights of the program include a very successful summer kids camp, supported in part through member donations of \$4,500 for scholarships, and three OWL classes for different age groups.

We also provided experiences for participants in adult RE through small group discussions during 2014. Thirty-one forums were offered with topics ranging from personal growth to social, economic, and environmental justice.

As a congregation, you have the benefit of being guided by a very talented and dedicated ministerial staff, Board of Directors, and other leaders who are looking to the future of the congregation.

The Board met at least once monthly to address the business of the church and provide direction. This year the Board set goals to:

- Engage a Strategic Plan Taskforce—provide clear mandate and timeline for completion and presentation of the Strategic Plan at the 2015 Annual Meeting.
- Conclude the final wrap-up of the capital campaign and convert to a mortgage.
- Continue implementation of shared governance and writing of related policy.

- Initiate planning for the Stewardship Campaign in the spring—consider creative opportunities for funding an expanded operating budget.
- Consideration building use policies that enhance fulfillment of our mission in the community.
- Contribute to welcoming visitors and new members.
- Support Christine during Angela’s sabbatical, July–October.

We worked on all of our goals and feel especially successful about the Strategic Planning process that was led by three Board members (Dimitri Kapelianis, Diane Flynn, and John Kwait) and three congregational members (Mikaela Renz-Whitmore, Mary Colton and Nisanne Capps), resulting in a document that we hope will guide the church for the next five years. As part of that effort we have begun leadership succession planning, as Christine’s retirement will happen within the next four years. I am grateful to our Vice President, Larry Alei, for taking the lead on this initiative.

As I mentioned, our ability to complete the capital campaign and convert our borrowing to a new mortgage has been more challenging. In October when we had planned to sign the mortgage, we started into a more lengthy process of demonstrating our credit worthiness to the bank. That required us to close the gap between our income and expenses and involved asking the congregation to contribute to a year-end campaign and complete pledge payments. I was particularly pleased that Board members stepped up to help with this effort. And we are extremely grateful to all of you who helped us achieve a very positive outcome.

We finished 2014 with a \$12,000, surplus half of which will go to the capital fund and half to the 2015 Operating budget. Our 2014 pledge income was 6% below the budgeted amount, and our year-end campaign raised approximately \$46,000 to fill the gap and balance the 2014 budget.

Pledge payments to the Capital Fund in 2014 totaled approximately \$185,000. In addition we received a little over \$41,000 from the sale of our LEED platinum tax credit. We have maintained our line-of-credit at \$550,000 that will roll over into the new mortgage in February.

In summary 2014 was a good year for First Unitarian. We added 90 new members, but perhaps a better measure of our growth was our coming together to rise to a challenge, building a greater sense of community in the process.

## **Associate Minister's Report**

### **The Rev. Angela Herrera**

A year is a lot of time to sum up! Martha has done nicely in. Here are a few of my highlights: her president's report

Now that the building is complete and we have (mostly!) settled into the new space, this year we spent some time turning our eyes to the future. The Music Futures Task Force and I worked together to gather your ideas about the future of First Unitarian's music program, and they have provided a separate report. The Strategic Planning Task Force and I led the congregation in setting our congregation's strategic directions for the next five years, and they have also provided an annual report.

ABQ police violence was a big story this year. When an interfaith clergy meeting was called shortly after James Boyd was shot in March, we formed Albuquerque Religious and Clergy United, Albuquerque's first citywide interfaith clergy group. A subgroup of ARCU put together an interfaith service of lament, which we hosted at First Unitarian. Later, in partnership with protest leaders, interfaith clergy, and the Boyd family, I led a memorial service for James Boyd in the foothills where he was killed. It was heartening throughout to see UUs show up in compassion and as witnesses for justice.

Reproductive Justice work continued to be a focus as well. I traveled to Washington D.C. three times this year for trainings, networking, and meetings with legislators. In August, I joined the advisory board of the New Mexico Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice.

During my sabbatical from July-October this year, I did a cultural and historical study of New Mexico to develop a deeper sense of place here, including a deeper understanding of how our Unitarian Universalist congregation fits in and what it means to be who we are in this particular context. I also wrote, meditated, prayed, backpacked all the way around Mt. Hood, and ran a marathon!

Finally, I achieved final ministerial fellowship with the Unitarian Universalist Association, which is to say I have completed the multi year renewal and evaluation process that new ministers must undertake. Thanks again to the "Angela's Advisors" team at First U who met

monthly for three years and wrote countless pages of evaluations! And thanks to you all for being a congregation that dreams, works for justice, and tends to the strength of its ministry.

## **Director of Religious Education**

**Mia Noren**

### **RE Building**

Taking full ownership of the RE Building began in September 2013 with the formation of the RE Building Transition Team (REBT Team), made up of Candy Lindquist, Paul Browne, Bryan Elwood, Jake Barkdoll, Micah Boutillier, Rick Kennedy, Carol Cowan, and Erika Johnson-Jimenez. The REBT Team formulated a plan to furnish and finish the building, and ended their meetings in March 2014. Their plan has been followed throughout 2014 and will finish up in 2015 with the remainder of the painting being completed.

### **Registration Numbers**

During our academic year, from September 2013 through August 2014, we had 139 children registered in the program. An additional 59 children participated under unregistered status, attending three or more classes during the academic year. I have not included children who participated in less than three classes. The children were managed on Sundays by 59 adult volunteers, 11 paid child care workers and three church staff members.

### **Attendance Numbers**

Attendance numbers for the year for first service totaled 1,074 and for the second service totaled 2,215. OWL's individual attendance for the year equaled 409. Total instances of child attendance in an RE program equal 3,695 individual occurrences. The total instances of adult attendance in children's RE numbered 1,522 individual occurrences.

We had feedback from newer parents whose children stay in the Sanctuary for services and are too old for the Family Room, that they didn't feel welcomed in the Sanctuary. Two small activity tables were installed in the back of the sanctuary, and a children's usher was added to our roster of Sunday volunteers. The parents are very enthusiastic about it, and there have been between four and nine children at the tables during each service since November 1.

## **Staffing**

After Mia Noren transitioned to the position of Church Administrator, in February we hired Wanda Tuck as our RE Administrative Assistant. Wanda left in July to pursue another position, and Alana Rodriguez took over the position at the end of the month. Our Youth Coordinator, Libby McDonald, pursued a position with the Peace Corps and departed for Fiji in September. Our ministerial intern, James Galasinski, is our acting Youth Coordinator. Candy Lindquist retired in mid-November after two and a half years of service to the RE Department. Meladee Montoya, our RE Aide, resigned at the end of December to pursue full-time employment. Mia Noren began as DRE in January, and will pursue finding a replacement for Meladee.

## **Teachers**

Most classes are staffed with at least one lead teacher. La Amikoj and Mid-High classes had stable leadership all year. Additional leads are still needed in the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade class and the PreK-K class.

## **RE Council**

Please see the [report from the RE Council](#) on page 33.

## **Director of Member Development**

### **Kristen Satterlee**

The job of Director of Member Development comprises three core programs: guiding new members, providing access to information about church activities, and convening the LEAD (Leadership Enrichment And Development) Team.

### **Member Guidance**

Ninety members joined the church in 2014. All new members join through monthly Signing Ceremonies; signing the Membership Book at the Membership Information Table is no longer an option. Signing Ceremonies consist of:

- Chalice lighting
- Introductions, which allow participants to meet and hear each others' stories
- Responsive litany (including our Principles and Sources as well as an overview of denominational history through some of our heroes)
- Signing the Membership Book
- Brief discussion of contributions, pledging, and church activities
- Taking photos for the online church directory

I send each new member two welcome e-mails, an online activity interest survey, and an offer for a face-to-face or phone interview. The interview allows each new member to share the story of their path to First Unitarian, feel heard in a significant way by a representative of the church, and discuss what they want from the community and how they would like to give back.

After receiving survey and/or interview information, I share contact information between the new member and the leaders of the activities they expressed interest in, to facilitate involvement. For many members, this conversation continues via e-mail and at the Connections Table for months as they settle in and find activities and friends. Each member also receives a check-in e-mail after six months of membership and a first anniversary congratulations card.

## **Access to Church Activity Information**

The Connections Table allows visitors, new and established members, and church leaders to find and share information on church programs at an easily accessible point between the Sanctuary and Social Hall. A large collection of pamphlets – several of which I overhauled this year to make them more welcoming and useable – provides lots of information. The table host (usually me; Marian Schreyer substitutes monthly, and Dawn Lunt or Arne Gullerud on occasion) provides the rest. Many groups use the Connections Table to host signup sheets for upcoming events.

I also try to post to the church's Facebook page at least twice weekly with information about upcoming activities, and write occasional messages in the *Messenger* and Order of Service regarding church activities and guest welcoming.

## **The LEAD Team**

The work of the LEAD Team is a natural fit with member development, following members from signing through development into leaders. For more information, please see the [LEAD Team's annual report](#) on page 18.

**Operations**

Paul Browne, Director

## **Branch Coordinator—East Mountains**

### **Joy Ginther**

Good news from the East Mountain Branch Year One - 2014!

We filled the house for our dedication in August, after doing a fabulous remodel of our social hall. We have fixed the heat and the cooler, and the leaks. We've doubled our renters and hosted a successful movie night, a major concert with traveling artists Armand and Angelina, and a Native American flute workshop. We've shared a Thanksgiving feast with the whole congregation. We've doubled in size and average attendance, and had six new members sign the Membership book. We've taken three field trips in the limo, to see New Mexico's own 50 to 1, a stroll down River of Lights at the Biopark, and a trip to Saint Frances auditorium at the New Mexico Fine Arts Museum in Santa Fe to watch our own Joy Ginther perform with the Gustave Baumann Marionettes. Our Change for Change collection contributed to the Root 66 Community Garden, who in turn contributed produce to the Tijeras Food Pantry. A second donation went to Walking in Circles Ranch to support horse rescue.

It's been a great year! Next year is bound to be even better!

## **Branch Coordinator—Socorro**

### **Janet Cliff, Steering Committee Chair**

The end of 2014 coincides with our annual, free 8th holiday concert drawing more than 100 attendees. Many thanks to our Musical Director Elise Brower and her daughters, the Epiphany Episcopal Church and its bells for the bell choir, *Las Cantates* singing group, and musicians from Socorro County and Albuquerque.

2014 began with the death of Kay Brower, spouse of Elise, whose Memorial Service was officiated by Christine on July 4—Kay liked fireworks!

In addition to visits from Christine, Angela, Bryan, and James led services here during the year. Our small group greatly appreciates such visits!

We both lose and gain congregants with our weekly average remaining at 12.

It would be nice to actually grow. Furthermore, lay leadership is a challenge. For the spring semester, I led alternating weeks with Barry Clark or Richard Sonnenfeld working the other Sundays. During the fall semester when I was unable to lead services due to a change in employment, Sandra Noll stepped in (thank you!). Generally, she spends only a couple of months in Socorro during the year. We are very happy to have Candy Lindquist return to us in general and to lead services in 2015. But still, we anticipate having just three lay leaders: Candy, Barry, and Richard.

Our congregants continue to age with typical aging complications. We are grateful for First Unitarian providing the means for Margaret Lang (age 96) to have paid assistance to get her to and from church on Sundays. Thank you!

We remain proud of our refreshments after services and after our annual concert. Everyone deserves thanks for this, but Debby Safford warrants special credit. Debby also is responsible for

our Highway Mile between Socorro and Magdalena. Our coin collection continues to support local charities.

All congregants contribute to the success of our group, but a few deserve special mention (in alphabetical order):

- Elise Brower–Music Director
- Barry Clarke–Treasurer, Lay Leader, and Tech Crew
- Janet Cliff–Lay Leader and Steering Committee Chair
- Elliott Moore–Tech Crew
- Debby Safford –Refreshments Coordinator and Highway Skipper
- Richard Sonnenfeld– Lay Leader, Tech Crew, and Communications

Many thanks to First Unitarian’s Ministers and Tech Crew!

## **Part III—Standing or Elected Committees**

### **Endowment Fund Committee**

**Nell Graham Sale, Chair**

#### **Steering Committee**

Sandra McCardell

Steve Moskel

Dorothy Reynolds

At the end of 2013, the balance in the Endowment Fund was \$318,609. At the end of November, 2014, the balance was \$330,675. The Endowment Fund is there to support the long term viability of the church. It is designed to be invested “in perpetuity.” However, it also works to support the current work of the church. In 2014, the Endowment Fund contributed more than \$11,000 to the church operating budget, and we expect that to increase in 2015. Additionally, the Endowment Fund has served as part of the security for the construction loan for the new building. So these are ways that the Endowment Fund has worked for you as a present support for the church in 2014.

The Keepers of the Flame are those church members and friends who have told us that they have named the Endowment Fund in one way or another in their estate plans. Some examples of gifts for the future include gift annuities from the UUA which provide income to the donor during lifetime and at death can be targeted to our Endowment Fund, naming the Endowment Fund as a beneficiary of a retirement plan or life insurance policy, or naming the Endowment Fund as a percentage beneficiary of an estate under a Will or Trust. All the donor has to do to become a member of Keepers of the Flame is to let the committee know of the planning you have done.

The Endowment Fund Committee held two events in 2014. The first event was a presentation about how the Social Security system works for retirement planning. The event was well attended, and those who came told us that they thought we should get this information out to a larger audience. Therefore, the same speaker has been invited to present a forum in February

2015. We hope young church members will attend so you can learn about this planning before you make retirement decisions. Why would we want you to know this information? Gifts to the endowment require planning, and so we want to help the congregation learn more about all types of financial planning that may be helpful to you.

We also held a picnic for the members of the Keepers of the Flame in August, to thank them for their planned generosity and continuing support of the church, and to make sure that they understood that planning for endowment gifts would once again be a part of the stewardship campaign in the fall. We see that giving to the church is linked.

The Endowment Fund Committee for 2014 consisted of Nell Graham Sale, chair, Dorothy Reynolds, Steve Moskal and Sandra McCardell, with ministerial support of Angela Herrera. Let us know if you have questions about the Endowment Fund by contacting the church office.

# **Finance Committee and Treasurer's Report**

**Linda Suydam, Treasurer**

## **Finance Committee Members**

Janis Schubert, Chair

Eric Hall

Doug Loescher

Paul Browne (ex officio)

## **Summary of Revenue/Expenses**

The income for the year was \$804,615.27 which was \$13,107.27 more than budgeted. Expenses for the year totaled \$792,680.97 which was \$1,172.97 more than budgeted. The year ended with a surplus of \$11,943.30. This surplus will be split between the Capital Reserve and the 2015 operating budget. 2014 pledge income was at 94.27% of pledges. The "End in the Black" campaign made up the difference between budgeted pledges and actual pledge income with a significant increase in non-pledge gifts from the \$65,000 budgeted to the \$106,124.76 actually received.

## **Financial Accomplishments in 2014**

- Held an End in the Black drive which provided sufficient funds to balance the 2014 budget.
- Continued payments of Capital Fund pledges (\$184,903.34 received in 2014) positioned the Church in a sound financial position to obtain a long term mortgage.
- We received \$41,156.71 from the sale of our Leed platinum tax credit.
- Hired James Galisinski, Ministerial Intern with funds from designated gifts provided by members.

## **Expenses in 2014**

We underestimated the cost of utilities for the first full year in the new sanctuary. Utility expenses were \$6,463.58 over budget. We expect that the addition of the solar panels on the Sanctuary roof will ameliorate this situation in 2015.

## **Capital Campaign**

Total income for the capital campaign to date is \$1,967,633.54, with \$251,525.12 received in 2014. Total expenses at the end of December 2014 were \$2,606,657.64. The line of credit has been maintained at \$550,000 and member loans have been reduced from 126,000 to \$73,000.

## **Summary**

2014 was a year of adjustment. Our first full year in the new Sanctuary was a great success. Operating pledge income was less than budgeted for 2014 but was offset by the End in the Black Campaign. The RE program has made great progress in renovating their space thus making it a much pleasanter experience for the Congregation's children. Much remains to be done. The Congregation's generous and ongoing support continues to be essential for the continued well being of First Unitarian. Thank you for your pledges and for your support of the End in the Black campaign.

## **Healthy Community Committee**

### **Stephen Phillips, Chair**

#### **Members**

Randy Biggers  
Heather Clark  
Gilbert Gutierrez  
Betsy Townsend  
The Rev. Christine Robinson

The Healthy Community Committee is charged by the Board with creating and overseeing safe congregation policies, ensuring healthy communication and conflict management practices in the congregation, and providing educational resources and experiences on these topics.

#### **Congregational Outreach**

The committee participated in Sunday services on September 14 focusing on “The Blessings of Community” using readings, short talks, and a skit written by Christine to emphasize the importance of healthy communications practices.

#### **Conflict Resolution Activities**

The committee became involved in facilitating the resolution of conflict between two parties near the end of the year. This process continues.

#### **Policy Activities**

As part of the Board’s work on updating church policies and procedures, the committee began work on an updated policy that has been reviewed by the Board and will be submitted for approval in 2015.

## **Leadership Succession Committee**

**Geri Knoebel, Chair**

### **Members**

Nissane Capps

Jon Eldredge

Roger Hartz

Sally New

Andie Rigler

Benita Terrell

The Leadership Succession Committee (LSC) is responsible for preparing a slate of candidates for elections that are held at our Congregation's Annual Meeting in January.

The LSC makes recommendations for nominees to the Board of Directors, Endowment, Finance Review, and Leadership Succession Committees. There are 26 positions on these committees. For the 2015- 2017 elections, the LSC has developed a slate of 16 nominees. Seven are nominees for a second term and ten are new nominees for committee positions.

The Strategic Planning Task Force has identified volunteer development including leadership as an area of focus, which is a direction that is strongly supported by the LSC.

### **New Activities in 2014**

For the first time, the LSC had a presence on Connections Sunday. Handouts were provided and announcements were made in the *eBroadsheet* about leadership opportunities in the church. These efforts should be expanded next year.

*The LSC Resource Book* has been developed to provide information about the Committee's operations and procedures, as well as provisions from the by-laws that affect its roles and responsibilities. The *Resource Book* also provides continuity in the Committee's operations and expectations from year to year.

Letters were sent to each nominee to confirm his or her commitment to be a candidate for leadership position, inform each of the annual meeting date, and request a biography for inclusion in the *Messenger*. This should be a regular practice. Next year, the LSC should ask for photos so that members can identify the nominated candidates for elected positions.

As a part of the path to church membership, information is requested on New Member Forms, which include age, prior church affiliation, and leadership positions in other churches. This information is now being shared with the LSC and referrals are being made to appropriate committees or persons for follow-up. Next year, the LSC and Membership committees will develop procedures to share and process information we receive from new members.

## **LEAD Team**

**Kristen Satterlee, Covener and The Rev. Angela Herrera, Ex-Officio**

### **Members**

Arne Gullerud

Sandy McCardell

Mikaela Renz-Whitmore

In 2014, the LEAD Team focused on recognition and appreciation of First Unitarian's current leaders.

In May we hosted the 2nd annual Leader's Luncheon. A casual gathering with lunch provided and no formal program, the Luncheon is intended as a thank-you to our program leaders at the end of the program year. It also answers the common request for an unstructured time for leaders to network. The event attracted about 20 participants.

The team also began a program of identifying leaders who have gone above the call of duty and sending them personal thank-you cards. Over the year we sent more than 30 cards to church leaders who had shown particular dedication in special projects or over the long haul.

The LEAD Team has had difficulty retaining enough members to support labor-intensive programs such as Nurturing the Leader's Spirit. The team needs to grow so these programs can be reinstated, and so exciting ideas the team has put forth toward developing new church leadership can be developed.

## **Membership Committee**

### **Kathleen Rhoad, Chair**

#### **Members**

Janelle Campbell  
Rick Held  
Jerry Kiuttu  
Dawn Leach  
Andrea Lee  
Linda Skye  
Kristin Satterlee, ex officio

The Membership Committee comprised seven members as named above. The Membership Information table was staffed by two committee members after each service to provide membership information and to answer questions.

Ninety (90) new members joined First Unitarian in 2014.

New member events, both morning recognition ceremonies and dinners, were held on April 13 and October 19. On April 13, 49 people attended the new member dinner—36 new members, six church leaders, and seven committee members. On October 19, the dinner was attended by 27 adult new members and 11 children, nine church leaders, and seven committee members for a total of 43 adults and 11 children. The committee planned, prepared, and served both dinners. The annual budget was \$500 to pay for Recognition Ceremony flowers, food, and wine. Kathleen Rhoad resigned from the committee having served for nearly four years and the new chairperson will be Linda Skye.

## **Personnel Committee**

### **Judy Bentley, Chair**

#### **Members**

Alice Demi (church board)  
Jane Ronca-Washburn

In addition to the members named above, Director of Operations Paul Browne and Senior Minister Christine Robinson attended Personnel Committee meetings. The Personnel Committee should meet every quarter but met six times this year. The committee members participated in reviewing job descriptions, conducting exit interviews with employees separating employment, and participated in interview committees.

The suggestion from Christine to have a member from the Church Board was a wise one. Paul and Christine were able to review changes in employee benefits with the Personnel Committee and Alice was able to bring the information back to the board with assurance of thorough review.

Jane's last meeting was December 8, 2014. Jane served on the Personnel Committee for many, many years and will be missed. We are waiting for a new board member to serve on the Personnel Committee and have our next meeting planned in February 2015.

## Stewardship Committee

### Members

Geri Knoebel  
Scott Lake  
Chris Mayo  
Lynne McLaughlin  
Nell Sale  
Gwen Sawyer  
Marian Schreyer  
Linda Skye  
The Rev. Angela Herrera, ex officio  
The Rev. Christine Robinso, ex officio

The Stewardship Committee is a standing committee of the church. Our purpose is to obtain financial commitments from the congregation and friends to support the operating budget of the church and to create a culture of generosity in the congregation.

This year we tried a new approach in the fall campaign to obtain pledges (as we asked pledging households to increase their pledge amount by 10%). Instead of stewards visiting members to discuss budget plans, we focused on mailing stewardship packets and publicizing a scheduled “celebration Sunday” to gather pledges and celebrate the congregation’s generosity. The ice cream social and potluck celebration party included an ice-cream truck dispensing frozen treats and fun activities for all ages. For the first time, Church committees and social groups provided the activities for this fun event. Committees included the Board, Endowment, Mapalos Extended Family, and Membership Committee.

The celebration was highly successful. 301 pledges for \$507,800 were made on or before Sunday, September 21, 2014. By December 31, pledges had been made by 448 households for a total of \$649,000.

## **Part IV—Committees and Programs**

### **Animal Advocates**

*Promoting Respect and Dignity for All Beings*

#### **Leadership**

Linda Bairstow  
Sharon Hall  
Margaret Keller

Active members of Animal Advocates are Martha Anderson, Marion Ammerman, Mikki Aronoff, Linda Bairstow, Laura Bartolucci, Bobbi Bordeaux, Sacha Bush, Randy Diner, David Gick, Lou Graham, Margaret Keller, Marcia Petta, Rose Provan, Bev Roddy, Danny Ruppert, and Janet Strong. Animal Advocates also has an e-news list, a Facebook page, a monthly newsletter, and works in collaboration with the Interfaith Alliance for Animals.

Animal Advocates responded to our goals of political advocacy, humane education, and assistance to local animal welfare and rescue organization via many projects and events. Animal Advocates staffed information and artist tables in the Courtyard and/or Social Hall on designated Sundays before and after services. This included our talented Artists for the Animals, who generously donated a portion of their sales to benefit animals. We supported local animal organizations with monetary contributions on a monthly basis. Some of the those organization who received contributions from Animal Advocates this year were Placitas Animal Rescue (funds designated for horse rescue), Street Cat Hub, Paws and Stripes, Walk in Circles, Tiny Toes Rat Rescue, Wildlife Rescue, APNM Equine Fund, Wanagi Wolf Fund and Rescue, PACA, Rio Grande Tortise and Turtle Club, and Rio Rancho Animal Control.

Animal Advocates hosted and members volunteered at numerous events including First U events for Animal-Kind International, Fabulous Felines, and Animal Protection of NM Companion Animal Rescue Effort (CARE), which was included as a Change for the Future recipient. We hosted the first annual Animal Advocates Yard Sale (all proceeds designated to support local animal organizations), participated in Animal Blessing Sunday, hosted a benefit potluck for Animal-Kind International, and volunteered to support the wonderful West of

Broadway Musical Revue, directed by our talented member Laura Bartolucci (all proceeds going to support local animal advocacy organizations). We hosted a Sunday used jewelry sale to support wild horse rescue in Placitas and participated in the Social Justice Committee's auction event. Additionally, Animal Advocates helped facilitate finding forever homes for many animals and/or provided emergency care for animals in need. We continue to help supply pet food to the First Unitarian Food Pantry.

In 2013-2014 we were awarded a generous grant from the Social Justice Council to support our Pets of the Homeless Project. Pets of The Homeless has since delivered more than 4,500 pounds of pet food annually as well as collars, leashes, beds, and other supplies to our partner, St. Martin's Hospitality Center. The City Animal Welfare Volunteers included our project in the annual citywide Holiday Pet Food Drive. Our continued partnership with ABQ PetCare to provide vet care to the pets of the homeless is mutually appreciated. Subsequently, Animal Advocates and our partners offered three wellness clinics, providing city required vaccinations, check-ups, grooming, and medications to more than 70 pets.

Under the direction of founder Linda Bairstow, the Critter Club flourished in 2014 and continued "celebrating and respecting the awesomeness of life" for children ages 6 to young adult. Highlights of Critter Club 2014 include a field trip to the Wanagi Wolf Sanctuary, where the kids got to help by clearing out fire hazards, and a trip to Hollyhock Farm to learn about bees. The club "adopted" an orphaned orangutan in Borneo (Beryl) with money raised by making animal greeting cards. And, the kids enjoyed a presentation by Tiny Toes Rat Rescue. At their meetings there was always loads of information, poems, and projects celebrating 27 different animals (from bacteria to flamingos to kangaroos to blobfish). And, the club topped off the year with their annual "Doggy Party" in November.

## Arts & Aesthetics Committee

Jane Baldwin and Suzanne Visor, Co-Chairs

The Arts and Aesthetics Committee (A&A) selects and installs art exhibitions in the Social Hall for the enjoyment of members and friends. Works of art are for sale with 30% going the Church general fund. A&A also acts as a consultant regarding other aesthetics questions on campus. Key accomplishments for the year are:

- Increased visibility to congregation, leadership, and general public using newly designed Committee name tags, brochures, and business cards.
- Established a moveable display/sales stand for use on Sundays.
- Staged nine art exhibitions during 2014.
- Juried art work and scheduled exhibitions for 2015.
- Awarded Eleanor Bailey Memorial prize to 2014 favorite artists, Beverly Schoonover and Ron Swartz.
- Inventoried church owned (campus wide) art collection.
- *Ad hoc* committee selected and installed member-loaned art objects in Sanctuary nichos.
- Welcomed two new committee members.
- Worked with Board and administration on plan to add gallery lighting in Social Hall.
- Received an anonymous member's gift earmarked to install gallery lighting.

Arts and Aesthetics is one of few committees that contributes dollars to the general fund by means of art sales—in 2014 the total sales exceeded \$10,000!

Visitors and new committee members are always welcome. We meet the fourth Sunday of most months immediately following the second service. We want members with an interest in art selection or practicing artists who will devote time hanging exhibitions, attend regular meetings, and contribute to the business of the Committee.

## **Coffee Crew**

### **Chris Feil**

#### **Purpose**

The Coffee Crew prepares and serves refreshments during the social hour every Sunday. This includes 30-60 minutes of making coffee, juices, and seasonal drinks while also setting up the service line and keeping up with church demand during the social hour after the first and second services on Sundays. Members of the Coffee Crew also sometimes volunteer to provide refreshments for holiday services and other church events.

#### **News**

Coffee Crew volunteers have done an excellent job of adjusting to the new kitchen. While we have been there for many months now, continued changes (including the breaking down of the freezer and a change in policy regarding laundering towels) have been keeping our volunteers on their toes. In spite of these continued changes we have had easily our most stable year in terms of volunteer retention. This is in large part to the willingness of our volunteers to be flexible. In particular, Skip Bleistein and Torre Near have done a lot to fill in as impromptu substitutes and even donate supplies, such as pitchers and cups, as needed. As in past years, Mary Ann Sloan has faithfully and effectively kept up with ordering coffee and other supplies as needed.

#### **Numbers**

All statistics regarding the Coffee Crew, including amount of coffee ordered/ served and donations brought in, are recorded in the church office. We have had a very reliable roster of 16 regular volunteers and nine substitutes.

## **Earth Web**

**Valerie Smith and Barbara Leonard, Co-Chairs**

2014 was a busy year for Earth Web. While we don't have a formal membership list, we have about 10 regular attendees, and another five or so occasional visitors. Our purpose has been to operate as a UU faith group focused primarily on issues of the environment and sustainability.

We conducted two book discussion groups this year. The first, using *The Transition Handbook: From Oil Dependency to Community Resilience* by Rob Hopkins, focused on community action on reducing carbon emissions and oil dependency. As an additional resource, we watched the film "In Transition 2.0," and now have a small Transition Group meeting separately and planning training for April 2015. This fall, we conducted the second group using the Northwest Earth Institute's discussion guide *Seeing Systems: Peace, Justice and Sustainability*, which is just wrapping up at the end of the year.

Earth Day is a big event for our group. The weather was not very cooperative, so it was not as successful as in 2013. However, there were several informational tables on recycling, composting, and solar cooking. We sold plant starts again this year, as well as reusable shopping bags and water bottles, which we also sold throughout the year.

As we have become more aware of the threat posed by climate change, that topic became the center of many activities this year. We hosted a showing of the documentary "Chasing Ice," which chronicles the challenges of photo documenting the thawing of the world's ice caps. Members have taken part in the Climate March and other rallies in support of action on greenhouse gas emission, joining other environmental groups, and supporting Michael Dowd's visit for the "Climate Preach In."

Our involvement with NM Interfaith Power and Light (NMIPL) grew this year. Procedures for paying dues were worked out at First U, and Marilyn O'Boyle and Tom Stark of Earth Web have now joined the board of NMIPL. In addition to strengthening ties with other faith communities

on the environment, NMIPL is a resource of information and access to environmental documentaries.

This fall, Virginia Burris organized four months of Sustainability Sunday tables. Each month on the first Sunday, a topic related to sustainability was presented. The first presented the details that earned the new sanctuary's platinum LEED certification. This was followed by Meatless Monday, recycling education, and energy saving ideas using solar and LED bulbs.

Earth Web coordinators for 2015 will be Barbara Leonard and Linda Doherty.

## **Food Pantry**

### **Rebecca Gracey, Chair**

The Food Pantry packs 90 sacks of food each week to hand out on Wednesday afternoons to anyone who comes for food. More sacks are prepared if needed. Judy McDowell is in charge of the 10 people who prepare these sacks, each performing the task once per month.

Pam Bliss coordinates the 20 people who hand out the sacks of food each Wednesday afternoon. This job is done monthly by each person.

Rebecca Gracey is the Roadrunner Food Bank contact with Tom Stafford serving as her backup. She places the food order online and picks up the food on Tuesday mornings. There are three church members who assist her on a rotating basis.

Erika Johnson-Jimenez and her family purchase pinto beans and rice from Costco if they aren't available at Roadrunner, repackage the beans and rice into one-pound bags, and deliver it to the church.

A total of 4,449 sacks of mostly nonperishable foods were given away in 2014 with an average of 85.5 sacks per week. The average cost of a sack of food was \$3.19. The food obtained at Roadrunner is offered at a greatly reduced price. The sack of food contains a pound of both rice and beans, four cans of food, cookies or crackers, cereal or granola bars, 12 or 16 ounces of meat, and a loaf of bread.

**BEGINNING BALANCE: \$10,487.33**

**TOTAL INCOME: \$14,635.14** (from members' donations, Growers' Market, Pagan Pride, and Yoga Class)

**TOTAL EXPENSES FOR FOOD: \$14,215.95**

**YEAR-END BALANCE: \$10,068.14**

## **Forum Committee**

### **David Colton, Chair**

Sunday Forums, offered in the Memorial Hall most Sundays at 11, are intended to contribute to church members' understanding of issues in the public and personal spheres, and to encourage actions that are aligned with our church's guiding principles. Selection and scheduling of the Forums is handled by a Forum Committee composed of church volunteers. Forum topics and speakers are announced in the monthly *Messenger* and the weekly eBroadsheet.

Thirty-one Forums were held in 2014. Subjects included personal development and lifestyle issues, social topics such as the environment and climate change, and difficult justice issues such as immigration, education, and police violence. In cooperation with the Social Justice Council, and in light of Annual Meeting guidance, the Committee scheduled several Forums featuring homelessness and Change for the Future recipients. It is a testament to the depth of resources within our congregation that just over half the Forums were presented by First Unitarian church members.

During 2014 the Forum Committee reviewed and clarified its procedures. Committee membership was expanded. Goals for 2015 include increased attention to opportunities for service and advocacy; enhanced publicity of Forums, especially on campus on the day of presentation; and greater diversity in Forum Committee membership. We will work with the church leadership to address any other strategies that might increase participation in what we feel is a vital program of First Unitarian.

# iMinistry Team

## **RE Council**

**Carolyn Riggs, Chair**

### **Members**

Micah Boutillier (2015)

Carol Cowan (2017)

James Galasinski, Ministerial Resident and Interim Youth Program Coordinator

Amanda Longer (2015)

Heather Clark (August 2015)

Erika Johnson-Jimenez (2016)

Brian Tankersley (2015)

### **Outgoing Members**

Amanda Longer (resigned August 2014)

Libby McDonald (Left for Peace Corps in Fall 2014)

We are happy to report that several members agreed to extend their terms to provide continuity during current RE Staff changes. In addition we are actively recruiting new members to diversify the Council and match skills with needs.

The REC (Religious Education Council) was very active and busy in 2014. e continued using action teams to support specific RE tasks and programs. The DRE's RE Building Transition Team (REBT Team) transitioned into the REC RE Building action team and continued to make progress in organizing, painting, and furnishing the RE building after La Puerta moved out.

Our OWL team advocated for polling parents for interest in OWL and supported three OWL classes (7-8 grades, 4-6 grades, and K-1 grade) offered in the Spring of 2014. The UU Kids Camp team supported the UU Kids camp, which was at capacity of kids to available volunteers and had a full bus going to and from camp. Camp volunteers and REC members worked hard to raise scholarship money and everyone who applied for scholarship received financial assistance.

The REC continued to learn more about church programs, including the Healthy Community Committee, and be involved with church wide events like Connections Sunday. We also meet with the Strategic Planning Task Force to offer information about the RE program and share ideas about the RE program's future and its role in the church's growth.

The REC supported the DRE through staff changes and assisted the ministers in hiring a new DRE. The REC supported the Youth Programs Coordinator, as well as youth teachers and advisors who were very busy with multiple events including overnights, Cons, a La Amikoj Sunday service, Coming of Age, a float for the LGBT pride parade, summer grill nights, and a Halloween Dance fundraiser. The REC supported and assisted RE staff with many projects and programs including starting a children's choir and a youth choir, having a field day, and a summer gardening curriculum. We also continued to monitor and collaborate on RE policies including First Aid/CPR requirements, fire drills, and emergency lockdown plan, Mid-High class sign-in and out, and youth social media policies.

## **SipNSup**

### **Pat Diem, 2014 Coordinator**

SipNSup currently has 78 members made up of both couples and singles who were invited via email to nine dinners in member homes on the first Saturday of the month for nine months of 2014. Members share responsibilities for food preparation and hosting. In total for 2014, SipNSuppers hosted nine dinners attended by 275 members for an average of 30 people attending each dinner. Efforts are made to schedule dinners so that people meet new people throughout the year.

During the year there are new SNS members each month that asked to be added to the member list.

A new co coordinator, Torre Near, was recruited to help with SipNSup.

## Social Justice Council

### Members

George Bakula  
Nancy Carrillo  
Jon Ellig  
Lisa Goldman  
Cristy Holden  
Nancy Kilpatrick  
Dorothy Reynolds  
Sara Stevens-Miles  
Jane Ronca-Washburn  
Peggy Whitmore

The mission of the Social Justice Council is to strengthen and promote social justice work that meets immediate needs and promotes systemic change. The Council will do this by leading and educating the congregation, supporting its efforts and providing resources.

Council accomplishments for 2014 were in three goal areas – communication, finance, and a focus on the issues related to homelessness. Visibility of all social justice groups was increased through a reorganization of the social justice presence in the social hall, development of a comprehensive notebook to include information on all the First UU justice activities, and the creation of the monthly SPOTLIGHT program. Monthly articles in the *Messenger* and weekly announcements in the eBroadsheet were submitted on a regular schedule.

After a successful fundraiser in spring 2013 and with a combination of previously held funds the Council was able to support justice activities and programs for ABQ Health Care for the Homeless, Animal Advocates/food and medicine for pets of homeless, First U's ESL program, Kenya Sister Church, NM Faith Coalition for Immigrant Justice, ABQ Interfaith, First U's Food Pantry, Transgender Resource Center, First U's After School Tutoring, First U's Economic Reform and Advocacy Group, Earth Web, Gay Pride Parade, and Habitat for Humanity.

We were especially proud of providing scholarships for two mid-high youth to attend a UUSC College for Social Justice conference in New Orleans.

Since May we have sponsored, in conjunction with the Forum Committee, an ongoing series on issues related to aspects of homelessness in Albuquerque. Our aim was to provide memberships of the congregation with information and opportunities to become involved in solutions.

We thank the congregation for their support, time, and money in developing and maintaining programs to address justice issues.

## **Adult English as a Second Language**

### **Sandra Bruce, Program Coordinator**

#### **Instructors**

Beverly and Hal Jackson  
Marion Ammerman  
Connie Molecke  
Cathy Intermann  
Bonnie Chavez  
Shelley Carter  
Sandra Bruce  
Kate Harrington (sub)  
Beatrice Mitchell (sub)  
Ursula Biggers (sub)

#### **Child Minders**

Kellsie Prince  
Olivia Herrera  
Maya Stephenson (sub)  
Lauren Ruff (sub)

The Adult ESL program began in fall of 2009 with five students under the helm of Ursula Biggers, and our program has grown each year with students from the neighborhoods that populate NE Albuquerque. Our classes meet once a week for 90 minutes. Each instructor prepares a lesson plan to develop skills in reading, writing, listening, and speaking comprehension. With only one exception, all of our students come from Mexico and Central America. We consistently had 15 students in the fall 2014 term, with an average of 12 children per week in our child care program. While our ESL instructors work solely on a volunteer basis, our child minders are hourly employees, have been fully vetted with background checks, and are certified in first aid. While our child minders remain our largest program expense, we have

learned over the years that our child care services are instrumental in allowing parents to attend Adult ESL, and we could not draw in the students that we do if we did not have this service.

Our most successful improvement this year has been implementing an attendance policy whereby students sign a contract at the beginning of the term stating that they will miss no more than three classes per term.

If the student attends four classes in a row, they receive a \$5 Wal-Mart gift card. This policy has helped curb episodic attendees, making each class more consistent for both the students and the instructors.

2015 brings us some innovative changes. We will be implementing the use of wireless technology through tablets that have been funded through a church RFP. This additional teaching tool will allow us to expose our students to multiple modes of learning, different aspects of English-language life (including accents, lifestyles, cultures, and values), and reach out to a younger demographic that is tech-savvy and eager to use technology in their language acquisition. For example, accessing social media sites (Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Wiki, etc.) will encourage students to use their language skills in an immediate, real-world context.

We continue to receive funding from Sunday collections, personal donations, and sales from church functions (such as the quilt sale in October). We are extremely grateful to everyone who supports our program in time, money, energy, and ideas, and we look forward to continuing this valuable program for many years to come.

## **After School Tutoring Program**

**Carol Oslund, Chair**

## **Covenant Groups**

**Martha Beyerlein, Chair**

### **Steering Committee**

Lea Ann Boone  
Beverly Burris  
Nancy Cushman  
Alicia Hawkins  
Amanda Longer

## **Economic Reform Advocacy Group (ERAG)**

**Bob Riley, Chair**

The ERAG, formed in September, 2010, was incorporated into the SJC umbrella in the summer of 2013. The parent ERAG has spawned several related organizations and initiatives including (1) a book study group, (2) a Public Banking Group, and (3) a March workshop focused on precipitating actions to reverse the continued concentration of wealth

The book study group has been reinvigorated after the recent election and is recruiting and planning for an active 2015 program. That new study-advocacy group will be focused on developing an economy based upon caring instead of one based upon property ownership and power.

The Banking Group has been meeting monthly and was an endorser of a September state-wide Public Banking Symposium held in Santa Fe. They recently articulated a primary objective: To promote Public Banking in NM especially focused on metro Albuquerque in order to strengthen and democratize the local economy. Related objectives include assuring safe banking, ending the debt cycle, assuring sustainability, and investing funds in local human services and local economic development. The group is considering (1) “Public Banking Advocates of Central

NM' as its name and (2) affiliation with Banking on NM in Santa Fe. The group has been led by Vern and Vicki Hagen and is made up of a number of First Unitarian members as well as members of other faith communities.

In March the ERAG organized a workshop to build on the momentum created by showings of Robert Reich's movie *Inequality for All*. The movie was shown in Albuquerque, Santa Fe and during a forum at First UU. The workshop attracted 45 participants including 6 panel members who shared their substantial experience with precipitating change. Each workshop participant committed to a specific course of action ranging from working in a political campaign, writing letters to editors and politicians, voter registration, and developing data to support social justice initiatives.

## **Landscape Committee**

**Nancy Cushman, Chair**

### **Steering Committee**

Virginia Burris  
Martha Kettle  
Scott Lake  
Kurt Robertson  
Daniel Ryerson  
Jerry Shelton  
Ed Wallhagen  
Barbara Winter

The church's landscaped grounds are an important part of congregational life, providing not only beauty and shade, but also places for conversation, play, ritual, and rest, and serving as an expression of our congregation's values and mission, as well as a pleasant haven for the general public passing through. The Landscape Committee is charged with maintaining and enhancing the church grounds in a manner that reflects the congregation's environmental values and the UU's 7th Principle. We also maintain the irrigation system.

Much of 2014 involved acquainting ourselves with the new landscape surrounding the new sanctuary; maintaining and enhancing each section of the grounds. In March we began holding bi-monthly grounds cleanup days, alternating between Saturdays and weekdays to allow as many church members to volunteer their time as possible. Each member of our committee is responsible for a particular area of the grounds, but we all pitch in as needed. We are hoping to recruit at least one more person to tend to the area south of the RE building.

Tours of the Jim Lewis Certified Wildlife Habitat were given by Virginia Burris to interested attendees of the Unitarian Rocky Mountain District Conference hosted in Albuquerque this past summer, a meditation walk as part of one of a December Sunday morning service given by Angela Herrera celebrating our Sanctuary's LEED designation of which the points earned from existence of our church habitat was a significant contribution, and to an RE class learning about animal shelter and homes in the habitat such as a very tiny wasp which creates a gall home on Chamisa branches. The habitat has offered to again host RE classes in exploration of the 3 other required areas for certification—food, water, place to raise young, and focus on native plants.

## **Worship Team**

**Pat Diem, Worship Team Leader**

### **Members**

Laura Bartolucci  
Vance Bass  
Paul Caskey  
Doug Cowan  
Jon Eldredge  
Pat Frieder (co-leader)  
Judy Goering  
Brian Long  
Dawn Lunt  
Marilyn O'Boyle  
Jan Lee (on sabbatical)  
Anne Manning (on sabbatical)  
Brian Elwood, Ministerial Intern  
James Galasinski, Ministerial Resident

The Worship Team's purpose is to assist ministers and guest speakers as needed to provide a worshipful experience for each member of the congregation, at each service.

The Worship Team performed the following tasks: arranged and conducted eight services during Angela Herrera's sabbatical recruiting speakers from the larger community, provided lay worship leaders for services throughout the year, and assisted ministers as needed with other tasks in preparation and conduct of worship.

In response to the service disruption that occurred in the New Orleans Unitarian church, the Worship Team developed and practiced actions/procedures to be taken in the event of a similar occurrence in our church.

## **Part V—Special Reports**

### **Music Futures Task Force**

#### **Members**

Ken Harper, Chair  
Brenda Cole  
Tania Hopkins  
The Rev. Angela Herrera  
Andie Rigler  
Jane Ronca-Washburn

The Music Futures Task Force was formed to set the direction, in consultation with the congregation, for the future of First Unitarian’s music program following the retirement of our long time music director in 2013. The task force gathered input in early 2014 through small group meetings with the choir and other musicians and a survey. It also researched music programs at other congregations for information and inspiration.

#### **Vision for the First Unitarian Music Program**

Thank you to all who have participated in the survey or conversations with the Music Futures Task Force. Based on your input, the task force presents this vision for the future of the music program, which will become a guiding document in the development of musical staff and volunteer positions, and the recruitment of future candidates for those positions.

#### **Core Values**

Music is an integral part of living out First Unitarian’s mission. Music creates sacred space and beauty in our worship services. Incorporating diverse musical styles is a reflection of the Unitarian Universalist value of diverse paths to Truth or God. A musical program in which the congregation itself makes much of the music—especially through supported congregational singing—reflects the participatory, democratic nature of our faith and its value of community, and fosters feelings of connection and wellbeing.

## Goals

Currently, First Unitarian has a growing adult choir with a talented interim conductor, a skillful accompanist, and an adventurous, energizing church band that plays a variety of contemporary styles. Two children's choirs launched in Fall 2014. Guest musicians are also a part of our Sunday rotation. There is mostly unguided congregational singing on Sunday mornings, which represents a variety of genres.

The congregation would like to see the music program build on what we already do while expanding to do more. We envision a program in which:

- There is intergenerational participation
- The size of the choir (or combined choirs and other member musical groups) is proportional to the size of the congregation, with the number of participants roughly equivalent to 10% of church membership
- The music program extends beyond Sunday worship, including yearly special concerts, and possible other events such as hymn sings
- The music program represents First Unitarian in the wider community through interfaith/public performances (though there are currently one regular and a few ad hoc interfaith/public performances per year, a larger program would allow more)
- There is consistent, strong leadership for congregational singing, including learning to sing parts and new songs, and making the most of our voices
- There is a level of organization and coordination within the music program that enables synergy, short and long term planning, and the discovery of new possibilities
- We find and develop talent within the congregation and see the congregation and our musicians expressing joy through music

Programs in a future music program may include acapella singers, pastoral care singers, and instrumental ensembles.

This ambitious vision will take some time to grow toward, as it requires increased staffing and the related financial resources. However, as it reflects the passions and interests of the congregation—and our church is what we make it!— we hope that in time we will find it within reach.

## Strategic Planning Task Force

The Board created the Strategic Planning Task Force in May 2014 to assist the congregation in creating a five-year strategic plan for 2015-2020. The Task Force consists of three board representatives (Dimitri Kapelianis, Diane Flynn, and John Kwait) and three non-board members of the congregation (Nissane Capps, Mary Colton, and Mikaela Renz-Whitmore). The Board chose members to balance skills in big-picture thinking, publicity, and project and event management. The Rev. Angela Herrera worked with the Task Force, except during her sabbatical, during which the Rev. Christine Robinson stepped in to assist.

Since June, the Task Force has worked with the congregation, via meetings with individual groups in August and September and town halls in October, to develop a plan with strategic directions for the next five years and present it at the 2015 Annual Meeting. The Task Force gathered input from the following groups:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LEAD (Leadership Enrichment and Development) Team</li> <li>• First Unitarian Staff</li> <li>• UU Camp</li> <li>• Mapalos Extended Family</li> <li>• Penguins Extended Family</li> <li>• Wednesday Potluck</li> <li>• RE Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead Donors Event</li> <li>• Membership Committee</li> <li>• Adult RE</li> <li>• RE Parents</li> <li>• iMinistry (via email)</li> <li>• East Mountains Branch</li> <li>• Social Justice Council</li> </ul>
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The strategic plan does not address all of the activities and events that take place at the church but only those that need some additional energy, focus, and/or re-tooling in the future to be more successful or effective. At the direction of the Board, the strategic plan also does not include plans for the ministerial transition coming over the next five years, as the Board will lead that transition as a separate effort, and any suggestions for a large capital campaign were also to be phased to start at least five years out, since we just finished a major capital campaign for the sanctuary.

In November and December, the Task Force met to synthesize and vet the ideas gathered throughout the process and begin to shape them into a strategic plan. Task Force members consulted with groups and/or individuals as needed to clarify and refine ideas within each focus area and worked with Angela and Christine to test the practicality/feasibility of implementing priority actions.

The draft plan will be distributed to the congregation in the packet with the annual meeting materials and posted online on the church website. The annual meeting is expected to include discussion of the plan, and any needed changes will be incorporated in a final version in early Spring.