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As 2019 began, there were three large projects ahead of us:

1) find an Associate Minister;
2) raise over a million dollars in pledges (another $235,000 for the construction project and then the whole operating fund); and
3) see the construction project through.

As you heard from Meghan (Shattuck, Board President): Check, check, and check. Or at least, pretty darn close. I want to say a few more words about those high points this year.

The Associate Minister search was an enormous undertaking, and the search team was heroic in the hours it put in with me from January-May, writing an exhaustive congregational record, vetting the twenty-plus applicants, and hosting four finalists for in-person interviews in February and March. It’s hard to describe the amount of time and energy this took. Our search team was a diverse group in age, theology, and race. Its members reflected a wide array of the congregation’s commitments, including social justice and ministry to children and families.

This fall, we concluded that long search process by celebrating the arrival of Bob LaVallee, the search committee’s unanimous choice. Bob is off to a great start. He and I have invested many hours this fall in his orientation and in developing as a ministry team. And he has jumped right into supporting ongoing programs, launching new ones, and being a voice for justice and ally-ship in the wider community.

The Renewed Social Hall. Much has been said already about this big project. It is such a delight to see the hall now and remember that all this hard work has been for a great cause. Our building dedication party for the hall included a surprise wedding, which linked the hall’s past with its future and reminded us that it is still a sacred space, and that it holds the memory of all the sacred moments that have happened within those walls, just as we the congregation do.

As big projects do, this one has both revealed the strength and health of our congregation, and has also at times stressed us all out. A thriving church has many groups and programs, each of which bring their own hopes and needs (and stuff) to a transformed space. Staff have yet to be trained by the general contractor on how to the building’s many components work. Policies and procedures remain to be developed, tested, and fine-tuned. It is important to remember that we will be “moving in” to our social hall for the next year as we figure these things out. So let us be patient and kind with each other as we navigate this change. It was the same way when we built this sanctuary. That seems like a long time ago now, doesn’t it?

With our campus in the best shape it’s been in years, a new ministry team settled, and an overall positive spirit, we are starting the new year in a good place as a church.

One of the areas we continue to pay attention to is ministry with children and families. Participation in RE has sharply declined in Unitarian Universalist congregations across the country in the last several years. There are many theories as to why, but no one fully understands this change yet.
We are seeing a similar trend here. The ministers, RE staff, and RE council have responded with a variety of creative approaches, listening for feedback and testing out new possibilities. We’ve adopted theological themes, used both in the sanctuary and in RE, as well as in other programming to increase the sense of connectedness across areas of church life and make spiritual programming available beyond Sunday mornings, such as in the Potluck Theology program Mia Noren created last year.

We’ve begun experimenting with fully intergenerational services, trying them out on fifth Sundays (when a month has five Sundays) throughout this program year to see if that’s something that might bring us all together. RE staff have increased opportunities for community bonding among families, with events such as pool parties and BBQs, which have sometimes had strong attendance. As a lifelong UU and someone who returned to church in the early 2000’s in order to raise my own children as UUs, providing meaningful ministry to young families is really important to me.

Meghan mentioned some of the other things we will turn our attention to in 2020: the strategic directions we’ll all work on together and meeting our data management needs as a thriving 21st century congregation. I look forward to seeing us begin to translate all of that into ways of serving and being together.

For now, I’ll conclude with the word I think best describes the current state of the church: evolving. We are evolving: adapting and growing, transitioning and leaning into our size (which is hovering around 840 members after another growth spurt in 2017) and we are leaning into these times. Evolving takes effort and creativity, vision and courage. It takes a lot of energy. Evolving is often grounded in the deep faith that what matters most transcends our lifetimes, and is therefore the work and the joy of our lifetimes. Therefore, in these times it is also important to remember to rest and celebrate together; to be fed and refilled.

May the coming year find us resting, praying, breaking bread, dancing, dreaming, scheming, and working side by side in a spirit of love, faith and hope.
I am deeply grateful to have had the opportunity to serve as congregation president this past year. It has been a privilege and a joy to work with the board, the staff, and the congregation. This year's board was both thoughtful and bold. They took time to consider the many facets of issues, and set audacious goals.

This felt like meaningful work amidst the background of a world where too much is going wrong. It's so easy to become downtrodden. Serving our congregation—in any capacity—allows us to focus on what we can do. And wow, can we ever do a lot in this congregation!

We remodeled our Social Hall, we raised more than a million dollars, every camper made it to camp regardless of ability to pay, we brought Bob on board, we gave out more food than ever before, we helped adults and kids learn, we housed families, and we served and drank a whole lot of coffee—to name just a few things.

One of my favorite things about serving on the board is seeing so many caring, committed people do the work of this church. We all pour our hearts into this place, and you can feel the love everywhere. It's in the soup we eat at camp fundraisers, the coffee we sip at coffee hour, the songs we sing together, the warmth and light of the chalice, the wild shouts of joy on the playground, and so much more. It really is everywhere. And it's because this congregation is something special. It is an entirely futile task to identify every single volunteer, because there is always someone quietly working with care behind the scenes. We see you. And I am so grateful. I want to thank every one of you for making this place as special as it is.

2019 Priorities

The board gathered right after the annual meeting last year, and set out to define our priorities for 2019.

- **Stewardship Support**

  We knew we needed a larger-than-average increase in our operating budget for 2020, and also needed to close the gap on the Social Hall remodel. Resourcing stewardship was the top priority of the board this year, with 3 members joining the radical generosity team. The congregation stepped up in a big way, in donations of both time and treasure. We are also grateful to the endowment fund committee for the use of a portion of the endowment distribution in the operations budget for some specific items where help was needed. The board will continue to work with the endowment fund committee to identify longer-term impact items where the endowment distribution could help, or to reinvest the funds to help grow the endowment for generations to come.

- **Integrated Data System**

  Previously, the endowment fund committee engaged a consultant to help understand
how to grow the endowment. Their key recommendation above all else was to update our data systems. A financial planning expert on the radical generosity team concluded the same thing. Underpinning so much of the work of both staff and committees is the ability to keep and access good records. We expect improved systems and workflows to reduce staff hours spent searching and compiling, and to improve the congregation's experience when seeking information. As a result of these recommendations, the board formed a 4-person task force to go find the right solution for our church. The task force is in its final selection of a system, and transition will begin this spring, with the systems team continuing on in 2020.

- **Support Associate Minister hiring process**
  This important work began in 2018, and carried over. Two board members participated on the search and selection committee. This had the fantastic result of selecting Bob LaVallee as our multifaceted and compassionate Associate Minister.

- **Building Transition**
  The work of the construction oversight was in great hands with the many involved teams. The board didn't have much to oversee with such dedicated and engaged teams. So, we planned for how to support the transitions between buildings, to be proactive about challenges we might face as we navigated reduced space, and then subsequently expanded into new space. We kept climate-change awareness in policies, practices, and as we outfitted the new space.

- **Appropriate resourcing for financial operations**
  In 2018 we were finding that there just were not enough hours for staff to get all the financial work done. As a result we focused on increasing the staff hours allotted for bookkeeping work. We also navigated the many staff transitions of 2019. One of the key recommendations here as well was to ensure we get the integrated data system transition planned carefully and implemented.

- **Educating ourselves as a board on privilege, diversity, and being welcoming**
  The board all agreed that we had work to do educating ourselves. We asked a sub-team of the board members to help us with this by coming up with exercises and discussions to help us increase our awareness of privilege and power systems. We did this with the goal of becoming more welcoming and inclusive to all who walk through our doors.

- **Continuing the work of policy & bylaw review**
  The stewards of our collective wisdom and institutional memory are the policy and bylaw review team. They carefully review the policy and bylaws for both style and substance. A large part of their work in 2019 was condensing the policy manual down to a single style guideline they had defined and documented. Care was taken to ensure that style fixes did not cause substantive changes to policy. These policies help guide us in all our work. It is remarkable how much information is contained in the policy manual. If you have a bit of time, it actually is quite interesting to read.

**2020 and Beyond**

This year, our new board will work on several items. I am so grateful that Heather Clark is willing to be the congregational president in 2020, as she has been invaluable and engaged as vice president of our board this year. The board will define their priorities at the board retreat in early February. We have a few key items known for 2020, and many to be determined.

- **DFO Transition**
  We will be supporting the transition to a new DFO due to Paul's retirement after many
years as our first ever DFO. These will be big shoes to fill. Thank you Paul for your many years of dedicated service, late nights, early mornings, and doing a bit of everything.

- **Strategic Direction**

  It's time for us to go through another strategic direction and planning process as a congregation! Our last strategic plan was written for 2015-2020. Our strategic directions had a substantial impact, guiding the priorities we choose each year as a board, and allocating staff hours to achieve these goals. Everyone's input will be needed in this process. Please do start thinking about where you would like to see the church in 5 years.

- **Volunteer Engagement**

  A discussion around thanking and engaging volunteers emerged in both the board and in the radical generosity team. We hope to dedicate some time and focus to this in 2020. This is yet another area where an improved data system will greatly help us.

  It is amazing what we are capable of as a congregation when we are engaged and dedicated.
Summary of Financial Status

This year has been one of change and growth for the church finances. We have successfully funded and remodeled the church Social Hall. This included demands on our Facilities Manager Mark Fickler, who was often called to meet and facilitate various workers who needed access to or information about the facilities. Our physical plant suffered some injustices, such as a broken Social Hall window and theft which resulted in the installation of an upgraded security system. We hired a new Associate Minister in the fall and 2020 will be his first full time year with us. We have successfully managed the 2019 budget to "break even," even with some of these unexpected pressures on the expense side.

The actual income from all sources (pledges, contributions, rental, miscellaneous, and endowment income was $936,351 or 1.1% higher than anticipated. Total expenses were $928,524 which was 0.3% more than our budget. This resulted in a surplus of $7827. The back side of this sheet has a summary of operations for the year.

Finance Committee and Changes for 2019

As the church has grown—and in the interest of compliance with accepted financial standards (as required by the church policy manual) - a review of our financial procedures and practices was undertaken and resulted in several changes. The Director of Operations and Finance (DOF) has prepared draft procedures for several of the church’s financial operations. These are under review and they will bring clarity to the processes and ensure new staff has a resource for questions during their orientation period.

In addition to the monthly review of the financial statements with the Director of Operations and Finance, the Committee has begun development of a procedure for review of each month’s bank reconciliations. This review will be completed by the Treasurer. It will result in a timely review of the church’s cash flow, bank transactions, and any inconsistencies which require attention. Additional accounting work this year included preparation for the audit of 2019 church financial status. This included preparation of the compilation of 2018 financial data. This data was delivered to our auditors who, after their review and confirmation of completeness, will use it as a basis for the 2019 financial audit.

A new accountant, Reinier Rodriquez, was hired this year and has been invaluable in reconciling the Church’s long neglected financial statements and bank reconciliations.

Focus for 2020

There are three main focuses for this year:

1. Fully implement the revised financial practices to ensure compliance with generally accepted accounting practices.
2. Support and facilitate the 5 yearly audit by an accounting firm. This audit will take place during 2020 and will be of the 2019 financial statements
3. Hire and install a new DOF.

The generosity and support of the Board and Congregation has ensured a fully funded and functioning financial future for First Unitarian Church. Thank you.
## 2019 Operating Fund Performance
### January 1 to December 31

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Budget</th>
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<th>Actual</th>
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<th>Variance</th>
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<td>Amount</td>
<td>Prct</td>
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<td>Miscellaneous</td>
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<td>Previous Year Surplus</td>
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<td>Endowment</td>
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<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
<td>$926,156</td>
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<td>$936,351</td>
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<td>$10,195</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
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### Expenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operating Expenses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Payroll</td>
<td>$693,035</td>
<td>74.8%</td>
<td>$681,485</td>
<td>72.8%</td>
<td>$11,550</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program Staff</td>
<td>$421,640</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
<td>$417,329</td>
<td>44.6%</td>
<td>$4,311</td>
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<td>Administrative Staff</td>
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<td>Facilities Staff</td>
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<td>RE &amp; Childcare Staff</td>
<td>$37,162</td>
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<td>3.1%</td>
<td>$7,775</td>
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<td>Other Employer Costs</td>
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<td>3.4%</td>
<td>$5,011</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
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<td>Operations</td>
<td>$130,700</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
<td>$151,885</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>($21,185)</td>
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<td>Office Expenses</td>
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<td>Physical Plant</td>
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<td>Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religious Education</td>
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<td>Music Program</td>
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<td>Councils &amp; Committees</td>
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<td>Accounting Firm Services</td>
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<td><strong>Total Operating Expenses</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Operating Surplus (Deficit)</strong></td>
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<td>$41,706</td>
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<td>$8,731</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Expenses</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>$32,795</td>
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<td>$33,879</td>
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<td>$904</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property Financing Costs</th>
<th>Moved to the Capital Fund</th>
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<tr>
<td>Denominational Commitments</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Total Expenses</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>$926,156</td>
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<td>$928,524</td>
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<td>$2,368</td>
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</table>
When I was starting out in seminary, I was mentored by Rev. Abhi Janamachi, who had just taken a position as Senior Minister at a large church in Maryland. I asked him what he planned to change first at his new church and he looked at me incredulously. “Change first?” he said. “Before I change anything I’m going to listen to this congregation for a year.”

With that in mind, I spent my first five months at First Unitarian simply trying to listen and learn about the church and I’ll continue to “learn the church” for the rest of my first year. Job one is listening to the congregation, whether they are speaking as individuals, or as hardworking committees, or in small group ministries, or simply speaking through their committed labor. What I’ve heard impresses me. I see spiritual maturity show up all over this church and in many different ways. And I can’t wait to hear more.

This is my first experience as a minister in a large church setting and I’m coming to understand just how different large churches can be. The church I served before coming to First UABQ had 170 members and by this time last year I knew almost everyone’s names. It’ll be a little while before that’s the case here. Regardless, I experienced a sincere and warm welcome from this congregation, for which I’m grateful.

I also feel listened to as well, and I want to hold up a particular instance of being listened to. From the moment I arrived, Rev. Angela invested a serious amount of intentional time in developing our working relationship. I’m grateful to her for this, and I’m pleased that we’re off to such a good start. Rev. Angela shared our covenant in the December Messenger and I recommend that everyone read it. I’m also grateful for the support of my advisory committee, who listen well and reflect back with wisdom.

My specific work includes leading worship once or twice a month, supervising our Director of Religious Education and our Director of Membership and Communications, and supporting the church’s various justice initiatives (internally and externally). I attend meetings for the Board of Trustees, support Radical Generosity and Denominational Affairs, and coordinate our Adult Faith Formation activities. I’m particularly proud of the new group for men that emerged after I preached on masculinity.

2020 is not going to be an easy year, but I’m carried by the fact that I am journeying with so many committed UUs. Let’s go do the work.
The mission of the music program is to inspire and support worship through high quality music in a variety of styles, to encourage church members to participate in congregational music, and to build connections with the wider community through music.

The music program includes two paid staff: Susan Peck (Director of Music) and Gabriel Longuinhos (pianist). Regular volunteers include:

- **Chalice Singers** (45-50 singers who participate in worship monthly)
- **Sol Singers** (12-20 singers who make rehab/nursing home visits, sing for hospice patients and memorials, occasionally lead singing in worship)
- **Spare Parts** (7-12 musicians who participate in worship monthly)
- **Chamber Playing Group** (around 12 musicians who play occasionally in worship and at special events)
- **RE Family Sing song-leaders** (8-10 singers who rotate weekly during the RE school year)
- **Ad Hoc UUkulele Ensemble** (8-20 musicians who provided music for worship twice over the summer, and grew into the monthly Folk Song Circle)
- **Soloists and Substitutes** (12 musicians)

**Highlights and Accomplishments of 2019**

Susan coordinated a wide variety of in-house and guest musicians—ranging from gospel to early music—for weekly worship services, special events, fundraisers, and community events. Church-sponsored concerts included: Finnish folk duo Vellamo in a coffee-house concert, Gamelan Encantada, Franc Chewiwie and his Latin All-Stars for Social Justice Council fundraiser, and Native American musician Randy Granger.

In the first half of the year, Susan completed the UUA Wellspring program for spiritual development, with a small online cohort of UU religious professionals meeting biweekly to practice deep listening, ground each other in UU theology and history, and share personal spiritual practices. She attended the AUUMM conference in Denver, completing the second year of the Music Leadership Certification Program and launching her 3rd and final year of the program. She also served as co-director for NM Women’s Chorus.

First U hosted rehearsals and a potluck for the 2nd Annual One NM Gospel Choir concert, featuring V. Michael McKay and Treva Jones, in partnership with NM Black History Organizing Committee. Several UU members participated in the choir, and many more attended the concert as part of the NM Black History Month programming in February.

We hosted UU songleader and social activist Matt Meyer in May for workshops on organization for social justice work, and justice-based worship design. Susan coordinated a Music Sunday service on May 19 with the Chalice Choir and chamber ensemble performing *i thank You God*.

Several choir members participated in a June 14 concert with the One World Singers from Denver, directed by UU colleague Keith Arnold.

Susan led a song at the Lights for Liberty march and rally on July 12 in El Paso, with Linda Chase (Sol Singers) and Catherine Massey (director of music, Las Cruces UU). Later in July, she volunteered as a music instruction assistant at Roots Summer Leadership Academy, a program of the NM Black History Organizing Committee.

First U presented the Alan Stringer Memorial concert in September, with the Chalice Choir, NM Women’s Chorus, and NM Gay Men’s Chorus, as a fundraiser for Earth Web and Welcoming Congregations. At the end of the month, she provided music for worship at our Socorro branch.

The last quarter of 2019, Susan applied and was awarded a grant from the UU Funding Project for Social Responsibility to support the One NM Gospel Choir concert.

In November she attended the LREDA FallCon in Baltimore with Mia Noren; and participated in the Interfaith Thanksgiving Service and benefit for HopeWorks, hosted this year by St. Paul Lutheran church.

The end of 2019 launched planning with the NM Black History Organizing Committee for the 3rd annual One NM Gospel Choir concert in February 2020, this year featuring Kelontae Gavin.
Director of Religious Education
Mia Noren

Staffing

There were some staffing changes in the RE department this year. Mia Noren completed her 5th year as DRE, Alana Rodriguez continues as RE Assistant, and on September 1st, took on the additional role of Youth Programs Coordinator with 9 hours per week. Arianna Espinoza continues as our RE Aide, returning after a maternity leave. The childcare pool is at 11.

Mia Noren completed her Credentialing Program and was awarded Credentialed status in April. She attended the Mountain Desert District DRE retreat in March and was elected Chair-Elect of MDD LREDA. That means that after this coming July, she will serve as Chair in 2021, and Past Chair in 2022. She attended General Assembly in Spokane, WA in June, and the Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA) Conference in Baltimore, MD, in November. She completed a Renaissance Module on Worship in November. Alana Rodriguez received her degree in Early Childhood Education with a concentration in Program Administration from CNM in September.

Registration Numbers

During the academic year, from September 2018 through August 2019, there were 137 individual children registered in the program. An additional 17 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 and youth were managed on Sundays by 69 adult volunteers (teachers, advisors, Coming of Age Advisors, OWL facilitators), ten paid childcare workers, and three staff.

Attendance Numbers

Individual instances of attendance in RE classes for the year for first service totaled 677, and for the second service totaled 1,141. For OWL and Coming of Age, individual instances of attendance for the year equaled 356, with 64 attendances for OWL childcare. Total instances of child and youth attendance in an RE program equaled 2,174 individual occurrences. The total instances of adult attendance in an RE program numbered 1,031 individual occurrences. These numbers refer to programming only, and do not include attendance at community events. Attendance isn’t taken for Family Sing, but those numbers reflect the number of children showing up for class that day- most children take part in it, along with one or more parents or caregivers, and many of the teachers. RE maintains background checks on Family Sing volunteers, but that program is managed by Susan Peck.

Religious Education Council

The RE Council continues to operate with portfolios, extending the effectiveness of the DRE and benefitting and enhancing RE programming. Mia meets individual members as needed to discuss their portfolio work and to plan, and progress is reported on and discussed at the meetings. This was the first year of Council leadership for Benita Terrell. Eric Keiter and Wendy Small joined the RE Council.

Summer

This year we stepped away from monthly themes for the summer and based our lessons on a program called Books and Cooks, which featured a story that represents one culture. After talking about the story, the class cooked a dish from that culture. The classes were conducted in the one-room schoolhouse style, and youth were invited to help younger children with things like cutting and measuring. Adult sign-up was a challenge, and staff filled in for many of the classes. Our average attendance numbers for this summer were 10 for 1st service and 14 for 2nd service, mainly unchanged from 2018 numbers of 9 at 1st service and 15 at 2nd service.

Fall and Spring

We returned to an age-based classroom format for Fall and Spring classes and continued to staff with Teacher Teams. We had the same situation as in 2018 with barely any Pre-K children, and so that class remained a combination of Pre-K, K, & 1st graders. All our teacher teams filled up quickly, except for the 11:00 PKK1 team, which operated with two teachers and floaters. Some of our parents signed up regularly as floaters, hall monitors, and as other special volunteers. There are some families
that didn’t volunteer at all. Staff occasionally stepped in to fill in vacancies. Linda Bairstow of Animal Advocates is no longer conducting Critter Club, and now regularly presents Critter Club activities and programming for most of our teacher holidays.

Youth

Mia changed the format of our youth programming. In response to less youth attending La Amikoj and a steady attendance in mid-high, the 11:00 youth programming was made “All-Youth.” Youth develop relationships with each other at camp and then they are separated when they return, which doesn’t make sense. Having a youth group in which all are welcome more closely follows the camp model. Once this change was made, barely any high school youth came to the La Amikoj programming, and so that was changed as well. La Amikoj youth said they wanted to meet less and for a shorter amount of time. They are now meeting on the second Sunday, which is an off-site youth lunch, and the fourth Sunday, the topic being more youth-directed. In the summer, we experimented with a monthly off-site social activity for youth which was so popular that we decided to continue it during the rest of the year.

Another change Mia made to the all-youth class was to assign themes every week. They now know and are prepared for a RE week, a social time week, and a social justice week. Due to our schedule of teacher holidays and intergenerational services on 5th Sundays, they rarely meet on a fourth Sunday, but if they do, the format is in a “Things you don’t learn at school or home” format. For instance, in November, Kris Kennedy came in and talked to the youth about money and finances, which they had requested.

In addition, High School youth attended two youth conventions - Fall Con in Ft. Collins, CO and Spring Con in Los Alamos, NM. Many youth and volunteers participated in the Pride Parade Prep Night and subsequent Pride Parade in June.

Advisers

Because of the changes made to youth programming, our youth advisors are now free to be in any of the groups. One benefit of this is that our mid-high youth get to know the advisors who had previously only met with the high school youth. In the past, there seemed to be a barrier after Coming of Age, resulting in many of our youth dropping out. This way, they can continue to attend with every-one they have built relationships with and participate in special meetings as high school aged youth with advisors they already know.

We currently have seven youth advisors—four returning and three new ones. An appreciation lunch is being planned for advisers in January or February 2020 - it’s always a challenge to come up with a date that will work for most everyone.

In 2019, Mia took each group of OWL facilitators out for lunch separately, in order to more clearly hear their feedback about their classes.

Community

Our annual RE BBQ was moved to mid-September so as not to conflict with school-year-end activities and family vacations. It was again a successful event with families, staff and all volunteers invited. Our RE Pool Party kicked off the curriculum year on August 10th. It was at West Mesa Pool and at least 40 were in attendance. This year’s Halloween Party was not such a success - youth insisted on planning it and running it for youth only, but then no youth had the time to do the planning. Next year we’ll return to our previous format. Youth will have a hand in planning parts of it and it will be open to all ages.

UU Kids Camp

The Camp Scholarship fundraising team handled fundraising events throughout the year and raised $3900.00 for camp scholarships, which was enough to award scholarships to all 17 campers who asked for help in the amount of $5,889.00. The program itself was a success, hosting 44 children and youth and twelve adults. Numerous Albuquerque-based volunteers helped to make camp happen.

RE buildings and grounds

This year’s Building and Grounds efforts included refurbishing our nursery. The nursery may be the first room that a new young family sees, and it was getting worn out. New paint on walls, trim, and doors, a new sink in the nursery bathroom, a new sink and cabinet in the main room, and new base cove molding was installed.

Due to ongoing security problems, the La Amikoj room doors were replaced with a more secure door, and security bars were installed over the windows.

Two volunteers, Brie-Anne Stout and Amanda Harper, continue to care for the playground area and continually work to make improvements. They also schedule playground clean-up days.
There were 56 people who joined or re-joined First Unitarian in 2019.

When guests express interest in joining the church, they visit the Welcome Table where a volunteer from the Membership Committee is available to answer questions, provide information, and assist in filling out paperwork. New Members fill out a Ready to Join form. Once the information from the Ready to Join form is entered into the church database, the new members are contacted by the Membership Director, who invites them to participate in a Joining Ceremony, which 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 invited to have a one-on-one meeting with the Membership Director regarding how to best make their membership meaningful and to find ways to participate that best suit their skills and availability. They are also invited to participate in the Welcoming Conversations program, where they can meet one-on-one with someone who has been a member for a long time.

The New Member Recognition Ceremonies and the New Member Dinners took place in the spring and the fall. Two times a year, new members are formally welcomed in the New Member Recognition Ceremony during Sunday services. The dinners promote social bonds and allow new members to meet church leaders and get general information about the community and programs. It also includes a time for small group ministry. Six-month and one-year anniversaries of joining the church are recognized with contact from the Membership Director.

Orientation tours continue to be offered on the third Sunday of each month following services. This is a tour of the campus that includes information about the faith, the congregation, and the community. There have not been very many people showing up for them, so the program is being evaluated and revamped for 2020. New members and others new to the church may also participate in UU101, an intensive set of classes that inform people about what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist today, with discussions about the theology and history of our religion.

Other initiatives to reach out to and involve those new to the church included New Member November and a New Member Facebook group. Both of these initiatives were started as a way to help those new to the church find connections with other new folks as they navigate the groups and activities of the church.

Connections Sundays continue for two weekends in the fall. We had 40 groups participate in Connections Sundays, allowing the congregation and community to learn more about programs, sign-up to participate, or receive more information.

There have been numerous new groups, events and programs in 2019 formed to build social bonds including Souls in the Middle, Intergenerational Game Nights, and new Extended Families. There were fewer events due to the loss of the Social Hall to construction.

The combining of the Membership Director and Communications Director positions in October has led to an increased ability to inform the congregation about all of the programs within the church and events available to them in our community. The increased hours for the membership position means there is an increased opportunity to connect with those new to the church and fully integrate them into our beloved community.
The Justice Coordinator aimed to increase visibility, coordination, and participation in First Unitarian’s Justice programming. While supporting current programs, the coordinator emphasized the importance of building relationships within the community, making the current work visible and accessible, and coordinating events both within the church and in the larger community.

The Justice Coordinator received requests from the congregation and wider community and assisted in prioritizing and coordinating the programs in which the church participated. She also provided information about programs going on in the community particularly through the Activism group on First U Connect. The coordinator was responsible for a Justice Page in the monthly Messenger newsletter.

In 2019, the Justice Coordinator worked with Religious Education and the UUSC liaison for First Unitarian, Sue Spaven, to bring the UUSC’s Guest at Your Table program to the congregation. She also worked with the Social Justice Council to organize the Change for the Future vote at the Annual Meeting.

The main project of the Justice Coordinator was ABQ FaithWorks Collaborative. Working in collaboration with 8 other local congregations, the program became a fully functioning non-profit organization and hired a social worker to help the participating faith communities with programs, education, and support for marginalized communities. This team also is working in conjunction with numerous local organizations. The social worker, Valerie Griego, has already had an impact through helping individuals coming to First Unitarian by signing them up for resources. She established a plan that allows the churches to provide discounted bus passes. Other programs of ABQ FaithWorks included a tour of the Westside Shelter, a volunteer training, and information on the cities plans and the tiny house program.

The Justice Coordinator position was not filled when Beth Elliot departed the congregation in September. Our Associate Minister, the Rev. Bob LaVallee has taken on the Justice portfolio for the foreseeable future, or until funding becomes available for the position.
2019 ENDOWMENT FUND GROWTH

Endowment Fund Committee
Pat Diem, Andy Apple,
Howell Lind, Cheri Plavnick,
Linda Suydam

ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Andy Apple
Cheri Plavnick
Howell Lind
Linda Suydam
The purpose of the Endowment Committee is to build and hopefully grow financial assets to assure the church’s financial stability into the future after many of us have departed and entrusted the health of this church to future generations. The Endowment Committee is charged in the Bylaws with recommending and overseeing distributions from the fund and to “promote the growth of the Endowment Fund, encourage and accept gifts to the Endowment Fund, and ensure that all gifts are acknowledged, honored, and properly recorded for posterity in accordance with the policies of the Church.” The assets in the Endowment Fund are invested in socially responsible funds managed by the UUA.

The slide below shows the current financial status of the Endowment Fund. The fund grew this year by $300K from a combination of new gifts and stock market growth. We received bequests to the fund this year from Robert Milos and Zoe Walton in the combined amount of $176K. With beneficial Stock market growth of $120K and $19K Endowment income contribution to the operating fund we ended 2019 with a healthy balance of $912.7K.

Early this year it was suggested that the Endowment Fund be considered as a source for loans to fund capital projects. The Endowment committee contacted the UU Common Fund to see if this was possible and learned that if our Bylaws allowed for borrowing that we could do it. We then investigated if other UU churches were using their Endowment Fund as a source for borrowing.
We contacted six large UU churches with endowment balances from $300K to $3M to learn how they manage their endowment and if they use their endowments as an internal source for loans. None of these churches were using their Endowments as a loan source. At the same time we gathered information about Best Practices in the management of Endowment funds and how these other large churches manage their funds. We found our Endowment fund was being managed in much the same way as other churches except for consistently using endowment income for operating needs.

We reviewed the findings shown on the slide below with the Board and do not intend to pursue the suggestion that we use Endowment funds as a loan source further at this time. The general findings were that most of the income from Endowment is used for longer term projects not funded in the operating budget. Some were focused on social justice outreach in the community and others for building maintenance.

You may remember in the Endowment committee’s past reports, we recommended to the Board that the 4% of allowable Endowment Fund income be used to support longer term church needs beyond the annual operating budget. The Endowment Committee continues to encourage the use of Endowment income for longer term church needs and growth of the fund. One such use would be to more adequately fund Campus Care so that our recently renovated Social Hall and other buildings have timely maintenance and do not fall into disrepair requiring future capital campaigns to maintain our campus facilities. This year the Board has recommended that $15,000 of the available endowment fund income be used to support the operating budget. The EC agreed to the Board’s suggestion. This leaves another $10K+ income that could be made available for campus care expenses as the Board has reduced campus care to $5,000 for 2020. To use these funds for this purpose does not require a Congregational vote. The decision to use these funds for campus care is within the purview of the Board with consultation with the Endowment Committee. Using these funds for campus care addresses longer term campus needs and does not diminish the Endowment Fund principal amount.

- Endowment funds were not used as a source for borrowing.

- Other churches occasionally used a portion of their Endowment income for operations when special conditions warranted.

- Best Practices suggest segmenting the funds and income into portions for
  - Longer term needs
  - Social Outreach

- Endowment income most often used to fund projects not covered by operating budget. Many were facilities maintenance and community social outreach projects.

- One church makes no withdrawal from their Endowment
Our projections based on Estate Gift intention forms suggest that our Endowment in the future could grow to well over $2.5 Million. We believe there may be others who have already included First U in their estate plans and if that is the case, we are encouraging members to complete an Estate Gift intention form to let the Endowment Committee or church office know. Common methods for including the church in an estate plan are beneficiary on a retirement account, life insurance policy or bequest in your will.

Thank you for your generosity and assuring that First Unitarian is financially supported into perpetuity.

THANK YOU
FOR YOUR GENEROSITY AND COMMITMENT TO
FIRST UNITARIAN
Financial Review Committee

No report
Landscape Committee

Steve Phillips, Chair
Members
Vance Bass
Judy Bentley
Andrew Fearnside
Chris Mayo
Lucy Silva
Bill Slakey

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 2020 elections, the LSC has developed a slate of 11 candidates. Seven are new nominees for vacancies and four are nominated for a second term.

2019 Activities
The LSC continued to develop its focus on raising awareness about opportunities for leadership in the church. The committee participated in Connection Sundays, offered a pulpit editorial on the theme of “Stepping Up,” and followed those up with information and outreach after services. LSC members also attended New Member events during the year. As a result of these efforts, we saw another increase in members actively seeking out leadership opportunities, as opposed to being recruited. The LSC also supported including new perspectives in leadership, especially on the Board.

As noted in previous years, the LSC sees a critical need for a primary resource to record church members’ activities, skills and interests in order to identify potential leaders and to help create a path to leadership as members become more active in the church. We are excited to see how this need, likely in the form of new software and a database, will be filled in 2020; and we’re excited to participate in using this new resource to cultivate new leaders within the church.

2020 Vision
The LSC is interested in increasing communication between Members, between volunteer groups and standing committees, and between committee members in 2020. The LSC will be presenting quarterly round-table discussions on lay leadership as a stepping stone to leadership. We invite all Members with any interest in learning about the work and vision of the church to come to those events, which we’ll begin promoting in February.

As an expression of our church-wide exploration of and response to white supremacy and white privilege in our nation, our organized faith and our own church, we are actively seeking to recruit under-represented voices for positions within Standing Committees in 2020. Step up! Nurture our beloved community’s continued growth by growing your practice of leadership.
Personnel Committee

No report
Radical Generosity Team
Kathryn Probasco, Chair

Members
Kris Kennedy
Eric Renz-Whitmore
David Wilson
Margo Milleret
Meghan Shattuck
Heather Clark
Raven Reed Starr
The Rev. Angela Herrera
The Rev. Bob LaVallee

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.

During the spring and summer, we continued to promote the capital campaign to renovate our Social Hall, raising $197,351 to close the remaining gap between expenses and pledges.

This fall, we also conducted the congregation’s annual pledge drive, and are pleased to inform the congregation that as of December 4, we had received a record $929,839 in pledges towards our annual operating budget. Over the course of this year, the Radical Generosity team raised a grand total of $1,127,190 for First Unitarian’s operating and capital campaigns.

The Radical Generosity team also worked with staff to develop reliable procedures for acknowledging and thanking donors, adopt more inclusive criteria for lead donor status, offer both adult and youth financial literacy classes, and plan future adult RE around giving as a form of spiritual practice.

We are thankful to be part of such an engaged and generous congregation and look forward to a successful 2020!
The Social Justice Council (SJC) is a standing committee at First Unitarian devoted to funding and enabling social justice efforts within the church, the larger community, and the world.

The committee meets monthly in the Wesson Room. For most of 2019, the SJC worked with Beth Elliot as Justice Coordinator, but Beth recently moved to Colorado to take a fulltime job. We appreciate the work Beth did during her tenure as Justice Coordinator and wish her great luck in her future justice work.

In January, the SJC held its annual social justice potluck and invited all church social justice groups to join us. The potluck was well attended, and we discussed future plans for justice work at the church.

This year’s SJC Auction Fundraiser was smaller than usual due to the Social Hall renovation, but well attended. Church members and friends contributed a total of $7,821 to fund SJC awards.

The Fair Trade Coffee and Chocolate program was ended this year, and proceeds of $1,645 were added to the general SJC Awards account.

Vital church social programs were funded by the SJC using $3,000 of general church funds provided by the Board of Directors. The programs funded were: Adult ESL program, After School Tutoring, Family Promise and the Food Pantry.

Using the proceeds from the annual fundraiser and other sources, the SJC approved funding requests for a total of $8,984 to various Church Member sponsored programs including Albuquerque FaithWorks, Amigos de las Americas, Matt Meyer justice workshop, Albuquerque Interfaith, Junta Casera, Oxford House, and Pets of the Homeless.

Finally, the SJC manages funds for the Change For The Future program (CftF). The last four CftF groups to receive funding (including the last group in 2018) received a total of $9,155.

The Change for the Future charities chosen in 2019 were: New Mexico Interfaith Power and Light, The Transgender Resource Center, Crossroads for Women and Family Promise of Albuquerque (the charter organization that provides assistance and structure to our own Family Promise program.)
Members
Donna Collins
John Edwards
Angela Merkert
Lilli Nye
Jane Davis, Ministerial Intern, Ex-Officio
The Rev. Bob LaVallee, Ex-Officio

The Adult Religious Education Program’s Mission and Vision statement is:
First Unitarian Church of Albuquerque is a community that encourages and supports curious seekers who meet to explore spiritual, ethical and social issues in an accepting and nurturing environment. We envision a faith community that engages in the spiritual journey as a lifelong process in...

- Developing our faith through
  - Unitarian Universalist identity formation,
  - religious, theological, and spiritual discernment, and
  - personal and community practices.

- Inspiring justice by
  - developing moral and social courage,
  - practicing radically inclusive love, and
  - challenging oppression and injustice

...that together we may embody the Beloved Community.

The Adult Religious Education Program’s Council (AREC) was convened by Dan Lillie in the final year of his service as Ministerial Resident. With his leadership in 2019, the Council developed a mission/vision statement, policies, procedures and committee responsibilities and parameters enabling a smooth transition from Dan Lillie to Rev. Bob LaVallee’s as the minister supporting adult RE.

2019 Program Offerings

Sunday Explorations (Offered weekly on Sundays)
In 2019, we covered many topics including a historical sermon series, the UU common read of Just Earth, Reparations, the Touchstones monthly themes, faith of the Founding Fathers, religious practices of native NM tribes and more.

UU 101 (a two-session course offered 3 times per year)

Exploring Spiritual Practices (a 4-to-6-session course, offered in the spring and fall)

Cultivating Your Personal Theology (a 6-session course, offered in the fall)

White Fragility Reading Circles, had a second round in the spring.

Christian Archetypes: The Passion Story (a 6-session exploration of the Easter narrative through art, poetry and readings.)

Covenant Groups (approximately ten different groups meeting October-April)

Ongoing Endeavors

Working with Laira Magnusson, Director of Membership & Communications, to develop a set of regularly-offered core courses that provide an “arc of membership” and faith development for members of all stages.

We are also working with her to revamp our presence on the website and improve our visibility in publications.
The Arts & Aesthetics committee (A&A) selects and installs art exhibitions in the Social Hall for the enjoyment of members and friends, and as a form of outreach to the wider community. A&A members also provide consultation regarding other aesthetics questions on campus. Key accomplishments for the year are:

- Staged three art exhibitions;
- Prepared preliminary work on Juried art exhibitions for the year 2020;
- Submitted requirements for art exhibits in renovated Social Hall to Renovation Committee for work in 2019;
- Confirmed with SHRC that hanging equipment was ordered and installed;
- Welcomed two new members and one returning member to the committee;

Artwork is sold off the walls on Sundays and through private arrangements. In addition, when desired by the exhibitors, a Mercado reception 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 2019, sale totals amounted to $6,421.50, with $1,926.45 (30%) going to the church. Final sales were completed on December 29, 2019, the last Sunday of the year.

We meet ordinarily on the fourth Sunday of the month 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. Minutes are taken at every meeting and posted on the Church website.
Members
Jake Barkdoll, Co-chair
Zoe Walton*, Co-chair
John Feaveryear*
Steve Phillips
Dumas Slade

The B & G Committee is a committee of the Board and plays an important role by providing information to the Board on the condition of the buildings and grounds of the campus.

Activities of the Building and Grounds Committee are guided by three overarching goals:

- Assure a safe venue for church programs and activities.
- Provide a comfortable and welcoming campus for current activities.
- Look to the future to meet the ever-increasing needs of a growing church.

Although 2019 was year of substantial progress for the UU campus, it was a year of substantial loss for the B & G Committee. Two of the committee’s members died, one member’s time and energy were productively diverted to critically-needed “hands-on” guidance of the Social Hall redo, and one member’s capabilities were diminished by illness.

Zoe Walton, who died in May 2019, was co-chair of the committee. She had been an exceptionally valuable contributor to the committee for many years. Her technical training and experience equipped her to engage the technical aspects of the committee’s responsibility; and her dedication to the church always assured a job well-done. She tenaciously identified and monitored the inventory of the committee’s dozens of active and proposed projects. Zoe categorized the many plans of previous campus changes which provided invaluable resource material for subsequent planning and implementation.

John Feaveryear joined the committee in 2018. He had previously been a gardener at three previous churches so he “hit the road running” when he joined the committee. John not only provided valuable information and perspectives for the committee’s deliberation, he served as a knowledgeable hands-on contributor to a number of campus projects. John died in May 2019.

Noteworthy Accomplishments

A very important improvement in the annual budget process was made by the Board of Directors in 2019 at the urging of committee members. The addition of a “campus care” line item in the budget will assure that sufficient funds are allocated annually, and sufficient funds are accumulated over time, for more substantial periodic projects to improve campus facilities. The committee recognizes the hard work of Paul Browne and several Board members in this enabling accomplishment. In the past the lack of dependable funding has made planning impossible and needed campus care haphazard.

The work of several dedicated church members converted the Memorial Garden into a welcoming, serene, and attractive venue. The appearance and uniqueness of the garden, including the addition of an Indra’s web, were further enhanced through the efforts of Melisa Nicoud and the funding of a memorial rock fountain by a member of the congregation.

Critical efforts in the coming year include:

- Recruiting two or three members to the committee.
- Continuing to support the Social Hall project to completion.
- Developing a contemporary inventory of projects to support the church’s current and future needs and improvements.
Caring Network
Kristin Satterlee, Chair

Steering Team Members
Nancy Bowen (rotating coordinator)
Barbara Garrity (Friendship Ministry lead)
Marian Kraai (Rotating Coordinator)
Andrea Mason (Caring Cooks Lead)

Care Team Members
Maureen Bannon
Ron Friederich
Arne Gullerud
Sheryl Guterl
Andrea Lanier
Ernest Lanier
Mary Ready
Anna Watkins

The mission of the Caring Network is to provide support for First Unitarian members in times of need, joy, and transition, with the understanding that the whole church is responsible for caring for one another.

The Caring Network’s sub-teams include:

- **the Care Team**, whose members provide supportive visits and companioning in person, by phone, and through text and email as appropriate;
- **the Caring Cooks**, who fill the Caring Freezer with meals for the Care Team to provide as needed;
- **the Friendship Ministry**, providing regular outreach to isolated church members;
- and **Sol Singers** (led by Susan Peck), bringing the gift of song to hospitals, hospice, and home bedsides as requested.

2019 was a strong second year for the Caring Network. Key accomplishments include:

- Approximately **100 First Unitarian community members supported** through phone calls and visits;
- Reorganization and relaunch of the Friendship Ministry program;
- Fruitful monthly Care Team gatherings, providing mutual support and continuing education in caring issues and techniques for our volunteers;
- Creation and staffing of caring, supportive alternative ritual space for Mother’s and Father’s Day services;
- Presentation, with the ministers of First Unitarian’s first “Blue Christmas,” a reflective alternative Christmas service for those with sorrow around the season;
- **Holiday cards sent** to community members supported throughout the year (where address information was available);
- **Dozens of healthy, nutritious meals** cooked, hygienically stored, and shared with members in need.
Coyote Willow CUUPS (CWCUUPS) is an Albuquerque chapter of the Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans. We support the practice and understanding of modern Pagan and Earth-centered spirituality, with a focus on Unitarian Universalist Principles and Sources. We also provide outreach to the Pagan community, which is very active locally.

Coyote Willow CUUPS has an open, drop-in style membership. Officers this year were Raven Reed Starr as Contact Person, and Jessi and Joela Bezzeg as Keepers of the Keys.

CWCUUPS had another busy year in 2019. We regularly met on the second Friday of every month at 7:00 pm for planning sessions and discussions on various topics related to Pagan/Earth-centered interests.

Additionally we hosted eight open rituals for the most commonly recognized Pagan holidays: Imbolc, Ostara, Beltaine, Litha, Lughnasadh, Mabon, Samhain, and Yule. Attendance at these rituals included not just CWCUUPS members, but church members as well as people from the outside Pagan community. We also held the annual Divination Night event.

Finally, we were very active in the 2019 Albuquerque Pagan Pride Day (PPD) event, which is part of a global movement to increase awareness of Paganism through education, activism, charity, and community. The local PPD collects non-perishable food donations for the First Unitarian Food Pantry every year. PPD provides the single largest food donation that the Food Pantry receives all year. CWCUUPS had its usual booth at PPD, where we passed out brochures and answered questions about our group and Unitarian Universalism. PPD is a great event to engage with a community which already shares similar values with Unitarian Universalists. Many new members to CWCUUPS, and ultimately First Unitarian, first meet us at a Pagan Pride Day event. CWCUUPS also provided support throughout the year to PPD in preparing for the event.
The Denominational Affairs Team’s (DAT) purpose is to build awareness of our congregation’s connection to the broader mission of Unitarian Universalism. The DAT is a committee with shared leadership model and no chair. The team met 7 times in 2019 breaking into small taskforces which met as necessary. The team advertised several key events such as General Assembly in Spokane, Washington with the Mountain Desert District Annual meeting being held there.

The Team solicited the help of two very gifted artists, Carole Bonda and Lucy Silva, to design and create a beautiful Church banner to hang at General Assembly (GA), carry at the Pride parade and other events, and to hang prominently at our church when not traveling.

The Mountain Desert District Annual Assembly: Living from the Heart: Bringing Hope to a Changing World will be held at our own First Unitarian of Albuquerque May 1-2, 2020 with an Assembly filled with fabulous music, speakers and food. The DAT and church staff are working to make this an exciting and memorable event. Save the date!

The General Assembly will be June 24-28, 2020 in Providence, Rhode Island. Registration is already open and the DAT will be working to encourage congregants to go and spend time with other UUs from around the Country. Virtual Delegates are also needed and can vote on important issues from the comfort of your phone or computer.
The Membership Committee is focused on creating a friendly church environment that helps guests become members and integrate with the community. The committee helps staff the Welcome Table to answer guest questions, assist in membership signup, welcome visitors, and provide campus orientation. We host the New Member Dinners and New Member Recognition Ceremonies that allow new members to meet their "joining cohort" in a meaningful and lasting way while exploring their spiritual growth.

This year, we hosted two New Member Dinners and New Member Recognition Ceremonies: April 7th & October 20th. Due to the renovation of the Social Hall, the committee decided to only do two meals over the year since room scheduling would be more difficult. This meant we didn’t offer a Brunch in 2019; but it is something that will be reviewed for the 2020 year as it allows for more new members to attend. The New Member Recognition Ceremony and Dinner occur on the same day to create a more meaningful and memorable experience for attendees in the years to come. Both dinners were well attended (21 & 27 members, respectively) and were followed by a small group spiritual journey discussion led by the Membership Director.

The use of yellow mugs by visitors for Coffee Hour was suspended during the renovation of the Social Hall and replaced with comic book style nametags. We observed an increased use of the name tags over use of the yellow mugs and visitors often commented positively on them. While it served its role in identifying visitors, the committee is perpetually thinking of ways to better remind and call our congregation to interact more with visitors during Coffee Hour.

2018 saw the departure of Beth Elliott as Membership Director, but the helm was quickly picked up by Laira Magnusson who introduced new ideas such as the New Member November initiative that focused on linking together new members to upcoming events and classes based on mutual interest. It is a tactic to review and potentially reimplement in 2020.

The formal Campus Orientation program that occurs monthly continued in 2019, but it was not well attended even with added publicity in the Messenger and Broadsheet. Some months would have a handful of individuals, but the majority of months had no interested parties. This program is also being evaluated and may be implemented differently in the future.

We continued to promote the use of the First U Connect social media platform. However, the tool has met with resistance even after having sign-up and information sessions. The committee is currently brainstorming ways this platform (or a similar social platform) could be better adopted in the future and how to best help with deployment.

Continuing efforts into 2020 include recruiting new members to the Membership Committee, working to increase the diversity of the congregation, and understanding more fully the "trajectory of membership": from joining to lifetime engagement.
Members
Callie Cone, OWL Portfolio
Carol Cowan, Curriculum Team Lead
Eric Keiter, Member-at-Large
Chris Mayo, Youths Programs Liaison
Nicia Rae, UU Kids Camp Liaison
Wendy Simms-Small, Secretary
Desiree Spielman, Community Connections Lead

Ex-Officio Members
Mia Noren, Director of Religious Education (DRE)
Alana Rodriguez, Youth Programs Coordinator

The RE Council is responsible for organizing, promoting, supervising, and evaluating the religious education programs for First U children and youth. The RE staff collaborates with the RE Council concerning issues of policy and direction providing lay leadership to the church’s RE programs.

The Council’s shared leadership model involves most members having a portfolio of responsibilities, although, lacking a specific portfolio need, some members may hold at-large positions. Portfolios are created as a perceived need arises, developed appropriately, or phased out if the portfolio doesn’t adequately address its intended purpose.

In 2019, a new portfolio for Youth Programming was created so that a Liaison can directly communicate between the Council, the mid-high and La Amikoj groups, and the Youth Programs Coordinator. The Council is further considering adding a Youth Representative seat in 2020, to be filled by a youth from La Amikoj. The Evaluation Portfolio was dissolved and replaced with a Council team approach in which each member reports monthly on things they have observed, or feedback they have received, regarding aspects of RE. This creates a more comprehensive and timelier picture of RE’s well-being throughout the year. The Social Justice Portfolio created in 2018 has been put on hold while the Council explores ways to create projects that will include an intergenerational teamwork approach.

The RE Community at First Unitarian extends well beyond Sunday mornings classes, in the form of regularly scheduled activities on nights and weekends, annual events such as Kids’ Camp and OWL (Our Whole Lives classes), volunteering, etc. The Council’s goal for 2020 is to strengthen this sense of community by enhancing RE’s visibility within the church, thereby bringing added value to members of every age. Two of the ways in which we want to do this is by creating intergenerational social justice activities and by finding meaningful ways for children and youth to participate in worship services.
The After School Tutoring Program continues its mission of providing one-to-one tutoring, PE, 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 Elementary School and are referred by their classroom teachers. Tutoring is offered Mondays and Wednesdays from mid-September through April.

This year there are 20 children enrolled in the program. There are 40 tutors and volunteers in the program. Our academic focus is on reading, vocabulary, writing and English language skills. Tutors also help children with their homework, math skills, and science projects. Students are given books at Christmas and at the end of the year. We encourage early literacy and love of books by distributing books to younger siblings whenever the opportunity arises.

Our program is also able to provide occasional enrichment activities for our students. Music, dance, and art activities are scheduled throughout the year. This is in addition to our regular Art program every Wednesday.

Training for tutors is provided during our September Orientation and at a special session in November, as well as on a continuing basis whenever help is needed.

The ASTP is guided by a Steering Committee of seven and powered by the love and devotion of our amazing volunteers.
Animal Advocates
Sharon Hall, Chair

Members
Martha Anderson
Marion Ammerman
Mikki Aronoff
Linda Bairstow
Sacha Bush
Janelle Campbell
Marcia Caregeorges
David Gick
Lisa Goldman
Margaret Keller
Cindy Kloss
Al Kulp
Gail Livingstone
Beverly Lowrance
Gretchen Oliver
Danny Rupert
Janet Strong
Jo Wilsdorf

Mission: Promoting the Worth and Dignity of All Beings Through Education, Advocacy, and Assistance. First U Animal Advocates was founded in January of 2010 and meets on the fourth Sunday of the month at 12:15 pm in the Wesson Room. We maintain an e-news list, a Facebook page, and publish a monthly newsletter. Members work with many local and state animal welfare and rescue organizations, and each month members nominate and vote for two groups to receive a donation. Some of the groups who received financial contributions in 2019 include: Fur & Feathers, Santuario de Karuna, Placitas Wild, Birds of a Feather Parrot Rescue, Longears Safehouse, Safe Haven Animal Sanctuary, Animal-Kind International, Four Corners Pet Alliance, Broken Promises SW, Kitty City, Four Corners Equine Rescue, In Good Company, Wild Earth Guardians, Almost Home NM, Land of Enchantment Wildlife Foundation, Vegan Outreach, Haven for Hamsters, and the UU Animal Ministry. Fundraisers, including our Patio Arts & Crafts Fairs, support these donations.

Additionally, Animal Advocates helped facilitate finding homes for many animals and or provided emergency care for animals in need. We continued to help supply pet food to the Food Pantry and we are a resource for community assistance in providing information on animal welfare services and organizations.

Our monthly meetings often include guest speakers and humane education forums. This year we hosted State Senator Mimi Stewart and Animal Protection Voters Chief Legislative Officer Jessica Johnson for a forum on animal protection legislation proposed for the 2019 session.

Under the direction of founder Linda Bairstow, the Critter Club continued “celebrating and respecting the awesomeness of life” for children ages 6 and up. Linda hosted Stephanie Kaylan and some of the pack from Wanagi Wolf Rescue for a "wildly" popular presentation in Memorial Hall.

In September, we joined Raven Reed Starr of Coyote Willow CUUPS, Ministerial Intern Jane Davis, and Director of Music Susan Peck in a very special Blessing of the Animals Service. It was a joyful collaboration and moving celebration of our love for our companion animals. Photos of pets and their people were available as well as treats and commemorative ribbons.

Our field trip to the new Bernalillo County Animal Care & Resource Center was a huge success. Not only did we get a private tour of the new facility, but we delivered carloads of food, toys, treats, towels, beds and blankets donated by members of First Unitarian.

We had a table at both Connection Sundays and volunteered at the Social Justice Council dinner and auction fundraiser. Danny Ruppert coordinated a Vegan Trunk or Treat event on Halloween night.

Another generous grant from the Social Justice Council supported our Pets of the Homeless (POH) Project. POH has delivered thousands of pounds of pet food as well as collars, leashes, beds and other supplies to St. Martin’s Hospitality Center over the past several years. Marion Ammerman and Gretchen Oliver picked up donations from our three veterinary partners: ABQ PetCare, VCA Wyoming, and Aztec Animal Clinic. We have also made connections to help supply the City's Westside Homeless Shelter, which generously allows pets!
Earth Web meets on the second Sunday of each month from 12:15 - 1:45. There are usually 10-15 people in attendance and working on our projects. Our group works in several areas of environmental sustainability and care for the Earth. Here are our main activities and accomplishments for this year:

We started by finishing “Our Place in the Web of Life”, a UU Ministry For Earth course, that we started in September of 2018. We decided to engage on projects that came from this study, concentrating on legislative advocacy and reducing plastic use. We had several people attend legislative sessions and we wrote to our congressional representatives.

We decided to finance the use of compostable cups and wooden stir sticks for Coffee Hour and applied for and received some funding from the Social Justice Council. We worked with the Coffee Server Committee on signage and new bins to encourage and educate about recycling and composting. A task force (The Reduce Reuse Task Force) composed of members of the Board, Earth Web and Coffee Servers worked with the Social Hall renovation committee as we planned for the elimination of all disposables in the Social Hall and Memorial Hall. Earth Web donated $1000 toward purchases of these non-disposable items.

A group of us toured the Albuquerque Recycling Center, and we sponsored a presentation from Athena Christodoulou, President of NMSEA for the whole congregation.

We joined with the Animal Advocates Committee to sponsor monthly Vegetarian Potlucks and Movie nights for several months in the spring.

Our Sustainability Fair took place on May 5th, with plant sales, solar, and other displays.

In the summer, several of us went rafting down the Rio Grande and had a great time!

In the fall, we started a book study of Drawdown, which spells out 100 solutions to draw down carbon from the atmosphere. Our group number soared to 35 people who were interested in this positive solution-based book. We will continue to use it to figure out how all of us can help reverse global warming.
ESL: Adult English as a Second Language

Connie Molecke, Program Director, conniemolecke@gmail.com

Mission
The Adult English as a Second Language Program continues its mission to promote the worth and dignity of all beings through education, advocacy, and assistance by teaching adults who wish to improve their general English speaking, listening, and reading skills. In some classes our goal is also to enable them to pass the US Citizenship Exam to become citizens. We additionally provide some special informational workshops about resources and advocacy. This builds relationships with people in our community and other community organizations.

Staff and Students
We have 21 ESL volunteers. Some are church members and some community members. We employ two child care workers for each session. We teach in English in most classes but this past year we added a class to teach in Spanish since there are some people in our community who qualify to take their citizenship exam in Spanish. About 95% of our students speak Spanish but we occasionally have students who speak Chinese, French or Vietnamese.

Schedule
Our classes meet on Monday evenings from 6:30 – 8:00 PM for 13 weeks each spring and in each fall. Classes are formed around skill levels and student needs. We have some “one tutor/one student” classes and small groups of 3 to 5 students. Occasionally our tutors provide extra time to study for the citizenship exam or other educational goals.

Community Partnerships
- ReadWest which is a non-profit in Rio Rancho that teaches Basic Literacy, ESL, and computer skills.
- New Mexico Immigrant Law Center. We link with them through an online program called “CitizenshipWorks” to complete the N-400 Citizenship applications.
- Encuentro & El Centro which are non-profits in downtown Albuquerque providing classes in ESL, Citizenship, Financial Management, Home Health Aide, and rights workshops for the Latinx population. They have held some advocacy and rights workshops at First U and we distribute their materials.

Evaluation of Our Program
- ESL We evaluate each student using the Casas English Reading and Listening Assessments to determine student beginning levels and progress. We work with each student to focus on language needs with additional consideration of their personal goals. We also document each student’s language progress on a skills check-sheet.
- Citizenship In 2019 Spring and Fall semesters, 11 of our students became Naturalized Citizens. In this fall semester of 2019, we enrolled 9 English speakers and 10 Spanish speakers into our citizenship classes. We have a waiting list of people who will start in January 2020.

Attendance
Students are now required to inform their instructors if they cannot attend. After two instances of not informing the instructor, we then decide if they can continue in the program. We have had more consistent attendance and fewer “surprise” absences this year. In 2019, we averaged attendance of 28 adults per week and 4.4 children per week.

Adult ESL Funding
This program is funded as a continuing program of First Unitarian, the Social Justice Council, and occasional donations from individuals. Expenses usually average $1,200 to $1,600 per calendar year. Our largest expense is childcare. Please contact Connie Molecke if you have any questions about funding.

The Citizenship Test Fund
This fund was created in September of 2017 through a special fundraiser and is also managed by Connie Molecke. It had an initial credit of $5,762.00. It had been used to pay the Citizenship Application Fees of 6 people and now has a $2,052.00 balance. A full Application Fee is $750 and a Reduced Fee for people below a certain income is $405. We will need to raise funds to replenish this fund. The Trump administration is trying to significantly raise these fees! Please contact Connie Molecke if you have questions or suggestions for this fund.
First Unitarian is one of 22 congregations that host families experiencing homelessness during the year. In 2019 we hosted four times. Hosting up to four families for one week, providing meals, companionship, activities, a safe place to sleep and transportation when needed, is just a brief list of what our UU volunteers accomplish. Three of our 2019 host weeks were moved to the Church of the Good Shepard (COGS). COGS provided an open door and support to our team of volunteers.

It takes up to 70 volunteers to support these families for one week. We are so fortunate to have a congregation that supports these families in so many ways. Our volunteers cook dinners, stay overnight, set up the sleeping spaces, clean up, and provide evening activities and companionship.

One host week costs approximately $400. We have been blessed to have the financial support of the Social Justice Council and numerous monetary donations from congregants.

In 2020 we will move back into our newly renovated Social Hall. We are so grateful to our congregation for supporting Family Promise by having more bathrooms and showers installed. Our families will be much more comfortable in our new space!

Family Promise of Albuquerque supports families experiencing homelessness in numerous ways. The primary goal is to get the families into their own homes. A success is credited when a family has been in their own home for 6 months. Currently, Family Promise Albuquerque has a 90% success rate! We support these families and their success.

Thank you First Unitarian!
In 2019 49 volunteers provided the help that allowed the Food Pantry to hand out an average of 108 sacks of food every Wednesday afternoon.

This number of volunteers includes people who pack the sacks of food, those who hand out the sacks; people who donate cat and dog food; people who meet the Roadrunner delivery truck every Tuesday morning, unload the food and put it away in the pantry; and volunteers who buy pinto beans and rice and repackage it into one-pound bags. Rice and beans are organized 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, the packing duties.

The goal is to provide nutritious food to the needy that come to us for help. The sack of food provided includes a pound of both pinto beans and rice, canned and fresh fruits and vegetables, a snack of cookies or crackers, cereal, a package of bread, and a package of protein such as hot dogs, chicken, turkey, pot pies, veggie burgers, or ham. Then an “extra” is added to the bag such as tuna, soup, a can of beans, canned milk or tomatoes, mac and cheese, or peanut butter. We must purchase 125 of each item every week in case more than 110 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 bought at Costco if not from Roadrunner.

Rebecca Gracey does the food purchasing and ordering online from Roadrunner. Most of the money for purchasing food comes from church member donations since the pantry is not a budgeted expense for the church. The estate of Elaine Smith, whose husband Nolan Smith was an early volunteer for the Food Pantry, gives $1,000 monthly to the pantry.

A total of 5,542 sacks of food were given away in 2019 with an average of 108.6 sacks per week. The average cost per sack was $3.22.

TOTAL INCOME: $20,376.33
TOTAL EXPENSES: $17,888.66
NET INCOME: $2,487.67
2019 BEGINNING BALANCE: $25,125.65
YEAR-END-BALANCE: $27,613.32
Immigrant Justice Task Force

No report

Our Mission is to support the rights, dignity, and well-being of the Immigrant Community and to work for justice, equity and compassion for Immigrants.
Wisdom Circle
Jerilyn Bowen, Coordinator
jbowen1@unm.edu

A place to come together with others on the path of elderhood.

Wisdom Circle is a monthly potluck brunch and in-depth round table conversation on topics of special interest to our “well-seasoned community.” It meets on the third Saturday of each month from 9:30-11:30 am in Memorial Hall.

We keep one another company in navigating the tricky waters of growing old with honesty and grace.

In the past year, we’ve had fruitful, very engaged convocations on a variety of topics, including Favorite Poems, Finding New Questions, Adulthood to Elderhood, Building Trust, Coming Together in Troubled Times, Changing the Cultural Aging Paradigm, Deep Listening, Winter Solstice, and 2020 Vision. Members propose topics and member volunteers facilitate most discussions. At our meetings, we often break into small groups to give everyone a chance to share in depth on the topic of the day, then reconvene to report back and talk amongst ourselves in full circle.

One highlight of 2019 was the well-attended November session on “Deep Listening” led by our new Associate Minister, the Rev. Bob LaVallee. Rev. Bob’s presentation brought forth profound personal sharing that left us with a better understanding of what it means to give our full attention to one another. “Coming Together in Troubled Times” was a remarkable participatory session of a different stripe. In that one, members talked about how the multiple converging crises in our country and our world are affecting us day-to-day, how we cope, how we can support one another in these troubled times, and how we can put our UU values into action for a better world.

In general meeting attendance ranges from ten to twenty. Everyone contributes something to the potluck spread—for instance: a quiche, muffins, scones, bagels & cream cheese, deviled eggs, salad, fruit, fruit juice. Those who want a hot drink bring their own.

All UU members are invited to drop in and see if you’d like to be part of our voyage of discovery on this uncharted sea we’re crossing together.