

# 2016 Annual Report

First Unitarian Church



Albuquerque | East Mountains | Socorro | Carlsbad

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884-1801

# 2016 Annual Report Contents

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## **Part I—State of the Church**

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

### **President's Report**

Good afternoon, and thank you for coming today.

I need to tell you that I will not be describing all that the Board does, or mention every team that supports our church. I only have time to highlight a few. Just know that we have a remarkable bunch of volunteers here who create what you enjoy about our church. And know that each team has an important mission and adds real value to the staff and to you our members.

It has been a privilege this year to chair your board of directors. The board is one of 4 teams who are elected by you and accountable to you, the congregation. These 4 committees are called “committees of the congregation”.

Previously, you heard from the other 3 – the Leadership Succession, Endowment, and Financial Review committees. They and the Board report to you directly as a kind of check and balance – so for example, we on the Board don't have undue influence over who gets nominated to the various teams, or which of our financial processes get reviewed or not, etc.

Having said that, I would like to give a special thanks this year to those other 3 committees, who have really grown their plans and results in 2016. In particular, the LSC has filled every new vacancy with strong candidates, and in a very tight timeline they put forward a fair process and an excellent slate of Search Committee nominees. Thank you LSC members!

Now I'll share a little bit about the Board of directors. If you read our bylaws (AND WHO DOESN'T?), you'll see that the Board is chartered to do 6 things:

1. To provide strategic leadership and direction.
  - a. For this piece, we are continuing to follow our 5 year Strategic Plan which was ratified in our 2015 Annual Meeting. We don't see a big need to re-define that plan, and this year we plan to continue with it but job 1 in 2017 is to conduct a fair and thorough process for calling our next Sr. Minister.

- b. On the Minister Transition, it's been 28 years since we've done this! So the Board appointed a subteam to research the UUA recommendations on how to do this, and to contact some other UU churches with recent experience in conducting a minister transition. They are on track with that work, and as you saw earlier we are following our bylaws and setting up the team who will invite your input to the process.
  - c. Besides minister transition, there are 5 focus areas in the strategic plan, and Christine and Angela will be updating you on most of them.
    - i. My piece of the update is on Communication Technology. In this area, the new website was deployed this year, looks great, is much easier for staff to update and maintain, and it enables online giving. The A/V team has upgraded to high definition video, added a new camera angle, have upgraded our microphone inventory and today we are piloting the multi-site meeting capability. We continue to provide information and materials to members in multiple forms, digital and hard copy, based on the preferences of various users. And we have a good Facebook page and a number of active Facebook groups for sharing activity. Really solid progress on this piece of the Strategic Plan.
2. The 2<sup>nd</sup> of our 6 Board responsibilities is Operations and Policy
- a. This year a sub-team of the Board completed a revision of all of the Board-level policies for the church. This was a huge undertaking that began several years ago.
  - b. You see, governance needs to change based on the size and scope of the organization, and our church keeps growing. If you have more members, you have more groups – and more weddings – and more memorials and a larger staff – and the Board and ministers can't and shouldn't be involved in every decision. So we adjust our Policies to have clear charters and empowerment for the staff and

committees. Writing these policies is challenging and time consuming, and I want to give a special recognition of the work of our Policy task force.

### 3. Finances and Budgeting

- a. This year we instituted some improved Quarterly reporting, so the Board can better see trends, spending patterns, and spot issues so we can make timely decisions.
- b. We also put a buildings & grounds subteam in place that has helped us greatly in planning for capital projects – things like upgrading the campus and facilities. This year, they worked with the staff to upgrade our campus lighting, improve the Wesson and Arnold rooms, and design the office space and fencing improvements you voted on earlier. The next step for this team will be developing a longer-range roadmap of prioritized improvements we want to pursue over time.
- c. The Radical Generosity team – another committee of the board, has really energized giving and brought reliable processes and information support for pledging and donations.

### 4. Risk Management

- a. Our lighting and fencing work this year were good steps taken in the area of campus safety and risk management.
- b. A committee of the board called the Healthy Community Committee is responsible for creating and overseeing the implementation of “Safe Congregation” policies. They monitor the Congregation as a whole for healthy communication and conflict resolution practices and provide educational resources and experience on these topics.
- c. In 2017, we will continue to explore areas where we can mitigate risks, whether they be around physical safety, legal or financial risks.

## 5. Bylaw Review

- a. We follow the bylaws, until we see that something is missing or misleading, then we propose changes for your vote. The Minister transition process is an example of following the bylaws, and the wording changes you saw earlier are examples of making them better.

## 6. Ministry Goal Setting and Review

- a. The board goes out on an annual retreat to set goals for the year; the 2017 board retreat will be next weekend. Then we follow through toward those goals during the year.
  
- b. And finally, we conduct an annual performance review for the Senior Minister.

I hope this overview of our 6 focus areas hasn't been too painful to endure. I wanted to take you through it because we in the board have a strong belief and value around transparency. We want you to know what we're up to, and in fact one of our 2016 board goals was to increase our visibility and invite your questions and engagement in how we govern the church. That's why we were in the library a number of times with our little sign saying Coffee with the Board, and why we added these little ribbons on our nametags. We will also continue following the practice of having open meetings, where you may come and observe.

If any of this has prompted any questions please find me after this meeting or via email – anyone in the church office can get your message to me and I'll respond.

In closing, I want to point out that Volunteers make all the difference around here. If you haven't volunteered in a while, or haven't volunteered enough, please see Beth Elliott at the connections table or any other staff member to put your name in. If we don't have a slot now, we'll keep you in mind for the future.

The commitment I make to you for 2017 is to remain transparent and work with the Board to fulfill our charter to the best of our ability. I'll be Presidential in accordance with the 5th Principle of Unitarian Universalism: The use of the democratic process within our congregations.

## **Director of Religious Education Mia Noren**

### **Staffing**

Mia Noren, Alana Rodriguez, and Brie-Anne Stout continue as DRE, RE Administrative Assistant, and RE Aide. James Galasinski completed his internship, was ordained, and left for another congregation. We hired Colin Spooner as our new Youth Programs Coordinator in May. The child care pool is at 13.

Mia Noren has applied to the UUA's Religious Education Credentialing Program, and expects to be accepted in January. In 2016, she attended the Mountain Desert District DRE retreat, the Liberal Religious Educators Association Conference, and completed the Renaissance Modules on Curriculum Planning and Family Ministry.

### **Registration Numbers**

During the academic year, from September 2015 through August 2016, there were 162 individual children registered in the program. An additional 46 children participated in an unregistered status, attending three or more classes during the academic year. Children who participated in less than three classes were not included in the count. The children were managed on Sundays by 59 adult volunteers, 13 paid child care workers and three staff, plus James Galasinski and then Colin Spooner working as our youth coordinator.

### **Attendance Numbers**

Individual instances of attendance for the year for first service totaled 1,152, and for the second service total 1,875. OWL and Coming of Age individual attendance for the year equaled 338. Total instances of child attendance in an RE program equal 3,365 individual occurrences. The total instances of adult attendance in children's RE numbered 1,258 individual occurrences.

## **RE Council**

This was the first full year of shared leadership with Council members holding portfolio, and the DRE has found it to be highly effective in being able to do more for the RE Department. Mia meets individually with members to discuss their portfolio work and to plan, and progress is reported on and discussed at the meetings. In this way, most of our manuals and resource guides have been updated, the September Mountain Desert District OWL Facilitator Training was planned and executed, more and better community connections events are planned, and curriculum has been planned out to 2018.

## **Teachers**

Summer classes were staffed with volunteers by free sign-up. Spring and fall classes continued to be staffed with Teacher Teams. Most teams had a full roster of volunteers, and other parents signed up as “floaters” and “special events” volunteers, filling in any gaps. We discontinued the Teacher Luncheons, as they became repetitive and the attendance dropped. There was a special dinner for OWL facilitators at the end of OWL classes in March.

## **Elementary**

Summertime classes were successful, with younger children learning moral lessons from the Berenstain Bear books, and older children learning about UU Heroes with selections from the Spirit of Adventure curriculum. Most classes used Tapestry of Faith curricula in the spring and fall, and the 4th & 5th graders started a social justice curriculum with a Harry Potter theme in the fall. It has proven to be very popular.

## **Youth**

There was an open class for mid- and high-school youth this summer, based on The Twilight Zone. La Amikoj youth participated in summer Grill Nights. Mid-High youth began a social justice curriculum in the fall. High School youth are focused more on the spiritual elements of current events. There was a successful Halloween Dance planned by Mid-High. High School

youth attended three conferences- MLK Con, Fall Con, and Leadership Con. Youth volunteered at Roadrunner Food Bank, and held overnights to work on the Pride Parade, and to welcome youth into youth groups.

## **Community**

Our annual RE BBQ in May was a big success—families, staff, and all volunteers were invited and volunteers were honored. We began having a monthly RE Family Picnic as an informal gathering, and that has been successful at building community. We had an RE Pool Party in June, which was attended by 80. A new family group was formed—Ohana joins the Mapalos and Mindful Parenting.

## **UU Kids Camp**

With the retirement of Keith Christopher and Mary Wright, who have been the main planners of UU Kid's Summer Camp for the past 25 years, a decision was made to place leadership for camp with the RE Department, under the guidance of the DRE. Mia has been meeting with Christine Robinson and Keith Christopher to organize how planning for camp will work next year.

## **RE Building and Grounds**

Improvements to the playground areas are proceeding. Steve Phillips has worked with me and we have identified a vendor of playground furniture that we'll use. We hope to have at least two picnic tables and two benches permanently installed in the playground area by this spring.

Steve and I have also worked together to identify security issues that continue in the playground area, and a plan to replace our fencing with improved stock is underway.

Major improvements were made to the La Amikoj room this year. The wall between the two areas was taken down, and new vertical blinds were installed over the sliding glass door and window. The closet was remodeled to provide accessible storage to the La Amikoj room and another closet with a separate, outside entrance was fashioned for administrative storage. Closets were also built in the Wesson room, reducing clutter and brightening up that end of the room.

## **Music Program**

### **Susan Peck, Director of Music**

This has been a rewarding first year, building a working relationship with ministers, staff, the worship team, choir, band, guest musicians, and congregation.

The mission of the music program is to inspire and support worship through high quality music in a variety of styles, encourage members to participate in congregational music, and build connections with the wider community through music.

### **Major Accomplishments**

They include launching Sol Singers (pastoral care choir) in the spring, offering monthly meditative singing services in the Fall, expanding membership in Chalice Singers, hiring Amy Woolley as our church pianist, transition of band leadership following Vance Bass' retirement, integrating choir and band for James Galasinski's ordination, creating four music-focused worship services, overseeing an eclectic blend of guest musicians, and providing music for social justice events at church and in the community.

I completed my tenure as UUA General Assembly Music Coordinator, working with GA Planning Committee, GA Worship Arts Team, GA Band Leader, GA Choir Director, SoLT Music Director, nearly a dozen ministers, and over 200 musicians, to provide worship music in plenary hall at General Assembly 2016 in Columbus, OH. After GA was finished, I resigned my position as president-elect of UU Musicians Network, realizing it was more important to focus my energies on developing the music program at First Unitarian.

### **Reaching Out**

- Chalice Singers partnered with Albuquerque Civic Chorus in January for a memorial service in honor of a congregational member who sang in both choirs.
- Members of Chalice Singers and Sol Singers participated in the annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Service.
- Spare Parts played for First U's Social Justice event in August, and presented a "Eulogies" coffee house concert which drew a large audience and raised nearly \$600 for Roots Leadership Academy.

- Sol Singers have visited members in hospital and nursing homes, sang at La Vida Llena twice, and led protest songs in preparation for the Women's March.

## **Looking Forward to Next Year**

- Susan Peck is applying for the Music Leadership Certification Program through the UUA (3-year program of study)
- Amy Woolley has joined UU Musicians Network
- Chalice Singers will present Missa Gaia/Earth Mass in concert in March
- Chalice Singers are planning and fundraising for Transylvania trip in 2018, working with UUA Partner Church Council.
- Co-sponsoring monthly open mic/coffee house concert with singer-songwriter Gwendy Joysen: community outreach as well as fundraising opportunity for choir
- Coordinating with RE program to increase music opportunities in RE, recruiting volunteers to help with classroom music, children's chapel, children's choirs

## **Membership Director**

**Beth Elliot**

There were 93 people who joined or re-joined First Unitarian in 2016. Each guest is contacted by the Membership Director after filling out a Ready to Join form. They are personally invited to participate in the Joining Ceremony. These ceremonies take place on the first Sunday of each month.

New members are contacted the week after they join with a formal welcome from the Membership Director and information about the church, website, and activities. They are contacted one month after joining with an invitation to have a one-on-one meeting with the Membership Director regarding how to make the most of their membership. Twenty-six people opted to participate in this program in 2016.

The New Member recognition ceremonies and the New Member Dinners continue to happen twice a year in the spring and the fall. Six-month and one-year anniversaries of joining the church are recognized with contact from the Membership Director. New members also receive an invitation to participate in the Welcoming Conversations program. Approximately 50 conversations with new members happened this year.

Connections Sundays continue for two weekends each fall. We had 34 groups participate in Connections Sundays.

We are now offering Roots classes in place of UU101. They run on the fourth Sunday of every month from 10:45 until noon. There are three sessions: UU Belief, First U Congregation, and UU History.

There is a New Group Procedure Packet for anyone who desires to start a group at First Unitarian. There have been 25 new groups, events and programs in 2016, with participation from approximately 175-200 people.

Two new programs were created in 2016, ready for implementation in 2017. The first is First U Connect, a social media tool that strengthens community building. The second program is an expansion on our Welcoming Conversations, called Getting to Know U and encourages members, new and old, to participate in one-on-one conversations.

# Operations

**Branch Coordinator–East Mountains**

## **Branch Coordinator—Socorro**

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

Our biggest challenge remains attendance/membership. Although new people come, the Socorro Unitarian Universalists (SUU) has steadily decreased in regular attendees. We are now averaging eight persons. Members die, a spouse dies and thus the surviving spouse moves out of the area, health issues restrict attendance, or individuals simply move away. This year, Margaret Lang died, and Ed Crawford, spouse of Mary Crawford, also died. We have, however, gained two regular attendees: Stephanie Mitchell and Allan Sauter.

Because Janet is on Dan Lillie's Intern Committee, he has been assigned SUU as one of his areas. The SUU congregation unanimously decided it would like to use Dan's skills and energy to increase attendance. Furthermore, it unanimously decided to do so through Theology on Tap beginning in January 2017. Unlike First U's Theology on Tap, SUU's will meet monthly and will be open/invite people who are not (currently) affiliated with SUU. During December 2016 and January 2017, we are actively advertising Theology on Tap, and Dan has committed to the endeavor for January, February, and March. Based on attendance for those months, he may continue in April and May.

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 is also responsible for our Highway Mile clean-up 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 alpha order):

Elise Brower – Music Director

Barry Clark – Treasurer, Lay Leader, Tech Crew

Janet Cliff – Lay Leader, Steering Committee Chair, Intern Committee member

Candace Lindquist – Lay Leader

Debby Safford – Refreshments Coordinator, Highway Skipper

Richard Sonnenfeld – Lay Leader, Tech Crew, Communications

Many thanks to First Unitarian's Ministerial Staff and its Tech Crew!

**Carlsbad**

**Worship Band—Spare Parts**

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

### **Endowment Fund Committee**

**Nell Graham Sale, Chair**

#### **Steering Committee**

Sandra McCardell

Margo Milleret

Judith Parsons

Dorothy Reynolds

We continued our efforts to publicize the Endowment Fund so that the church membership would know about this wonderful opportunity to underpin the long term existence and success of our church. Thanks to the gift of the balance of her estate from Margaret Lang, the Endowment Fund was increased by \$100,000. This was a great example of how one person can make a significant difference with just one gift, after she was done using it. All Margaret did was to put the church as the Pay On Death beneficiary of her accounts that she lived on for the last years of her life. And her accounts outlived her, much to our benefit.

We decided to consult with two professionals who know how to do legacy giving programs in order to enhance our understanding of what we can do as a volunteer committee, and what we might need to seek help from professionals. We are excited about what we have learned and look forward to sharing that with the Board.

We strengthened our relationship with the Radical Generosity committee, and have added a page on the church website that is specifically focused on legacy giving.

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

**Linda Suydam, Treasurer**

## **Finance Committee Members**

Ken Callahan

Joyce Etheridge

Doug Loescher

Cheri Plavnik

Paul Browne (ex officio)

## **Summary of Revenue/Expenses**

The actual income for the year was \$869,738.75, which is \$3,600.25 less than budgeted. Rental income was \$28,653.76 which was \$653.76 over budget. The Endowment income for the year was \$11,544 which was \$519 under budget. Non-pledge gifts were \$60,783.86 which was over budget by \$4,783.76. Pledge income was \$686,310.37 which was under budget by \$12,689.63.

Expenses for the year totaled \$849,153.66 which was \$24,185.34 under budget. The year ended with a surplus of \$20,303.09. This surplus will be split between the Capital Reserve and the 2015 operating budget income.

## **Financial Accomplishments in 2016**

The Music Angel Fund contributed \$49,421 to the music director's salary and in 2017 that contribution will be \$48,300.

Mortgage payments for the year totaled \$37,315.09 which included payments on the line of credit, the principal, and the interest.

Congregational commitments were \$25,686 and in 2017 that will be increased to \$30,79.1

## **Capital Campaign**

Contributions to the Capital Campaign were \$1,825.

## **Summary**

Despite concerns in the last few months of the year about pledge income, the yearend outcome was extremely positive with a surplus of \$20,000. This was the result of excellent management of resources by the staff.

**Financial Review Committee**

## **Healthy Community Committee**

### **Steve Phillips, Chair**

#### **Members**

Randy Biggers  
Heather Clark  
Alisa Cooper de Uribe  
Gilbert Gutierrez  
The Rev. Christine Robinson

The Healthy Community Committee is charged by the Board with creating and overseeing safe congregation policies, ensuring healthy communication practices, assisting with conflict resolution, and providing educational resources and experiences for the congregation.

#### **Congregational Outreach**

No outreach activity occurred in 2016. However, late in the year the committee had an initial discussion about developing a Forum program on constructive communications techniques to be presented in 2017, perhaps in collaboration with the Diversity Team.

#### **Conflict Resolution Activities**

2016 was a relatively quiet year. The committee received one written notice that a request for help might be forthcoming. In addition, a church member was counseled about possible committee help. No follow-up communication was received regarding either of these and thus no action was taken by the committee.

#### **Policy Writing Activities**

The committee completed drafts of the following policies and sent them to the Policy Governance Taskforce: Disruptive Behavior, Threats, Violence, Harassment, Registered Sexual Offender, Child Protection, Professional Misconduct, and Privacy and Security.

#### **Leadership Transition**

Heather Clark has agreed to have her name submitted to the Board for consideration as chair of the committee for a year starting in February of 2017.

# **Leadership Succession Committee**

## **Benita Terrell, Chair**

### **Members**

Michelle Bloodworth  
Ian Carrillo  
Heather Clark  
Jon Eldredge  
Sally New  
Joseph Sadek

The seven-member Leadership Succession Committee (LSC) is a Standing Committee of the Congregation. The LSC identifies potential leaders within our Church and 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 fill vacancies on the Board of Directors, Endowment, Finance Review, and Leadership Succession Committees. There are 26 positions on these committees. For the 2017 elections, the LSC has developed a slate of 12 nominees. Four are nominees for a second term and eight are new nominees for committee vacancies.

The LSC is also responsible for nominating persons to the Senior Minister Search Committee when such a search is undertaken. Due to Christine's retirement in August of 2017, the LSC nominated seven people to this Committee. Elections will take place at the Congregation's Annual Meeting in January.

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.

### **2016 Activities**

The LSC is not well known in the Congregation and had been taking steps to increase its visibility. The LSC had a presence on Connections Sundays. Handouts were provided and announcements were made in the eBroadsheet about leadership opportunities in the Church.

The *LSC Resource Book* provides information about the Committee's operations and procedures and includes 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 a leadership position, to inform each of the annual meeting date, and to request a biography for inclusion in the Messenger. This has been established as a regular practice. It's been suggested that the LSC ask for photos so that members can more easily identify the nominated candidates. This may be implemented in 2017.

## **Challenges**

There is no primary resource for being able to identify potential leaders. A comprehensive database that includes members' skills, interests, activities in the church, etc. would be valuable. It would enable the LSC to consider church members that may not otherwise be known to the committee. The need for such a repository and/or program has been recognized in the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan.

The by-laws state that Board and committee members can serve two consecutive terms before they must rotate off for at least one year. However, there is no established mechanism for recording members' terms in office, which complicates LSC's work (and perhaps the work of other committees).

## **Membership Committee**

**Linda Skye, Chair**

### **Members**

Nancy Cushman

Alice Demi

Nina Hanks

Betty Higbie

Lee Higbie

Brian Hill

Ann King

Jerry Kiuttu (term ended February 2016)

Dawn Leach

Currently, the committee consists of six members. Three new members joined the committee in late Fall: Nancy Cushman, Brian Hill, and Nina Hanks. This was my second year as the Chair of the committee and I stepped down in December (having served 4 years). I will serve through February 2017 to provide continuity while the committee identifies a new chair. Three members stepped down and we thanked them for their service: Dawn Leach (served 4 years) and Alice Demi (served 18 months), and Jerry Kiuttu (served 2 years).

The committee met seven times, completing both routine duties and identifying new projects to improve the experience of church guests and new members. The following projects were completed:

- Recruited new committee members
- Merged the Membership Information table with the Welcome Table
  - Conducted cross-training with welcome table volunteers so that we could answer guests' questions and help a person interested in joining
  - Reorganized the table spaces to accommodate the merge as a permanent change
- In April, began meeting with the new Membership Director, Beth Elliott
- Reviewed and revised membership table materials
  - Combined the Demographic form with the Ready to Join form
  - Revised "Exploring Membership" brochure

- Training
  - How to answer new members questions about the initial contribution (Chris Mayo of the Radical Generosity Team presented)
  - Setting up a profile page in the new One Body software (a “Facebook” style page for First U members only)
  - Discussed procedures presented by Beth on points of connection and follow-up with new members
  - Members encouraged to attend any/all New Member Signing Ceremonies
  - Discussed features and information available on PowerChurch software
  - Upcoming in 2017: combined training on the Welcome Table for ushers group, welcome table volunteers, and membership committee

The committee hosted two New Member Recognition Ceremonies and Dinners (March and November). Each dinner was attended by a total of 32-33 guests, including new members, their families and guests, committee members, Membership Director, ministers, church staff and invited church leaders.

## **Plans for 2017**

- Work on special project identified by the Membership Director related to membership development and retention to explore and implement best practices.
- Train with Welcome Table staff to provide a seamless experience for guests
- Review and revise Membership webpage information
- Continue to train on how to discuss new member contributions and pledging
- Engage in new “Getting to Know You” program
- Get comfortable using new First U Connect “Facebook” software
- Experiment with New Member Recognition activities (lunch instead of dinner?)
- Linda Skye to pass on all materials and info from 2015-16 to new committee Chair when named

## **Personnel Committee**

### **Judy Bentley, Chair**

#### **Members**

Rick Held (member from the Board)  
Judy Parsons

In 2016, the Personnel Committee members were Judy Bentley (Chair), Rick Held (member from the Board) and Judy Parsons. Director of Operations Paul Browne and Senior Minister Christine Robinson attended committee meetings. An updated Board Policy *5.03 Personnel Committee* set the committee as having at least one Board member and at least two Church members and at least one member of the Executive Team. Rick is a Board Member and both “Judy’s” have a professional background in human resources. Paul or Christine or both attended every meeting. A statement of confidentiality was signed by all members and given to Christine. The Personnel Committee should meet every quarter and did meet on February 8, May 23, August 29, and November 28. The Committee was aligned with the Board Policy.

The committee members discussed compliance with changing Federal Laws, reviewing policies, reviewing interviewing processes, job descriptions, conducting exit interviews with employees separating employment, and participated on interview committees. It was decided that the committee would be provided with a list of the status of performance appraisals for staff. Christine and Paul said it was helpful to them because getting the list together and updating for the quarterly meeting reminded them and other supervisors to complete the review process.

My last meeting was November 28, 2016 as I have exceeded the four year term limit. It has been a pleasure working on the committee and I will miss the members and getting to help select the wonderful staff.

# Policy Governance Task Force

## Geri Knoebel, Chair

### Members

Pat Diem  
Gwen Sawyer  
The Rev. Christine Robinson

### Previous Members

Joyce Kaser  
John Kwait  
Tom Wofford

Church policies define lines of authority, organizational accountability, as well as the relationships between governance, programs, and ministry. Governance is how we manage our affairs, set goals, identify priorities, and oversee the day-to-day activities of the Church. The Church's programs, services, and ministries are what we manage to fulfill the Church's mission. Our policies delineate the authority and responsibilities of the Congregation, the Board, Committees, and staff.

In 2013, the Congregation approved new bylaws to adopt a shared governance structure appropriate for a church of our size. These organization-based bylaws define responsibilities at the Congregation, Board, and Minister levels. Once the shared governance structure was adopted, the Board charged the Task Force as follows:

- Recommend policies for implementing the new structure
- Recommend needed alignments between Church bylaws and policies
- Replace *the Compendium of Policies*<sup>1</sup> with a new *Congregation and Board Policy Manual*.<sup>2</sup>

The Task Force has been working on this enormous and complex job for two and a half years. Based on recommendations made, the Board has approved 43 policies. Only two policies remain

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<sup>1</sup> The *Compendium* was last revised in 2011 and included 39 policies, one of which was adopted in 1993 (leafletting of church members). Of the 39 policies, 10 were determined to be obsolete, 2 were completed, 3 were actually procedures, and 2 were covered in bylaws. The remaining 22 policies were consolidated and or revised and included in the *Policy Manual*.

<sup>2</sup> *Policy Manual* website is: (<http://uuabq.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Cong-Board-Policy-Manual-2016-09-29.pdf>).

and are currently under discussion. As the Board approved policies, they have been included in the Policy Manual and posted on the Church website.

### ***Policy Manual Organization***

The *Policy Manual* is arranged as eight policy categories (or chapters) which provide the framework for its organization. Individual policies are designated as numbered sections within each category. The policy categories are: Governance, Finance, Affiliations and Participation, Programs, Staff, Safety, Facilities, and Communications. The Board has approved all eight chapters of the Policy Manual, which are:

- **1.0 Governance** (approved August 2015) – Seven policies establish roles and responsibilities for the Board, ministers, staff, and lay leaders as well as lines of authority among them.
- **2.0 Finance** (approved December 2015) – Eleven policies establish the framework for managing the financial resources of the Church. The Congregation entrusts the financial management of its affairs to the Board, the Senior Minister as Head of Staff, and the Endowment and Financial Review Committees. The approval of the annual operating budget, the purchase/ construction/ sale of property and incurrence of debt are reserved to the Congregation.
- **3.0 Affiliation and Participation** (approved March 2016) – Three policies establish categories of affiliation, tracking mechanisms, and expectations of those who participate in Church activities or activities on Church property.
- **4.0 Programs** (approved June, 2016) – Eleven policies comprise the Program chapter. These include Board committees, program policy, and councils; the membership Committee; Landscape Committee; green sanctuary; animals on campus; and selection of delegates and scholarship recipients.
- **5.0 Staff** – These policies include the *Personnel Manual*, Church as an employer, and the Personnel Committee.
- **6.0 Safety** (approved September, 2016) – These seven policies are intended to maintain a respectful and caring Congregation. These policies include: Disruptive Behavior; Threats, Violence, and Harassment; Policy on Persons Required to Register as Sex Offenders; Professional Misconduct; Privacy Policy; and the Healthy Community Committee.

- **7.0 Facilities** (approved March 2016) – Five policies define how Church buildings and grounds are used and cared for.
- **8.0 Communications** (approved March 2016) – Two policies establish guidelines for development and ongoing management of print and web-based publications and communications venues.

## Policy “Owners”

All policies have an “owner”, the entity which has the authority to create and change them.

Policies are hierarchal in nature.

- a. The **Congregation** may create or change any Church policy
- b. The **Board** may create or change the policies of staff, teams, task forces, and committees with the exception of the Standing Committees: Board, Endowment, Leadership Succession, and Financial Review
- c. The **Staff** may create or change staff policies in their areas of authority.
- d. **Committees and Teams** may create or change policies which help them carry out their work.

## Thanks to the Policy Governance Task Force

I would like to acknowledge and thank the Task Force members, who met more than 40 times to accomplish the Board’s charge. The Church’s policies are now codified in the *Congregation and Board Policy Manual*, an important policy governance document.

The Task Force updated, replaced, consolidated, retired and created dozens of policies for approval by the Board. Careful consideration was given to where the church is today and where we would like to be in the future. Other large UU congregations were researched and input was obtained from those impacted by Church policies including committees, task forces, and teams.

Determining policy format and alignment with church by-laws took hours of discussion and scores of drafts. The final product may seem self-evident now but it was a mind-bending exercise to understand, integrate, align, draft, and format the individual policies.

## Next Steps

Now that the *Policy Manual* is nearly completed, the Task Force is planning how to familiarize Church leadership with its provisions.

- Develop forums to orient lay leadership to the *Manual*'s structure and provisions. Leadership would include committee chairs, teams, and councils.
- Develop user-friendly materials to provide an overview of shared governance and the *Policy Manual*.

## **Radical Generosity Team**

**Dimitri Kapelianis, Chair**  
**Michael McDonald, Acting Chair**

### **Members**

Ian Carrillo  
Linda Hudson  
John Kwait  
Chris Mayo  
The Rev. Angela Herrera, ex officio

In 2016, the Radical Generosity Team continued to fulfill the charge that it received from the board. Specifically:

*The Radical Generosity Team is an ongoing committee of the board, tasked with overseeing the pledge drive and fundraising for the annual operating budget, and helping First Unitarian refine its stewardship practices and develop a culture of generosity.*

Consistent with this charge, the Radical Generosity Team:

- Met with new members at the signing ceremony and shared with them our culture of generosity,
- Regularly highlighted the generosity of our congregation with its “Caught in the Act” series,
- Signed up church members to the Smith’s rewards program which raised additional funds for the church,
- Spent most of its time and energy on the Fall pledge drive.

We are proud to report that we received 512 pledges, averaging nearly \$1,500 per pledge, for a total amount pledged of \$744,988.

The team expresses its gratitude to Michael McDonald for stepping in as Acting Chair while Dimitri Kapelianis was on sabbatical during the Fall.

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

### **Animal Advocates**

*Promoting Respect and Dignity for All Beings*

#### **Leadership**

Marion Ammerman  
Martha Anderson  
Linda Bairstow  
Sacha Bush  
Sharon Hall

Active Members: Martha Anderson, Marion Ammerman, Mikki Aronoff, Linda Bairstow, Lisa Goldman, Sacha Bush, Janelle Campbell, Randy Diner, David Gick, Sharon Hall, Margaret Keller, Marcia Petta, Rose Provan, and Janet Strong. In 2016, we lost an ardent member, Lou Graham, and we will miss her. Animal Advocates also has an e-news list, a Facebook page, a monthly newsletter, and works in collaboration with many organizations throughout the city.

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 an information and artist table in the Courtyard 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 organizations who received contributions from Animal Advocates this year were Fur and Feather, Tiny Toes Rat Rescue, Animal Welfare Coalition of Northeastern NM, HART of NM, Rez Dog for a Transport Van, and Animal Protection of NM.

Animal Advocates hosted and members volunteered at numerous events including Fabulous Felines 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Free Lecture Series and The Red & Green VegFest, and we co-hosted the May Humane Forum with Animal-Kind International, which included a presentation by Morris Darbo, founder and director of the Liberia Animal Welfare & Conservation Society. Several of our members participated in the Mountain Desert District's Annual Spring Assembly. We hosted the third annual Animal Advocates Yard Sale (all proceeds designated to support local animal organizations), and volunteered at several events around the city for Friends of

Lucky Paws as well as Animal Humane NM. We hosted sales to support wild horse rescue in Placitas and participated in the Social Justice Committee's monthly Bulletin Board Spotlight. 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.

Our monthly meetings included guest speakers and educational micro- seminars. Anne Ryan, The Paz Project Assistant Director of Administration Bernalillo County Youth Services Center, spoke about the Paz Project's mission to educate at-risk youth about the devastating and multi-dimensional effects of animal maltreatment on community safety, and equipping them with resources and support so that they can choose to serve as change agents in the future. And, our members met Samuel Adams from the Jemez Pueblo Animal Rescue. This much needed Animal Rescue is a certified, 501(c) (3) was founded by Samuel who saw the need of a humane animal organization, to educate community members and care for the pueblo animals.

In 2016 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 6,500 pounds of pet food annually as well as collars, leashes, beds, and other supplies to our partner St. Martin's Hospitality Center. Animal Advocates hosts monthly shot clinics sponsored by VCA-Wyoming and The Rock at Noon Day, providing city-required vaccinations, check-ups, grooming, and medications to over 125 pets. We continued our partnership with St. Martin's Hospitality Center and ABQ PetCare, VCA-Wyoming, VCA Referral Center, and Aztec Animal Clinic.

Under the direction of founder Linda Bairstow, the Critter Club continued "celebrating and respecting the awesomeness of life" for children ages 6 to young adult. The kids visited Wanagi Wolf Sanctuary, and were treated to an extraordinary tour by founder and director Stephanie Kaylan. Many of the children, along with adults and teens, went on a field trip to Santuario de Karuna, a local humane education micro sanctuary in New Mexico focusing on compassionate living. The trip was organized by Marion Ammerman and was a great success.

## **Arts & Aesthetics Committee**

**Elizabeth Runyon, Chair**

**Bob Wood, Secretary**

### **Members**

Barbara Adkins

Jane Baldwin

Bruce Little

Pamela Livingston

Jana Murphy

Sally New

Eliza Schmidt

Susan Visor

The Arts & Aesthetics committee (A&A) selects and installs art exhibitions in the Social Hall for the enjoyment of members and friends. A&A members also act as consultant regarding other aesthetics questions on campus. Key accomplishments for the year are:

- Staged eight exhibitions during the year 2016
- Juried art works and scheduled exhibitions for the year 2017
- Welcomed three new members to the committee
- Selected winner of the Eleanor Bailey Memorial prize to one favorite artist from the All Members Show, and one from all the other exhibitions during the year 2016

When desired by the exhibitors, a Mercado is held to give both Congregation members and members of the wider community time to view the show and to purchase smaller items from the exhibiting artists. Most art works in the exhibition are for sale; 30% of the sale price goes to the church's general fund. For the year 2016, the total of all sales amounted to \$13,155.80, with \$3,946.74 (30%) going to the church.

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

# **Buildings and Grounds Committee**

## **Jake Barkdoll, Chair**

### **Members**

Stephen Phillips  
Dumas Slade  
Zoe Walton

First U of Albuquerque is a “big church” in many ways, including its physical facilities. Maintaining and improving 30,000 square feet of existing space that hosts over 3,000 scheduled events per year, and houses a busy staff, is a correspondingly big job. The job is getting done through the committed and coordinated efforts of Paul Browne, Mark Fickler, volunteer members of the congregation, and members of the Building and Grounds Committee. The coordinated team work of the committee and staff is greatly facilitated by Steve Phillips serving both as a committee member and a volunteer member of the staff.

The Committee’s activity and progress was built on the work done in 2015 that developed a list of over 50 “projects” that had been identified through an assessment of previous reports and recommendations. Not surprisingly the project list evolved throughout 2016 as some projects were completed and new projects added.

Substantial effort was devoted to:

- **Lighting:** Campus night lighting was identified as the most pressing security and convenience item. It was estimated that there are 13,000 instances where individuals are “walking around” after dark. A lighting engineer was engaged to measure current lighting levels and an aggressive campaign to increase lighting was initiated. Paul Browne and Mark Fickler accomplished substantial improvements at modest costs.
- **Roof Repair and Replacement:** This project involved removing, storing, and replacing solar panels at substantial expense. In the Memorial Hall, old evaporative coolers were removed and the roof was replaced. During the project a new high efficiency HVAC unit was installed and the ceiling was patched and painted. In the office building, the roof was

rebuilt on the north side to improve rainwater drainage and the remaining surface patched. In the RE Building, the roof was patched.

- Office Reconfiguration: The addition of the music director and the continuing inadequacy of staff offices necessitated a substantial rethink of the available space. Staff and ministerial input was obtained, a variety of alternate plans were developed, construction bids were obtained from several contractors, and the project stands ready for execution early in 2017.
- A plethora of “catch-up” projects:
  - Irrigation Repair and Mapping. Several major leaks in irrigation lines in the Playground and Garden Area were repaired. In addition, a draft set of maps were developed that identify the location of irrigation lines and their controllers. A final draft of the irrigation maps and controller settings will be completed in 2017 and will be provided to the staff and Landscape Committee.
  - Trash, Brush and Vine Removal. It became evident when evaluating the safety and needed improvements of the RE playground that the fence between the Playground and Garden Area needed repair. In addition, it was evident there had been no maintenance of the Garden Area for several years and overnight camping by the homeless and vandalism have occurred. In addition there was substantial overgrowth of trees, vines, weeds, and brush. The fence has been repaired and considerable effort has been invested in trimming and cleanup. This project should be completed in early 2017.
  - Preparations for Improved Fencing. An increase in litter and use of outdoor outlets and water in the playground and garden areas of the campus by the homeless has led to obtaining estimates to increase the fence height around the playground grassy area, install proper gates, and repair the south gates into the garden area. It is anticipated this project will be completed in early 2017.
  - Blue Print Digitizing Project: Blue prints for all of the major building projects on the church campus were digitized and indexed for ready access.

It is the Committee’s opinion that the physical infrastructure of the church has not received the financial support needed to provide appropriate facilities for an evolving and growing big

church. A dependable and transparent process is needed to provide an assured source of funds for recognized and unrecognized major initiatives (e.g., renovating the social hall and the social hall kitchen, assess structural integrity of social hall roof, repair/replace Social Hall roof, including removing and replacing solar panels).

# Coffee Crew

## **Coyote Willow Covenant of UU Pagans**

Coyote Willow CUUPS (CWCUUPS) is an Albuquerque chapter of the Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans, a national organization. CWCUUPS supports the practice and understanding of Pagan and Earth-centered spirituality, with a focus on UU Principles.

The Wheel of the Year, with eight commonly recognized Pagan holy days, was celebrated with open rituals. Additionally, CWCUUPS held monthly business meetings and monthly workshops on various pagan-related topics of interest. CWCUUPS also joined in the Pagan Sunday Service last year. Finally, we had a booth at and participated in the Albuquerque Pagan Pride Day event, which raised 1,200 lbs of food and over \$200 for the First Unitarian Food Pantry.

## Earth Web

Earth Web meets the second Sunday of each month. Our activities consist of education, outreach, and participation in local environmentally-related events.

### Earth Day Patio Fair

We expanded our Earth Day Fair by coordinating with Brie Anne from RE. Teachers from RE helped man some of the Activity Stations. Some of the features of this year's Fair included recycled art, worm composting, plant sales, composting, solar cooking, and tours of the wildlife habitat.

### Education

Earth Web read and discussed *Powering a Bright Future*, a publication from North West Environmental Institute. We handed out the NMIPL Reflection Guide for Voters for the three weeks prior to the November election. We reached out to Angela to see if Forums could once again be a part of Sunday activities. We chose two guest speakers, Tom Solomon of [350.org](http://350.org) and Camilla Feibelman of Sierra Club as speakers for February and April 2017.

### Outreach

Sally Jacobsen publishes a short piece every month in Green Corner—sharing energy, environmental tips as well as information on upcoming events. We created an Earth Web Survey for the congregation in an attempt to find out in which environmental issues UU folks were most interested and in which activities they would most like to participate. Tabulated results showed that areas of highest interest were (1) Impact of climate change in our area (2) Adaptation to the changing climate and (3) gardening and xeriscaping. Activities most requested were (1) field trips (2) forums and (3) potlucks.

### Support for Transition ABQ

Marilyn O'Boyle is a go-between for Earth Web and Transition ABQ (working towards a Sustainable Albuquerque.) Transition hosts a monthly meeting in the First U Social Hall on

environmentally related topics. Earth Web committed to contributing \$25.00 monthly (until the end of 2016) toward maintaining the Transition website.

### **Greening Up the First U Social Hall**

We researched the possibility of phasing out paper products/plastic stirrers at both Sunday services. We received an enthusiastic response from Angela and other church staff. Linda Doherty is in the process of speaking with kitchen helpers, researching the purchase of plastic cups, and making signs so that we can begin in early 2017.

### **East Mountain Clean-Up**

We continue to reach out to East Mountain Ministries two times per year to join them in a highway litter clean-up up on First U's two-mile stretch of road heading up to Sandia Crest.

## **Food Pantry**

### **Rebecca Gracey, Chair**

Forty-six volunteers provide the help that allows the Food Pantry to hand out an average of 103 sacks of food every Wednesday afternoon at the church. This number includes people who pack the sacks of food, those who hand out the sacks, people who donate cat and dog food, and volunteers who buy pinto beans and rice and repackage it into one-pound bag. Repackaging is done every week by the Johnson-Jimenez family, Doug Thiesen, and Ken Callahan. The packers and food distributors do the job once per month. Pam Bliss coordinates the distribution aspect of the committee and Linda Hudson coordinates the packing duties.

The goal is to provide nutritional food to the needy that come to us for help. The sack of food includes a pound of both pinto beans and rice, cans of fruits and vegetables, a snack of cookies or crackers, cereal, a package of bread, and a package of meat such as hot dogs or ham. Then a couple of “extras” are added to the bag such as tuna, soup, cans of beans, milk or tomatoes, mac and cheese, and/or peanut butter. 120 of each item must be purchased each week in case more than 100 sacks are needed.

Most of the food is obtained from Roadrunner Food Bank at a minimal charge that covers their labor and stacking charges, usually at .19 per pound. If food we desire is not available there, it is bought at Smiths. The rice and beans are usually bought at Costco if not from Roadrunner.

Rebecca Gracey does the food purchasing and ordering online from Roadrunner. Remarkably most of the money for purchasing food comes from church member donations. The pantry is not a budgeted expense.

As of September, Roadrunner began delivering our food order to the church on Tuesday mornings. Rebecca has help from Vic Belarde and Gary Donnermeyer with unloading the food and putting it away in the pantry.

A total of 5,381 sacks of food were given away in 2016 with an average of 103.4 sacks per week. The average cost per sack was \$3.21.

**BEGINNING BALANCE: \$9,387.41**

**TOTAL INCOME: \$17,254.00** (from members' donations, Growers' Market, Pagan Pride, Kroger, Social Justice Council transfer from a church budget donation and Yoga Class)

**TOTAL EXPENSES FOR FOOD: \$13,097.85**

**YEAR-END BALANCE: \$9,387.41**

**Forum Committee**

## **Audio/Video (A/V) Team**

The A/V team have implemented high definition video and a new camera/perspective from the front wall (looking back into the audience), and have phased in a number of new and improved microphones. The team also improved and organized the associated storage, and logged all A/V inventory in the past year. They continue to work on the processes for melding slides with video footage, and for sharing the video recordings with our out-of-town stakeholders and the internet. Also, the video team has worked to keep live coverage of the second service for the family room and sanctuary foyer. In the past all that was provided for the second service was a locked down shot of the stage/podium. However, staffing is still an issue but the Audio and Video teams remain hopeful. They did all this while maintaining a very high rate of same-day-delivery performance.

## **RE Council**

**Gerri Knoebel, Chair**

### **Members**

Callie Cone, OWL Portfolio

Carol Cowan, Curriculum Lead

Stirling Crow, Recruitment Coordinator and Council Secretary

Nicia Rae, UU Kids Camp Liaison

Desiree Spielman, Community Connections Lead

Hannah Stephens

Benita Terrell, Program Evaluation Lead

### **Ex-Officio Members**

The Rev. Angela Herrera

Mia Noren, DRE

Colin Spooner, Youth Coordinator

Our Religious Education (RE) Program provides age-appropriate opportunities for spiritual, philosophical, ethical, and faith development for children and youth. The RE Council (REC) is responsible for organizing, promoting, supervising, and evaluating the religious education programs for the children and youth. The RE Staff collaborates with the RE Council concerning issues of policy and direction and operates as a working group providing lay leadership to the Church's RE programs.

The Council uses a shared leadership model so that each member has a portfolio of responsibilities. The structure includes: President, Secretary, Curriculum Team Lead, Community Connections Lead, RE Buildings & Grounds Liaison (currently vacant), OWL Portfolio, Program Evaluation Lead, Recruitment Coordinator, and UU Kids Camp Liaison.

With Mia's DRE leadership, coupled with ministerial, Board, and RE Council support, RE programs are stable and growing. Mia has provided energetic leadership to all facets of the RE programs. Staff and volunteer capacity of the RE program has significantly increased. Curricula have been strengthened. Connections between the sanctuary and the RE programs have improved. Communications with parents and teachers have been enhanced. The sense of RE community is being nurtured.

In addition to regular RE classes, the REC supported and assisted RE staff with many projects and programs this year including OWL held in Spring 2016, teacher recruitment and training materials, UU Kids camp, RE volunteer appreciation events, community connections including monthly picnics and a fall pool party, an extensive curriculum report and materials, and the children's and youth choirs. The REC continued to monitor and collaborate on RE policies and decisions including curriculum choices, classroom age divisions, RE calendar, playground rules, Youth Advisor policy and training, and La Amikoj Scholarship policy. First Unitarian hosted an Our Whole Lives facilitator training attended mainly by Mountain Desert District participants in September.

In the 2016-17 program year, luncheons will be rotated to include OWL, Mid-high, and La Amikoj teachers/advisors. Teachers will also operate in teaching teams. Both are part of a strategy to not only support volunteers and build up their capacity, but also to increase the sense of community in RE by bringing people together.

The RE Council is living into its new model of shared leadership, with increased focus on Community Building, Program Assessment, RE Buildings and Grounds, and Curriculum. Monthly minister-led children's chapel services and a children's table in the back of the sanctuary, as well as regular family-friendly announcements from the pulpit—continue to help bridge the gap between RE and the sanctuary.

In 2016, the RE web site was revised so that it would be more intuitive and appealing set of pages describing our RE programs, RE resource and encouraging participation (<http://uuabq.com/religious-education/re-children-and-youth/> ).

Included in the website is the *RE Council Resource Book*, which was developed to orient the Council to their responsibilities. Also major revisions were done to the *Teachers Training Manual* and the *Childcare Manual*.

## **Sip N Sup**

### **Pat Diem & Torre Near, 2016 Coordinators**

Sip N Sup (SNS) is a social program that arranges monthly dinners in members' homes for the purpose of getting to know each better in a small group social culinary setting. Dinners are normally eight people and are arranged for the first Saturday evening during the months from November through June. Members are assigned a menu item to share at the dinner.

In 2016 SNS tried a new opening event by kicking off the year with an all member potluck in the Social Hall which was well received by all.

SipNSup currently has 91 members made up of both couples and singles who are invited by email to each monthly dinner two weeks prior to the dinner. Participants who can participate in the current dinner respond and are assigned to dinners in member homes on the first Saturday of the month. Members share responsibilities for food preparation and hosting. In total for 2016, SipNSuppers hosted the opening potluck and eight dinners attended by approximately 339 members for an average of 32-40 people attending each dinner. Efforts are made to schedule dinners so that participants meet new people in small groups throughout the year.

During the year interested participants can join at any time during the year. There are new SNS members each month that have asked to be added to the member list.

## Social Justice Council

### Members

Kristin Ackerson  
David Barbour  
Judy Groves  
Rod Groves  
Tara Lee  
Ann Mueller  
Bethe Orrell  
Peggy Whitmore, chair

The mission of the Social Justice Council (SJC) continues to be to promote and support social justice causes within the church and congregation. This year, the council focused on determining the needs of the existing SJC sub-groups and distributing funds to those groups as needed. The groups supported by the SJC in 2016 included the following:

- Diversity Task Force for Ant-Racism and Oppression Workshop (\$1,000.00)
- Food Pantry (\$1,500.00)
- Economic Reform Advocacy Group (ERAG) (\$600.00)
- NM Faith Coalition for Immigrant Justice (\$85.00)
- Black Lives Matter UU Group (\$1,000.00)
- Animal Advocates (\$600.00)
- Available Media Group (\$500.00)
- Street Safe New Mexico (\$1,000.00)
- Next Step Prep Pilot Program at Metropolitan Detention Center (\$1,213.96)

The council also held its annual fundraiser on August 7, 2016 and raised money for the continuing social justice efforts of the church. In 2016, the SJC decided to set aside half of its existing funds and to save half of all future funds raised for a “big” social justice program to be determined in the future.

The SJC’s newest initiative, Family Promise, has now successfully housed homeless families at the church on three separate occasions and has developed a very competent and active core of volunteers that make the program operate smoothly.

In 2017, the SJC intends to restart the forum sub-group to conduct social justice forums for church members on Sundays at 11:00 a.m. Tara Lee will be the primary coordinator of that effort.

# **Adult English as a Second Language**

## **Tutors**

Marion Ammerman	Cathy Intemann
Barbara Adkins	Peggy Jugmahansingh
Becca Anderson	Sejeeda Khan-Woehle
Bobbie Bordeaux	Charlie Merritt
K.L. Castellás-Gutiérrez	Connie Molecke
Kate Harrington	Rebecca Steele
Amanda Hurford	

## **Substitutes**

Odile de la Beaujardiere  
Bonnie Chavez  
Beatrice Mitchell  
Christie McCauley

## **Child Minders**

Lora Green  
Emma Kochenderfer  
Stephanie Reich  
Tashara Stout

## **History**

The Adult ESL program first began in the fall of 2009 with five students under the helm of Ursula Biggers. In the fall of 2014 and spring of 2015, it was directed by Sandra Bruce. In the fall of 2015, Connie Molecke started as director & continues until present.

## **Teachers**

We have been fortunate to have many church members and a few community members volunteer as teacher and as substitutes. Our classes meet on Monday evenings from 6:30–8:00 pm for 13 weeks in the spring and the fall. Classes are formed around skill levels and student needs. Each teacher or teacher team prepares a lesson plan to develop skills in reading, writing, listening, and speaking comprehension. Volunteers attend meetings and training sessions to improve and share teaching ESL experience. We also have had a class to assist students with the US Citizenship Test.

## **Students**

Our program has grown each year with adult students from the neighborhoods surrounding First U. With only two exceptions, all of our students originally come from Mexico and Central America.

## **Attendance**

In our spring 2016 semester we averaged 16 students and 10 children (childcare) attending for 13 weeks or 328 total hours of instruction and 184.5 hours of childcare. In the Fall 2016 semester we average 12 students and 6 children (childcare) attending for 13 weeks or 202 total hours of instruction and 114 hours of childcare. We heard from many students that the political climate and the election results made many Spanish-speaking people afraid to stand out and sign up for classes. We continue to reward students with good attendance with \$10 Walmart Gift cards during our “end of the semester” potluck party. This policy has helped curb episodic attendees, making each class more consistent for both the students and the instructors.

## **Childcare**

We employ two child care workers for each session. They are hourly employees, have been fully vetted with background checks, and are certified in first aid. Child minders remain our largest program expense, but we could not draw in the adult students that we do if we did not have this service. We are one of very few programs that offer childcare during ESL classes.

## **Community Support & Collaboration**

In effort to address the questions about the fears and confusion of our adult students and their rights, we have begun collaboration with Encuentro which is a Hispanic Community Resource and El Centro de Igualdad & Derechos (Center for Equality & Rights) which offers Legal support to Hispanic in Albuquerque. We sponsored two information workshops led by these groups which included a light dinner. The spring workshop was attended by 25 to 30 students from ESL plus parents of children involved in the after school program. The fall workshop was only attended by three people –all from the ESL student population. We learned that too many people were afraid to attend for fear of standing out. The unused food was donated to St. Martin’s Hospitality Center the next morning. (\* See expenses on the following page.)

## **Funding**

Our program continues to receive funding from the Church budget, Sunday collection plate, personal donations, and sales from church functions. We are extremely grateful to everyone that supports our program in time, money, energy, and ideas, and we look forward to continuing this valuable program for many years to come.

<b>BEGINNING BALANCE:</b>	<b>\$6,636.50</b>
<b>DONATIONS 2016:</b>	<b>\$50.00</b>
<b>EXPENSES 2016</b>	
Childcare	\$870.53
Ink/Copies	\$93.26
Books/Materials	\$319.23
*Food/Beverages/Paper Goods	\$536.61
Reward Gift Cards	<u>\$385.00</u>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES:</b>	<b>\$2,205.33</b>
<b>ENDING BALANCE:</b>	<b>\$4,481.17</b>

## **After School Tutoring Program**

**Carol Oslund, Chair**

The After School Tutoring Program continues its mission of providing one-to-one tutoring, physical education, art, and enrichment activities to at-risk children who live in the neighborhood of the Church. The second through fifth grade students come from Montezuma School and are referred by their classroom teachers. All are in the Bilingual program. Tutoring is offered Mondays and Wednesdays from mid-September through April.

This year there are 20 children enrolled in the program. There are 32 regular tutors, 14 substitutes, and three more volunteers who provide an art program on Wednesdays and help with PE and art. Our academic focus is on reading, vocabulary, writing, and English language skills. Tutors also help children with their homework, math skills, and science projects.

Our program is also able to provide occasional enrichment activities for our students. In early November the Hawks Aloft organization presented an educational program on raptors and they will return in April for another program. Music, dance, and art activities are scheduled throughout the year.

We continue to celebrate at the Christmas holiday and at the end of the tutoring year by holding potluck dinners in the Social Hall for tutors, students and their families, and teachers from Montezuma.

At both of these events, each child receives a book which is at his or her reading level.

The ASTP is guided by a Steering Committee of six and powered by the love and devotion of our amazing volunteers.

# Covenant Groups

**Economic Reform Advocacy Group (ERAG)**

# Landscape Committee

# **Worship Team**

## **Judy Goering, Chair**

### **Committee:**

Christine Robinson–Sr. Minister  
Dan Lillie–Ministerial Intern  
Susan Peck–Director of Music  
Beth Elliot–Director of Membership  
Alex Long  
Brian Long  
Charlie Gravina  
Emma Elliot  
Ian Carrillo  
Jon Eldredge  
Kristin Satterlee  
Laura Bartolucci  
Vance Bass  
Raven Reed Starr

The Worship Committee coordinates all aspects of the Sunday worship services. The Worship Leaders assist the speaker or ministers by leading several parts of the Sunday Worship Services, offering a second “voice” each week and a bit of breathing room for the ministers.

The Service Coordinator is a member of the Worship Committee who volunteers to coordinate a particular service with the approval of the Worship Committee. The Service Coordinator is responsible for arranging all aspects of a Sunday Service.

When The Worship Team is responsible for planning a service, a Worship Coordinator or team is assigned. This group or team is responsible for all aspects of planning a worship service.

The Worship Coordinator’s main task is to assure a high quality program by:

- Working with the guest speaker(s)
- Developing the Order of Service
- Providing the office with publicity information
- Communicating with the lay leader(s) and other presenters
- Working with the music director to develop music for the service
- Coordinating the request for payment of the speaker, in any

## 2016 Activities

- We transitioned/renewed the committee by installing a new chair, brought on three new “youth” (under age 30) members and added three new worship leaders. This better reflects the views and makeup of our very diverse congregation.
- We surveyed the congregation on ideas for sermon topics and guest speakers. Survey forms are available at the welcome table.

## **Strategic Directions Task Force**

### **Prepared by:**

The Rev. Angela Herrera  
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In just two years since the congregation adopted its 2015-2020 strategic directions, we have made great progress together! The following update was prepared by the Board's Strategic Directions Task Force, which keeps a bird's eye view on the congregation's engagement with the goals it set.

### **Religious Education – Recommendations**

- Build up the staff and volunteer capacity of the RE program.
- Tailor our RE program to meet the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century families.
- Strengthen connections between the sanctuary and the RE program.
- Improve communications.

### **Religious Education – Update**

The RE program is thriving as it addresses the objectives above, as well the congregational goal stated in another section of the strategic plan: community building.

DRE Mia Noren designed and implemented a communications schema so RE participants would know where to look for information. She installed bulletin boards with teacher photos by every classroom door for communication, teacher recognition, and community building.

Since last spring, families have enjoyed monthly picnics on the playground. They were so popular that families requested continuing them indoors during the cold months! An RE swim party attracted 80+ attendees in September and another is planned for the winter months. RE barbeques have attracted similar crowds. Picnic tables will soon be installed on the playground to encourage parents and volunteers to linger and converse.

Teachers operate in teaching teams, part of a strategy to not only support volunteers and build up their capacity, but also to increase the sense of community in RE by bringing people together.

This was the second year of including a new Teacher Commissioning liturgy in worship in the fall, and teachers will be celebrated at a big “thank you” event in the spring.

Children’s chapel, which commenced at the time the strategic plan was formed, continues monthly, with leadership rotating among ministers and DRE, and support from Director of Music Susan Peck. The third annual minister-led, family-centered Worship in the Wilderness will take place next summer. A children’s table in the back of the sanctuary, a well-equipped family room with a live video/audio relay of worship, as well as regular family-friendly announcements from the pulpit also continue to nurture the connection between RE and the sanctuary.

Our vision for a children’s choir has proved to be challenging this year, with too few families able to commit to rehearsals. In an effort to tailor the children’s music program to the needs of 21st century families, we tried working on an ad-hoc model, in hopes that a short term choir with limited rehearsals, geared toward one special “performance” date might feel more doable. When that still didn’t work for families’ schedules, Mia and Susan set out to find new ways of incorporating music into children’s RE. Soon they will start kids out singing in the children’s chapel space each week, then rotate song-leader volunteers among classrooms so each group gets extra music in class once per month. A summer curriculum for kids based on social justice music is also in the works.

The RE Council is fully staffed with volunteers and now operates on a model of shared leadership with members holding portfolios of Community Building, Program Assessment, RE Buildings and Grounds, OWL, UU Kids Camp, and Curriculum.

The revamped church web site includes a more intuitive and appealing set of pages describing our RE programs and encouraging participation.

Mia has recently been accepted into the Religious Educator credentialing process with the UUA, which entails several days-long trainings, extensive study, and mentorship. She has a continuing education fund in the operating budget to support her in this professional development, part of building up the staff capacity and overall quality of RE and encouraging staff retention.

Mia has also developed a regional collaboration with DREs in New Mexico.

## Social Bonds — Recommendations

- Build a central repository for information and organizational support.
- Develop standard procedures for starting new groups.
- Provide year-round social bonding opportunities, especially during lulls in the program calendar.
- Enhance a culture of inclusion and action to initiate and support social bonds.

After the strategic plan was adopted, the Membership Development Director job description was revamped and 50% more hours added to the position. This paved the way for new initiatives and a dramatic increase in social bonding programming.

In 2016 alone, at least 25 new groups involving about 200 people were formed, and several activities, such as a group trip to a baseball game, were held.

All the church brochures have been updated and five new ones added. Brochures explain various activities and groups that are available to members. They are available at the Connections table every Sunday in the hallway between the Sanctuary and the Social Hall.

To continue encouraging new opportunities for social bonding, Beth Elliot, our Membership Director, has developed a New Group Procedure Packet for anyone interested in forming a new group or planning an activity. The Packet is a one stop shop for forming interest groups and is available on the website.

OneBody is a social media outlet designed for churches; kind a Facebook for members. A Beta test is currently underway and the program should be available soon. Keep an eye on the website if you'd like to participate. OneBody has the potential to serve as a central repository for information and organizational support.

Welcoming conversations were originally viewed as a means for new members to meet with longer-term members. The idea was that a member of the congregation might help a new

member find areas in which they might be interested in participating. Now all members are offered the opportunity to participate in one-to-one conversations. The conversations will be available every time there is a 5th Sunday in a month.

New members are now offered several options for integration into the church community. All new members are offered up to five personal contacts during their first year with First UU. These are growing more popular, with over 25 new members participating.

Roots classes are held on every 4th Sunday of each month. The classes cover UU beliefs, our congregation and our history.

### **Social Justice – Recommendations**

- Strengthen existing, long-standing Social Justice efforts by broadening and deepening involvement throughout the congregation.
- Enhance and leverage leadership experience within existing Social Justice programs and the Social Justice Council.
- Refine and evaluate the process to select a Social Justice focus issue.
- Engage in strategic partnerships to broaden program impact.
- Develop and encourage ways for First Unitarian to “walk our talk.”

### **Social Justice – Update**

After two years of increased organizing, recruitment and fundraising by the Social Justice Council (SJC), and thanks to the commitment of volunteer leaders, our congregation’s ongoing programs (including ESL, after school tutoring, and food pantry) AND its newest program (Family Promise) are thriving.

At the same time, the US presidential election has resulted in stress and worry for many social justice leaders and volunteers. The SJC held a caucus/potluck in January 2017 for all involved in Social Justice work at First Unitarian, to strengthen our sense of community, understand how each justice area is being impacted, raise spirits, and look for intersectionality (areas of overlap) in which we can support one another’s work.

Meanwhile in 2016, First Unitarian had a strong and positive presence at the Gay Pride parade, justice is a regular theme in worship, and our ministers continue to share their voices at other community events such as the interfaith Moral Monday event in Santa Fe in September, the Albuquerque Public School Board hearing on Transgender Student Protections back in March, and most recently, the Women's Rally in Albuquerque on the weekend of the presidential inauguration. (Groups from First Unitarian organized to attend both the rally in Abq and the march in Santa Fe).

In the Religious Education program, Susan Peck and Mia Noren are collaborating to create a children's summer curriculum based on social justice music, and RE children have raised money and collected hundreds books and bags of clothing for non-profit programs helping children in need in Abq. Justice is a regular theme of RE classes and projects.

The Diversity Task Force is in the midst of an expansion and re-visioning, to lead our anti-racism work into its next phase. In the last couple of years, anti-racism events and workshops have attracted at least 120 participants (not counting worship services on that theme).

We are still active with Albuquerque Interfaith, which is dedicated to systemic change, and ministerial intern Dan Lillie has formed a much-needed Core Organizing Team at First Unitarian to empower UUs in Abq Interfaith and other justice work.

The ESL and After-school Tutoring programs have developed a partnership with Encuentro, a community organization supporting immigrants. Together they are helping Encuentro reach the neighborhoods surrounding the church and are expanding First Unitarian's offerings with the addition of a Spanish language course in financial literacy.

The SJC has offered scholarship support for young people interested in the UUSC College of Social Justice and General Assembly. In a couple of cases they have dispersed funds to that effect. Overall, despite publicizing the availability of scholarship money and reaching out to La Amikoj (the church youth group), they have received very few applications. It may be, as many have noted, that young people today are overscheduled and reluctant to take on new projects or trips. Or it may be that with the continued strengthening of our RE program, we will eventually have youth who identify more strongly as UU and are therefore more inspired to take risks (such as a trip to an unfamiliar place) as they live out their faith.

## **Strategic Directions for Foundational Efforts: Volunteer Development – Recommendations**

- Develop the intentional volunteer training and management to support church programs and enhance individual skills
- Extend knowledge and training throughout the church

### **Volunteer Development – Update**

Members and friends volunteering are what keep the wheels turning at First Unitarian. Our Membership Director led a Sunday worship service in August, 2016, around the theme of “service” which resulted in a sign-up of 25 individual volunteers. We continue to have people visit the Connections table and sign up for volunteer activities. These folks are channeled to fill vacancies in our most critical groups.

A systematic approach to volunteer development and training remains to be designed and implemented.

## **Strategic Directions for Foundational Efforts: Communication Technology – Recommendations**

- Improve the church website to function as an information clearinghouse for all church programs and activities
- Grow our knowledge and use of social media in support of church programs
- Invest in communication infrastructure to keep us up-to-date and effective

### **Communications Technology – Update**

The church website has been overhauled to include a much better look and feel, and to enable online donations. As a part of this process, a number of information handling processes were improved—for example, an outline of our strategic plan and the progress we’re making to achieve our goals are easily updatable, and can be found readily through the new drop-down tabs.

Our Audio/Visual Team has been successful at upgrading our use of communications technology including implementation of high definition video, a new camera/perspective from the front wall (looking back into the audience), and a number of new and improved microphones. The team also improved and organized the associated equipment storage, and logged all A/V inventory in the past year. They continue to work on the processes for melding slides with video footage, and for sharing the video recordings with our out-of-town stakeholders. Also, the video team has worked to keep live coverage of the second service for the family room and sanctuary foyer. In the past all that was provided was a locked down shot of the stage/podium. Volunteer staffing is still an issue but the team remains hopeful. They did all this while maintaining a very high rate of same-day-delivery performance.

We are increasing our use of social media to build connections in our congregation. Our Facebook page has several groups to serve families with children, young adults, and our social justice organizing group. New members are finding us through Facebook. Our Membership Development Director is launching an on-line service, Our Church Family (referred to sometimes by its original name, One Body), which will be another way for church members to be in touch with each other, get information about different groups and activities, and update their personal information with the church.