



2017-2018
ANNUAL
REPORT

FIRST UNITARIAN
CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY
BR  **KLYN**
A UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

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First Unitarian Congregational Society in Brooklyn
48 Monroe Place, Brooklyn, NY 11201
718.624.5466 www.fuub.org
Facebook: First Unitarian Congregational Society in Brooklyn
Twitter: FirstUBrooklyn
YouTube: First Unitarian Brooklyn

REPORT OF THE SENIOR MINISTER

Rev. Ana Levy-Lyons
ana@fuub.org

This year at First U we have continued to grow and deepen our spiritual life together. Our worship services have been joyful and inspiring, the sanctuary full with congregants and visitors. Music continues to be a highlight of our worship with a blend of traditional and contemporary repertoires, joyful singing, world-class musicianship, and creative reinterpretations of well-known tunes, all raising the vibrations (literally) of Spirit in the room. Through my preaching and writing, as well as through our music program and religious education, we have endeavored to reclaim and reimagine ancient religious texts and traditions, finding meaning and wisdom in them for our time.

We have made enormous strides toward living our values as a congregation this year with two new initiatives: the project to make our spaces accessible and the project to become a sanctuary congregation for immigrants and refugees. We welcomed 30 new members this year for a total membership approaching 300 adults and we now have 124 children and youth enrolled in our bursting Religious Education program.

The program staff (Meagan Henry, Adam Podd, Garnett Losak, Kevin Jagoe, Shari Halliday-Quan, and I) has functioned as a highly collaborative team with each member contributing actively, flexibly, and creatively to produce our worship services and programs. Thanks to Chris Johnson, our physical plant is functioning better with more energy-efficiency, and is cleaner than ever. A number of new rental clients have been able to come onboard with their facilities needs well supported. This year we welcomed a new staff member – Wendy Russell – as office manager. Wendy has not only been a joy to work with, jumping right in with the collaborative spirit of the rest of the staff, but has streamlined our office systems and made us thousands of dollars in efficiencies and savings. Wendy also sings in the choir and has joined the congregation. Every staff member works hard and brings their full selves to their work.

First U has become a “teaching congregation” with our intern minister, Kevin Jagoe, a seminary student preparing for Unitarian Universalist ministry. My role has been to mentor and supervise Kevin and give him broad ministry experience; the congregation’s role has been to let him practice on First U! Kevin has become a beloved member of the community as well as a trusted leader and he has just been called to his first pulpit at BuxMont UU Fellowship in PA (see his report). This internship position has been generously funded for

two years by an anonymous donor in our congregation. Next year, I'm pleased to report that the same donor will be funding the position again for a new intern (TBA). Shari Halliday-Quan has had a slightly different position with us this year (see Meagan Henry's report) and has also been beloved by staff and congregants alike. We will miss both Kevin and Shari tremendously and send them off with blessings for their future ministries.

We are also saying goodbye this summer to our community minister, the Rev. Dr. Kelly Murphy Mason. Rev. Kelly's presence has been a gift to First U, leading the Good Friday service, adult education, and prayers with compassion and spiritual depth. She has brought a uniquely UU Christian voice and a feminist voice to our pulpit and a pastoral presence to us all. She has been called as senior minister at the UU Society of Wellesley Hills in MA (see her report). Congratulations, Rev. Kelly! We will miss you.

I'm thrilled to announce that on March 6 my first book was published - *No Other Gods: The Politics of the Ten Commandments* (Center Street/ Hachette). This book came out of a sermon series on the Ten Commandments I delivered a few years ago. The congregation has been enormously supportive and enthusiastic throughout my long process of writing and rewriting, then publication and release. We had a wonderful book launch party with a reading and discussion here at First U (deep gratitude to Coco Wilde for leading this effort), followed by a five-session class on the Ten Commandments. The ideas in the book, class, sermons, and discussions seem to be resonating with the First U community - ideas of a religiously-grounded counterculture and the power of spiritual commitments to liberate us spiritually and politically. This spring I've been sharing these ideas more publicly through interviews (TV and online), writing, and guest preaching and speaking engagements. Below I've highlighted aspects of my ministry that are also grounded in these ideas and support our congregational mission.

Goal: Promote spiritual exploration, development and practice

- **Expanding the Liturgical Calendar:** To mark the passage of time and deepen our spiritual journeys, we have been adding homegrown First U rituals to our liturgical calendar. These rituals were new this year or in the last couple years and we plan to celebrate them annually going forward:
 - Hunger Communion Fast – this year we introduced the practice of a fast day on Hunger Communion Sunday. This is the Sunday before Thanksgiving where we remember the hungry people in our city, country, and world. It was a time for spiritual reflection and people were encouraged to make contributions to fight world hunger. Many congregants participated, most fasting for the first time, and some broke the fast with a meal with Original Blessing.

- Gifts of the Magi – on Christmas Eve, congregants individually receive the three gifts given to Jesus (gold/ chocolate coins, frankincense oil, and myrrh oil) with accompanying words as blessings for their own ministries in the world.
- New Year Letters – the first Sunday after New Year’s Day, congregants are invited to write letters to themselves with their aspirations, hopes, prayers, and intentions for the new year. The staff mails the letters back to each congregant the following fall.
- Purim Spiel – in celebration of the Jewish holiday of Purim (with its universal themes of ethnic and gender discrimination and speaking truth to power) we produced a play, telling the story with an accompanying sermon and music. I adapted the script and many thanks to Caroline Sharman who directed our first run!
- Easter Fire Ritual – this ritual has become a First U favorite. Congregants project their fears and obstacles onto a piece of flash paper and burn it, allowing for rebirth/ resurrection in the spring.
- **Sermon Series: Women of Hebrew and Christian Scriptures:** My sermon series this year sought to reintroduce the women of our ancient religious heritage as marbled, complex, and sometimes heroic characters on spiritual journeys like all of us. Meagan, Kevin, and I all preached as part of this series, exploring Eve, Sarah, Mary (mother of Jesus), Mary Magdalene, Esther, Ruth, Miriam, and Deborah. Our resident jazz band played on these Sundays. Meagan Henry led a Children’s Chapel on the theme as well (see Meagan’s report).
- **Cellphone Check:** On second Sundays, we set up a table at the entrance to the sanctuary where people could check their cellphones for the duration of the service and lunch afterwards. The goal is to invite people to be fully present with their community and gain a taste of Sabbath freedom from their devices. We have not had large numbers participating, but some have expressed appreciation for it and acknowledged that it’s challenging and different from merely turning their phone on silent.
- **Reflections with Rev. Ana:** This ongoing monthly vegan potluck for young adults was themed this year on the UU Six Sources. We discussed one each month, along with a check-in and social time.
- **Progressive Spiritual Partnerships:** As of this year, we are helping to incubate and support three progressive spiritual communities who are worshipping in our spaces: Original Blessing (UU), Sadhana (Hindu), and Romemu (Jewish). I’m proud to be partnering with these organizations, strengthening interfaith connections and progressive religion in NYC.

Equip people with the skill and confidence to become change makers

- **Confronting Systemic Racism:** In the fall we joined UU congregations across the country in a special worship service to examine the ways in which systemic racism shows up in our congregation. Over the next few months, the staff led discussions on the three “summer reading” books we had selected on race and white supremacy culture: *Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Waking Up White* by Debbie Irving, and *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates. Most significantly, a pilot group led by Meagan Henry and Kevin Jagoe participated in the Beloved Conversations program (see Meagan’s report) and it was a powerful experience for all involved, looking at systemic racism at First U and in the wider community.
- **Lay Worship Leader Program:** Our lay worship leaders have been excellent this year – Elly Fong-Jones, Luke Elliott-Negri, Tom Check, Helen Harris, Illia Kawash-Cooper, and Takako Kono. They’ve all set a warm, welcoming tone, and offered insightful and challenging homilies. Jeff Levy-Lyons and I worked with them to hone their writing and presentation skills. The lay worship leader program is a leadership development program that helps bring a diversity of voices to our worship services and supports those newer to leadership at First U in moving deeper into congregational and public service.

Cultivate a caring, welcoming community that models a just and loving world

- **Sanctuary Project** (see Sanctuary report)
- **Accessibility Project** (see Garnett Losak’s report)
- **Community Sabbath Meals:** On the second Sunday of each month, groups hosted lunches for the entire community after the service to enjoy an extended Sabbath time together. I led a discussion each month on the sermon from that day. The meals were vegetarian with a vegan option and they served as a fundraiser for the groups hosting (see Garnett’s report).
- **Daytime Discussion Group:** This is a discussion circle for retired and/or non-traditional schedule people. We discuss a different topic each month, ideally one with both personal and universal application.
- **Pastoral Care in the Chapel of All Faiths:** This is a program of the Pastoral Care Committee in which a specially trained member of the Committee is available after services in the Chapel of All Faiths to offer pastoral care and make appropriate referrals for people in distress.
- **Brooklyn Heights Interfaith Clergy Association:** This year I became co-chair of this group that sponsors a public Sept. 11 memorial service and this year sponsored an interfaith solidarity event in response to the white supremacist violence in Charlottesville last summer.

Become an environmentally responsible congregation

- **Preaching:** I preached on environmental themes several times this year, emphasizing that the desecration of our ecosystems and climate change particularly is the most dangerous threat to humans and other species that we have ever known. My goal has been to inspire significant religiously-grounded changes in our personal practices and public activism.
- **Rev. Ana's Actions for the Next Seven Generations:** In response to people's questions about what they can do on the political/ public policy front, in January I began a year-long experiment in which I research and publish a weekly action for people to take, usually related to New York City or State environmental initiatives. The posts seem to be well received but we have no data yet on participation levels.
- **First U Energy and Waste:** This year we lowered our energy use over last year and began composting food waste (see Chris Johnson's report).
- **Rallies and Marches:** First U members joined me for public demonstrations this year including a Climate Rally in Albany (April 23) and the "Sandy5" rally on the 5-year anniversary of hurricane Sandy, in which I led a prayer for the faith contingent to kick off a march over the Brooklyn Bridge.
- **Forum on Environmental Justice** (Nov. 16): I served on a panel with other clergy and community leaders (Jeff Levy-Lyons moderated), sponsored by Weaving, to educate the community about the disproportionate impact of environmental toxins and pollution on communities of color and the poor.
- **Noah's Ark:** My article, "Noah's Ark," is the featured article in this month's issue of "Quest for Meaning," the publication of the UU Church of the Larger Fellowship. Based on my sermon in last year's series of Humans and the Earth, it takes an ecological perspective on the Noah's Ark story.
- **Guide to Preaching on Climate:** I am working on a guide for clergy on preaching on the environment and climate change. It will be published and co-branded with Climate Reality Project (Al Gore's organization) and The Center for Earth Ethics at Union (Karenn Gore's organization). This is a follow-up project to my webinar presentation to a group of clergy from across the country.

Develop and responsibly manage congregational resources

- **Fiscal Forward Team:** This team has been striving to think outside the box and research ways to increase giving and income generally. We have taken to heart some of the concepts in *Not Your Parents' Offering Plate* by J. Clif Christopher, especially trying to better communicate how we are transforming lives to inspire giving.
- **Transforming Lives:** I added a weekly testimonial as a new element in the worship service. Parrish Turner volunteered to edit the written statements in advance

(thank you, Parrish!) and the testimonials have been very moving and well-received by the congregation.

- **Preaching on Stewardship:** I preached two sermons on stewardship this year, one focused on “100% Participation” in the “Our Future Together” campaign and the other as the kickoff to the stewardship campaign.
- **Stewardship:** I wrote a stewardship letter, sent to all congregants, based on recommendations of the Fiscal Forward Team. The stewardship team this year decided to be clearer about how current giving compares with what’s actually needed and to ask for significant increases. This approach has been very successful (see Stewardship report). The Stewardship Team is under-(volunteer) staffed and its few members worked exceedingly hard this year. We will need more members to step up next year in order to avoid burn-out and ensure a sustainable stewardship program.
- **Intern Minister:** Following our consultant’s advice to “institutionalize” the position of Intern Minister at least until we are able to hire an Assistant Minister, I undertook a successful search process (with help from Meagan Henry and Sean Fisher) to identify our Intern for next year (TBA).

Life Cycle Ceremonies

- Sept 25: Wedding of Jayesh Sheth and Andrea Johnson.
- Oct. 8: Baby dedication for Eliot Yoder, child of Tara Kreider and Danny Yoder
- Oct. 22: Baby blessing for Samaya Elliott-Negri, child of Luke and Christine Elliott-Negri
- Nov. 5: Offered greetings from the NY Metro Area UU ministers’ cluster at the installation of Rev. Audette Fulbright as Associate Minister at All Souls, NYC.
- Nov. 12: Memorial service for Rev. Donald McKinney
- Nov. 12: Baby blessing for Peter Rohrbach, child of James Rohrbach and Lissy DeSantis.
- Feb. 19: Officiated at the funeral of member Marie Schloeder.
- February 25: Baby blessing for Sophie Luna Jaffre, child of Alexis and Paul Jaffre
- March 4: Memorial service for Susan Huyett, Crystal Huyett’s mother
- April 22: First U hosted the ordination for Stephanie Gannon. Many volunteers worked hard to make it a joyful event; I offered the Prayer of Ordination and the laying on of hands.
- May 20: Baby blessing for Cyril James Morgan Shepherd, child of Sarah Morgan and Jack Shepherd

STAFF REPORTS

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND FAMILY MINISTRY

Meagan Henry
meagan@fuub.org

This has been a year of growth, energy, and excitement in our faith community. The number of children and youth registered in Religious Education (RE) is up from 102 last year to 124. We held several children and youth programs: Jr. High Our Whole Lives for youth in seventh and eighth grades, Children's Chapel once a month for children in kindergarten through sixth grade, Justice Sundays with an immigration justice focus, and regular RE Sunday morning classes.

Our Adult Faith Development offerings this year were led by a combination of staff and lay leaders. Kevin Jagoe, ministerial intern, and I introduced a new program called *Beloved Conversations: Meditations on Race and Ethnicity* to our community and after the successful completion of the series with seven participants, I'm looking forward to offering more sessions next year.

Thanks to continued and generous financial support from the Women's Leadership Alliance, we were able to hire Shari Halliday-Quan, a Field Education Student from Union Theological Seminary, for a second year. Shari also continued in her position as part-time Youth Ministry Coordinator. Shari has been a valuable member of the staff team and we will miss her thoughtful input as she moves on to her full-time ministerial internship in San Francisco.

Last year during the budgeting process, the Religious Education Council and I requested support for the RE program in the form of a part-time RE assistant. Our budget did not allow for us to fund the request. However, an anonymous donor provided the funds to cover the position of a part-time assistant for a portion of the year. I was able to temporarily hire Laura Rizzo as the RE Assistant and she's put in many hours doing administrative tasks, assisting on Sunday mornings, and cleaning and organizing the Sophia Fahs RE supply room. This extra assistance has allowed me more time to do more pastoral care and one-on-one relationship building with RE families, as well giving me the space to be centered and present on Sunday mornings.

For the remainder of my report, I have organized items according to the goals set forth by the Forward First Strategic Plan. The work I do is made possible because of the constant support I receive from the Chair of the Religious Education Council (REC), Becky Huffman. See her report for even more information about our program this year. Volunteer members of the REC this year are Mariasara Alcott, Michele Ascione, Joy Gabriel, Becky Huffman, Andrea Parkinson, Chris Singh, Denise Wharton, and June Wohlhorn.

Promote spiritual exploration, development, and practice

- Monthly Children’s Chapels explored the spiritual themes of Women in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, in conjunction with Rev. Ana’s sermon series.
- Children had the opportunity to practice different types of prayer and meditation during Children’s Chapel. This year we experienced such growth in our elementary program that we experimented with having two parallel chapels; one for lower elementary and one for upper elementary. This was beneficial in that it allowed each group to focus on topics through developmentally appropriate activities and discussions.
- Children’s Chorus, led by Bert Eisenstadt, offers children the opportunity to engage with music and singing of songs with a positive spiritual message.
- Offered several Adult Religious Education classes and groups throughout the year, including: Spiritual Practices, Unitarian Universalist History, Rev. Ana’s Ten Commandments class, Beloved Conversations, and an upcoming day long workshop of death and dying.

Equip people with the skills and confidence to become change makers

- Justice Sundays engage our children in a variety of justice issues throughout the year.
- Offered Our Whole Lives (OWL) class for Jr. High age students in grades 7th & 8th. We opened our class to families outside the congregation and had four youth attending from the larger Brooklyn community.
- High School Youth Group Service Learning Immersion Journey to West Virginia to explore the significant environmental, social, and economic injustices that revolve around the state’s long history of coal mining. As we all grapple with the current political moment, our Youth have this opportunity to cross boundaries within our own country, to humbly listen, and try to make sense of the various struggles people are facing. Shari Halliday-Quan and I will accompany the Youth on this journey which takes place June 27 - July 5.

Cultivate a caring, welcoming community that models a just and loving world

- Preached an “all souls day” sermon on the theme of honoring our ancestors and gave congregants the opportunity to remember their deceased loved ones by building altars with photos, objects, and names during worship.
- Our children’s Winter Holiday service this year was a retelling of the nativity story through the lens of immigration justice with an emphasis on welcoming the stranger.
- Collected toys and clothes during the Winter Holidays for families in the Good Shepherd program.

Become an environmentally responsible congregation

- The RE program continues to use existing materials most of the time, rather than purchasing new items.
- Using reusable cups whenever possible for Religious Education snack.
- Continued use of an online Religious Education registration form instead of using paper forms.
- The Re Council met online using the Zoom video conference tool, enabling us to meet from home rather than traveling to the church building for monthly meetings.

Develop and responsibly manage congregational resources

- Tracking the Religious Education Program expenses.
- Continued use of existing supplies to use what we already have instead of purchasing new supplies.
- The RE program pays for much of its own supplies and programming through fundraisers and soliciting donations from families. We also ask parents to pay a registration fee per child to help cover the costs of supplies and snacks.
- Helped organize a stewardship dinner party for families with children enrolled in RE.

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

Adam Podd
adam@fuub.org

This has been my fourth full year as Music Director at First Unitarian. I feel proud of the music we've made each week, and confident in our ability to keep up the traditions, both old and new, that have been established with our great singers and other musical collaborators.

Our choir remains strong, in numbers and spirits. They have sung every single week this year, except twice, as well as at Rev. Dr. Donald McKinney's memorial and the Sacred Sites tour of our sanctuary, all the while exploring a breadth of new repertoire. Our special music services on Christmas Eve and Palm Sunday were well received, with exciting new music at each, including a few world premieres. Other guest musicians and performers include members of our congregation, as well as visiting artists, including Emma's Revolution, Anna Egge, Tyrone Davis, Dan Emino, Wendy Russell, and others.

Our monthly jazz services have continued for a third consecutive year. Feedback from the congregation has been overwhelmingly positive confirming that jazz is a great vehicle to lead rich and meaningful worship services. I have written new musical arrangements almost every single month for our special needs and utilizing our great choir, soloists, and band. This effort is all paid for by the McKinney fund, which has had some increase to its contributions, showing promise for the longevity of this well-loved tradition. Jazz Sundays are not yet fully self-sustained by donations, but our progress gives me hope we'll get there soon.

The music program at First Unitarian continues to grow its digital and social media presence with high quality videos made of some of our memorable performances. These videos are produced by dedicated volunteers with equipment purchased from our special appeal for camera equipment from a few years ago. Our YouTube channel has gotten the attention of several fellow music directors from UU churches across the country, who have been in touch with me about sharing materials and ideas. We are growing First U's reputation as a special place for music-making in the wider UU world.

The musical community at First Unitarian has also put on two major fund-raising events, Jazz & Pie (in the fall) and the Spring Cabaret. The two events raised a total of \$3,500 in support of programs at First Unitarian. Special thanks to everyone who participated and attended, especially Bob Bero, for spearheading the Spring Cabaret, and the Jazz and Pie organizing committee.

The Julie McKinney Music Fund raised a record \$11,600 from 51 generous donors. Here's to another great year!

DIRECTOR OF CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

Garnett Losak
garnett@fuub.org

In the five years that I have been privileged to be part of the staff of First Unitarian, my role has been adapted to meet the changing and ever developing needs of the congregation. When I first joined the staff, half time, in August of 2012, I was charged with managing membership and taking control of our internal communications systems. Five years later, my position is fulltime and added to those initial responsibilities are management of the congregation's calendar, building rentals, oversight of office and building administration, and special projects as they come up throughout the year. I am truly blessed to have the opportunity to serve the congregation that I love.

Promote collective and individual spiritual exploration, growth, and practice

This year, we opted to simplify our monthly Sabbath Sunday practice. After two years of planning multiple activities and a third year of discernment, we settled on a shared meal and fellowship. We invited the committees/groups to host events with the enticement that any proceeds would be added to their program budgets. Many committees were anxious to participate. The lunches have been well attended and as of this writing, every sponsoring group has been able to increase their program budget.

The following committees stepped up to sponsor Sabbath lunches: Membership Committee, Religious Education Council, Weaving the Fabric of Diversity, Queer Caucus, Beloved Conversations.

I worked with the membership committee to develop a new 5-hour curriculum called *Pathways: Deepening Your Relationship to First Unitarian*. This class is designed and strongly recommended for new members of the congregation and those who are interested in membership. Participants prepare to become active, vibrant members of our community through exploration of their individual spiritual journeys and deeper understanding of UU history and theology. We offered the class three times during the program year. 37 people participated. (see more in Rachel Michael's Membership Committee report)

Following the enormous success of our Transforming Lives series, I launched a [Transforming Lives page](#) on our website with the purpose of ensuring that these lovely, personal testimonials have a life beyond the worship service.

Cultivate a caring, welcoming community that models a just and loving world.

I am extremely proud to have been instrumental in our accessibility project. As membership director, I have watched many of our elderly or disabled members and friends struggle to enter the building and often give up as the struggle becomes overwhelming. Additionally, we have lost rental income and sadly, at least one memorial service this year due to the lack of accessibility. This has been a year of planning and fundraising (see Cara Haft's Our Future Together report). We were granted Landmarks approval for the project in the fall, thanks to the hard work of our architect, Andrew Wright and our Director of Facilities, Christopher Johnson. I am thrilled to report that we expect installation to begin in late August and conclude in the fall.

I facilitated first Sunday newcomer's orientations from October through June and once in the summer. The program year sessions were often co-facilitated by either Rev. Ana or Kevin Jagoe. Classes include a brief introduction to UU theology and history, and the history of our congregation and information on how to get involved.

For the second year, I live streamed our worship services on our Facebook page. We average approximately 10 viewers watching during the feed with many more, often hundreds viewing at least some parts of the service at a later time. We have had viewers from all over the country and from as far away as Ghana and Transylvania. I have been especially pleased that the service is frequently viewed live by several members who are unable to attend services due to injury or illness.

We welcomed 30 new members this year and certified 286 members with Unitarian Universalist Association in February. This is our 7th straight year of membership growth. (see more in the membership committee report).

Equip people with the skills and confidence to become change makers for justice in their communities

Luke Elliott-Negri and I worked together to develop a process by which members of our congregation can initiate a social justice project at First Unitarian. The result is a pamphlet that is used as part of the Pathways program. I hope to develop a "starting a social justice project at First U" program for next year.

Become an environmentally responsible congregation

With thanks to Wendy Russell, our office manager and bookkeeper, we have created a more efficient office so as to dramatically cut down on purchasing of unneeded materials. We

also continue to cut-down on paper use through effective use of our website and our monthly e-news.

Develop and responsibly manage the resources needed to support the congregation's work and growth.

Wendy Russell joined us in August and has made an enormous impact on the functionality and efficiency of the office. Wendy has created efficiencies through use of tax-free accounts, found savings in our office machine rentals, postage, purchasing and eliminated late fees and interest. Through Wendy's efforts we will save approximately \$12,000 this year.

I created an on-line space reservation form for use by our groups and committees. The form has streamlined the process of reserving space and reduced miscommunication and errors. I have processed 135 space requests this year.

I worked closely with the small, but mighty stewardship committee on our most successful campaign yet. As of this writing we have \$315,000 pledged. This is only the second time we have received over \$300,000 in pledges and the first time we have received \$300,000 before the annual meeting. (see Koren Manning's stewardship report for more information).

I was part of the "Our Future Together" fundraising team co-chaired by Cara Haft and Lee Pardee We raised \$67,000 in donations and receive a \$10,000 grant in support of our accessibility capital project. (see more in Cara Haft's Report).

We were able to significantly increase revenue from building rentals this year. St. Ann's School returned to the chapel for a second year and stayed well beyond their original exit date (originally February, now through the end of May). Income from that rental will be at least \$33,000. Other rentals contributed an additional \$57,400. Ceremonies income totaled \$8,100 before the ceremonies coordinator commission. It should be noted that, while additional rental income is necessary and welcome, the work involved puts significant pressure on our staff and building. This pressure will be partly addressed by the addition of a fulltime staff custodian (assuming approval of the 2018-19 budget at the Annual Meeting).

Total building rentals including ceremonies, but not including the daycare or the apartments, are anticipated to net between \$90,000 and \$95,000. This is an increase of \$30,000 over the previous fiscal year. The increase is attributed to a combination of increased requests for space and higher rental fees. We have also added charges for custodial overtime when appropriate, not included in these totals.

Director of Facilities
Christopher Johnson
chris@fuub.org

As your Director of Facilities, I continue to effectively manage all daily and emergency situations with regard to timely inspections, tenant relations as well as building repairs and improvements.

Below are some of the projects and repairs completed or ongoing this year.

- *New Gas line piping.* For several years we have heard reports of a gas odor in various locations of the First Unitarian campus, especially in the area between the chapel and the undercroft. Since the new gas line piping, the gas odor has completely dissipated. I am happy to report that this project which was anticipated to have many red tape complications, went very smoothly and came in well under budget. Though this part of the campus infrastructure goes unseen and unknown, I am particularly proud of this safety improvement.
- The initial stages of the new Fire alarm Installation Projects were completed. FDNY approval. NYCBD approval. \$160k installation estimated price tag by High Rise Fire. Hold put on project by Board until further notice. As the new Fire Alarm project was put on hold, it was imperative to repair the old system for safety and insurance purposes.
- The Accessibility project: I worked with our architect, Andrew Wright, to obtain Landmarks approval for the project. The date of expected completion has been postponed until fall 2018 due to a change in the work order for a wider ramp that will allow access for persons with oversized wheel chairs.
- The new walk through from the chapel to the woman's bathroom: The Undercroft women's bathroom now serves as an all genders rest room during the week when there is no access due to Imagine daycare's security concerns. This will undoubtedly assist with bringing in more revenue, as without a rest facility, the chapel is not a rentable space.
- The undercroft remodel continues. When completed, the improved space will provide congregants, renters, and Imagine daycare a more aesthetically pleasing space. It will be warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer. I am hopeful that this remodel will bring in more revenue through future rentals.
- Many infrastructure improvements went on in the 50 Monroe Place boiler room. Plumbing repairs take a major bite out of the budget each year.

- Multiple roof leaks are being addressed by me personally so as to save thousands in contractor invoices.
- I installed A new dish washer motor. This saved the congregation a couple of thousand dollars or more over hiring an outside vender.

Cost Saving:

The gas budget for the next 2018-19 FY was cut by about 10% due to a decrease in consumption. This is a direct result of the ongoing repairs and improvements to the campus infrastructure. Not only are these repairs saving money, but they are reducing the church carbon footprint. Repairs to the buildings are absolutely necessary precursors to any future large scale eco-friendly heating /cooling installations.

Committees, Workshops, Other:

Fire Installation project. Accessibilities project. Attended Facilities Committee meetings. Monthly Board meetings. Several meetings with owners/key staff of Imagine to address their security concerns. Apartment tenant relations. As for my commitment to a safer campus, I now work security on Sundays. I also authored the new church evacuation document, building on an existing Religious Education evacuation plan. The church will now be conducting emergency drills twice a year.

Budget Overview:

The total operating budget for facilities management was \$58,750.00, including donations for building improvements in the undercroft of \$3,750.00. An additional \$23,500.00 was allocated from an approved endowment draw for maintenance safety projects in preparation for an upgraded fire alarm system. The Board opted to delay the fire alarm upgrade, so \$12,000.00 was used from the endowment to repair the existing system.

COMMUNITY MINISTER
The Rev. Dr. Kelly Murphy Mason
Rev.KMMason@Gmail.com

My second year in affiliation as FUUB Community Minister has been an especially exciting time. In Nov. 2017, I was awarded a 'Distinguished Contribution Award' from my professional society, the American Association of Pastoral Counselors, for "innovative and visionary leadership" in the field. It was indeed an honor to be recognized in that way by my colleagues. In Jan. 2018, however, I decided to resign from my post as Managing Director at the Psychotherapy & Spirituality Institute in New York, NY, where I have worked since Feb. 2013. This coming summer, I will leave the PSI staff altogether as my

husband and I relocate to the Boston area. That will be a big change for me after my nearly 20 years in New York.

In academia, I again taught our UU students at Union Theological Seminary, this year in both Fall and Spring Terms (offering “Our Living Tradition: UU Ministerial Formation Today” and “Gathered Together: UU Polity and Practices”). In addition to being Lecturer at UTS, I was the Metro NY Liaison for the Ministerial Formation Network in our regional chapter of the UU Ministers Association from 2017-2018. In that role, I helped coordinate a springtime retreat and a year-end commissioning service for graduating seminarians. It has been a rich experience working with our emerging religious professionals.

Here in Brooklyn, I once more preached the sermon for our annual Good Friday service and commemorative communion led by the Deacons. My sermon was titled “The Witnessing World: Widening Our Scope” and recognized the spiritual significance of the #MeToo movement. In Dec. 2017, I also led a workshop titled “The Wisdom of Women in Religion”, commemorating the 40th anniversary of the UU Women & Religion Resolution. Additionally, I served as worship associate for Sunday services in both fall and spring. I also assisted with Rev. Dr. Donald McKinney’s memorial in Nov. 2017 and led a graveside memorial service for a UU family at Green-Wood Cemetery in Jan. 2018.

This June, I will be headed to Kansas City with Rev. Ana, where we will both represent First Unitarian as ministerial delegates at the 2018 UUA General Assembly. While there, Ana and I have plans to lead a public discussion of “Jewish-Christian Dialogue on the Ten Commandments: No Other Gods for Unitarian Universalists”. It’s been great helping celebrate the recent publication of her new book. In Mar. 2018, Ana and I appeared on two separate podcasts of The VUU, produced by the UU Church of the Larger Fellowship, each representing our distinct theological vantages within Unitarian Universalism. Later this summer, my husband and I will go on a Transylvanian pilgrimage with the UU Partner Church Council, marking the 450th anniversary of the Edict of Torda. That should be quite an adventure for the two of us!

In April 2018, I announced some bittersweet news, namely that I had been called as the next Senior Minister at the UU Society of Wellesley Hills. Fully participating in a busy ministerial search cycle with the UUA meant that I was out of town much more than I would have liked and often away from First Unitarian these past few months. Still, the support and encouragement I received from people here was remarkable. Please know how touching that was and how grateful I remain to you all.

Sadly, my affiliation with First Unitarian will end at the conclusion of the 2017-2018 programming year, but I do look forward to returning now to full-time congregational ministry. I promise not to be a stranger to this place (it’s become so dear to my heart and Ben’s!) and to send occasional updates from Wellesley, where I will start my new ministry in Aug. 2018. It truly has been a privilege being part of this fine faith community the past couple of years, and I bid First Unitarian the very fondest of farewells.



MINISTERIAL INTERN

Kevin W. Jagoe
kevin@fuub.org

The past two program years have been nothing short of amazing. I began with First U in August of 2016, preaching my first sermon on August 28th. I had just completed a summer as a chaplain intern in a hospital in Minneapolis, MN and then moved across the country to begin my second year of seminary and our time together.

My learning goals for year two of my internship were:

1. Develop my abilities in worship arts, particularly in the area of preaching.
2. Develop self-care and spiritual practices.
3. Develop leadership skills and experience in anti-racism and multicultural community building.

Developing my abilities in worships arts, particularly in the area of preaching. Over the course of my internship, I have had the opportunity to grow in this area in many ways including:

- Preaching four times at First U this program year, five times last year, and twelve times in other pulpits.
- Serving as a worship leader in my first year and participating in worship in numerous ways over the course of our two years together including many opportunities to lead prayer during worship.
- Creating and leading the Winter Solstice service in December 2017
- Performing two funerals last year and soon a baby dedication for twin girls
- Serving as sabbatical minister for February 2017
- Coordinating summer worship in 2017 and 2018
- And because it doesn't really fit into any of my learning goals, a bonus experience was chairing UniFair December 2017

Developing my self-care and spiritual practices. Over the course of my internship, and ministerial formation process, self-care is something I have focused on as a particular need to avoid burnout and to establish good habits for future congregational ministry. The ways I have done this include:

- Meeting weekly with Rev. Ana as part of my internship requirements and to check-in.
- Meeting monthly with a Spiritual Director who is a retired minister (UCC).
- Meeting monthly with a mentor (Rev. Tracy Sprowls, a former First U intern) in the Metro New York UU ministers cluster.

- Meeting once or twice a month with a group of three peers from across the country.
- Meeting once or twice a month with the ministry team of Church of the Larger Fellowship for Theological Reflection.
- Last year, I tried a varied approach to spiritual practice which included knitting, coloring, reflective writing, and meditation.
- In year two, I committed more deeply to a daily meditation practice
- I occasionally have attended meditation sessions at a Shambhala community in Manhattan
- I made Mondays into a reading and rest day as a form of Sabbath
- In recent weeks, I have been trying to hold an hour on my calendar each morning for meditation and reflection time, followed by an hour of study time.

Developing leadership skills and experience in anti-racism and multicultural community building. Over the course of this program year, I have grown in this area in many ways including:

- Leading our third book discussion from our summer readings about race and white supremacy culture on the book *Between the World and Me*.
- Proposing *Beloved Conversations: Meditations on Race and Ethnicity* as my Focused Initiative (similar to a capstone project) for year two of my internship.
- Meagan Henry and I co-facilitated the pilot offering of this curriculum to First U. Together, we recruited participants at the beginning of the program year.
- Megan and I led 7 participants through a weekend kick-off retreat (where we brought in an outside facilitator) and 8 two-hour sessions on alternating Tuesday evenings November-February.
- Since completing the program, our initial cohort has continued to meet and think about ways to bring what they have learned to the larger First U community.
- We are planning for the entire board to take part in *Beloved Conversations* next year and have a second group as well.
- The *Beloved Conversations* group will create and lead a summer worship service on August 5
- I taught a UU history course both years of my internship which included conversations about our congregation's and traditions' history around the topic of race and embrace or rejection of people of color as members and minister. We also discuss the UUA's participation in broader racial justice movements.

Beyond the three main learning goals, I have been completing the process to become a Unitarian Universalist Minister. Over the course of my internship, I have had an amazing environment to learn from and incorporate into the formation path of Unitarian Universalist ministry:

- Meeting almost monthly with 5-6 amazing members of the congregation as my Ministerial Internship Committee — Nancy Welles (Chair), Dawn Brekke, Alison Derevensky, John Carroll, Edwin Lord, and Karin Magary — who have helped me reflect on my ministry here and find ways to grow.
- I completed 48 of my 90 credits for the Master of Divinity degree at Meadville Lombard Theological School in Chicago, IL
- I prepared to go before the Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC) and members of this congregation participated in my Mock MFC interview
- I saw the MFC in December 2017 and passed, being granted Preliminary Fellowship as a UU Minister with the UUA and being cleared to go into the Search process for a congregation.
- I interviewed with 5 congregations in 5 different states in February and March of 2018.
- I was selected as the final Candidate in March 2018 and Called as the next Settled Minister of BuxMont Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in Warrington, PA on May 6, 2018. I will begin formally on August 1, 2018.
- On May 20 (the day of our Annual Meeting), I will graduate from Meadville Lombard Theological School
- The final step will occur next program year (in October I hope!) with my Ordination & Installation at BuxMont UU Fellowship.

In the past 22 months, a lot has happened. I have grown as a minister, First U has embraced me and Shari Halliday-Quan as a teaching congregation, the world has been transformed by national and global politics, and we have welcomed many new members.

I believe one of the most important lessons I have learned through this internship is to remain open to possibilities. I love a solid plan and a spreadsheet but the moments where real magic happens are in between the cracks of best-laid plans. My final Sunday as your ministerial intern will be June 10th. Between now and then I hope we learn what it means to say a good goodbye to one another. Thank you all for all that you have shared, invited, created, and gifted to me as your minister-in-training.

All that I have experienced here is now part of the ministry I will bring to future congregations. Your openness as a teaching congregation is not only a gift to me but to all the seminarians who have been and will be part of this amazing community. Know that the lessons learned here and the times you have ministered me into my own ministry are carried forward and will never be forgotten.

GOVERNANCE REPORTS

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Roger Cooper, President

The past year has been a busy one as usual at First U and for your Board of Trustees. We set to work shortly after we were elected at the last annual meeting, holding our annual Board Retreat this year in September 2017, and we haven't stopped since. Part of our focus at the Retreat was on First U's mission and what it means to each member of the Board, to frame and guide our work over the coming year. Here, I have continued with the practice of last year's president, Lee Pardee, of framing my report according to the goals of our Forward First mission plan.

Promote collective and individual spiritual exploration, growth, and practice

This year we continued to have the benefit of three additions to our clergy staff:

- Rev. Kelly Murphy Mason, our affiliated community minister, who will leave us next year for a new permanent position in Wellesley, Massachusetts.
- Kevin Jagoe, our ministerial intern who leaves us at the end of this year to begin as a minister to his own congregation in BuxMont Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in Warrington, PA.
- Shari Halliday-Quan, our seminarian who leaves us at the end of this year to begin an internship at First Unitarian in San Francisco, CA.

We will miss all three of them immensely. We thank them for all they contributed to First Unitarian and wish them well on their journeys on the next stages of their careers.

We are fortunate that we will be joined in the fall by a new ministerial intern who is a student and a new seminarian, both students at Union Theological Seminary.

Cultivate a caring, welcoming community that models a just and loving world

Following the congregation's vote at the last Annual Meeting to authorize the Board to draw funds from the endowment to fund an accessibility project that would include adding a lift on the front of the building, the Board approved a campaign to raise funds from the congregation to pay for a portion of this project and to offset the amount of any draw from the endowment. That campaign successfully raised over \$67,000. We have also received a \$10,000 grant from NY Landmarks Conservancy to help fund the project. The project is currently on schedule to have the lift installed in the fall of this year.

The Board spent time discussing and beginning an examination of issues of systemic racism and white supremacy with respect to First U. The Board committed to continuing this dialogue and work in the coming year.

We appointed new members to the Committee on Ministries.

Equip people with the skills and confidence to become change makers for justice in their communities

At the last Annual Meeting, the congregation (i) agreed to enter into a process of discernment in order to determine whether and how as a congregation to commit to a program of offering sanctuary to immigrants and/or refugees and (ii) authorized the Board to establish a committee to facilitate the accomplishment of these goals. At its next meeting, the Board authorized the creation of the Immigrant Solidarity Committee. That Committee then proceeded to work extremely hard over the next several months to develop a detailed proposal for a short-term sanctuary project at First U, and to work with the congregation on a process of discernment concerning its proposal. In October, the Board authorized the Committee to bring its proposal to a congregational vote at the November 5, 2017 congregational meeting, where it received near unanimous support from the congregation. After much further work organizing the congregation to carry out the work, the program launched at the end of April 2018.

The Board held two congregational meetings:

November 5, 2017	Presentation and vote on becoming a sanctuary congregation
	Presentation and vote to adopt the UUA Statement of Conscience
	Election of Edwin Lord as a Deacon
February 25, 2018	Election of GA Delegates
	Updates on finances, stewardship and accessibility
	Discussion of property tax issues

The Board approved the Baked Bean Cook-Off/Swing Dancing evening to raise funds to send our delegates to General Assembly in June 2018. Thanks to the Leadership Development Committee for a fun evening in support of current and future leaders of our congregations.

Develop and responsibly manage the resources needed to support the congregation's work and growth

In June 2017, we hired Wendy Russell as our new office manager and bookkeeper. She has been a terrific addition to our staff, and quickly became a member of the choir and active participant on Sunday mornings.

The Board spent substantial time over the year working with the Fiscal Forward Team to consider the current challenges of funding our congregation's level of operational expenses and to develop strategies for addressing those challenges. The Board addressed those challenges with the congregation at the November congregational meeting and has begun with staff to implement several changes aimed at meeting those challenges.

In October 2017, the Board learned that First U had previously lost its tax-exempt status for its New York City property taxes, and that it owed several hundred thousand dollars in back taxes that had been charged for the period without the exemption. The Board hired counsel with appropriate expertise and worked closely with counsel to submit the required applications to restore our exempt status and to have that status reapplied retroactively for prior periods where the church had been taxed. The board reported to the congregation on these issues at the February 2018 congregational meeting. After learning in March 2018 that the City had accepted the church’s submissions and restored its exemptions (although not at the same level as the church’s previous exemption, for reasons out of our control) as well as applied it retroactively (substantially reducing the amount previously taxed for the periods), the Board held a special information session with the congregation to discuss the outcome and answer questions. A special draw from the endowment was necessary in order to pay the back taxes owed. The Board is working with staff to implement a series of controls to ensure that an issue like this one does not arise again.

In light of the substantial additional costs to the congregation resulting from having to pay unpaid property taxes as well as the increased property taxes going forward, and the amount that has been and will need to be drawn from the endowment to fund these costs, the Board voted to suspend work on the fire safety plan that the Board presented to the congregation at the last Annual Meeting. The substantial additional costs resulting from the taxes were not known to the congregation or the Board at the time the congregation approved the use of endowment funds to fund the fire safety plan. At present, staff is repairing the current fire system and looking for more cost-effective alternatives to the system that was presented last year.

Following several recent incidents, including break-ins at First U, the theft of our Black Lives Matter banners from outside the building last year, and church shootings in Sutherland Springs in November 2017 and Charleston in 2015, the Board commissioned a subcommittee to undertake a security and safety study of the church. Board member Waciuma Wanjohi and Chris Johnson led this effort and presented the Board with a comprehensive report. The Board is moving forward with several of their recommendations, including regularly holding evacuation drills, which we did for the first time after the Sunday service on May 13, 2018.

Trustees:

<u>Term Ending 2018</u>	<u>Term Ending 2019</u>	<u>Term Ending 2020</u>
Roger Cooper	Patrick Gunn	Dale Ho
Sean Fischer	Cara Haft	Laurel Lesio
Lee Pardee	Waciuma Wanjohi	Dawn Elane Reed

Clerk: Bruce Wilde Treasurer: Lake Wise



DEACONS

Alfredo Blanco, Senior Deacon

The Deacons meet regularly on the first Sunday of every other month.

Olive Hoogenboom

Long time Deacon and Church historian Olive Hoogenboom, author of [The First Unitarian Church of Brooklyn](#), remains in a nursing home. Among her many other services to the congregation, Olive initiated the practice of an equal number of female and male Deacons.

Greeting and Ushering

The Deacons serve as head ushers. Generally, each Deacon volunteers for one month. Adjustments are made to accommodate the four Deacons who are choir members.

At the request of a decedent's family, Deacons are available to serve as ushers for memorial services. Most recently they served for the memorial service of Minister Emeritus Donald W. McKinney, senior minister of First Unitarian for more than three decades.

Donald W. McKinney Reception

The Deacons, with the help of Sara Faison, hosted the reception following the memorial service for Rev. McKinney.

Deacon Nominations

The By-laws stipulate ten Deacons and provide for filling vacancies. The Deacons nominate a member to fill a vacancy, and the nominee is then elected at a congregational meeting.

Following this procedure, upon nomination by the Deacons, longtime devoted member, Edwin Lord, was elected by the congregation to fill the vacancy left by the death of Seth Faison.

The Deacons nominated another long time devoted member, Bob Bero, to fill the vacancy left by the resignation of Peter Norling who has moved. Bob Bero will stand for election at the 2018 Annual Meeting.

Green-Wood Cemetery

The Deacons oversee the management of the congregation's burial ground, Vista Hill, in Green-Wood cemetery. Pursuant to that responsibility, the Deacons clarified the fee structure and examined the burial ground map.

Good Friday Commemorative Communion

In accordance with the congregation's By-laws and tradition, the Deacons assisted at the solemn Good Friday Commemorative Communion conducted by The Rev. Dr. Kelly Murphy Mason who identifies as a Christian Unitarian.

With a mixture of joy and sadness the Deacons learned that Rev. Murphy Mason will not be officiating at the 2019 Good Friday Communion because she has been called by the Unitarian Universalist Society of Wellesley Hills in Massachusetts.

Deacons: Tom Check, Liz Davis, Olive Hoogenboom, Edwin Lord, Connie Newsom, Lee Pardee, Bruce Wilde, Nancy Wolf

FACILITIES COMMITTEE

Liz Davis, Chair
ead1142@yahoo.com

1) Facilities Committee (FC) members have discussed a range of topics during the 2017-2018 program year which relate to the preservation and maintenance of our historic church buildings. The Facilities Committee is one of three committees mandated by our new By-laws. Per our By-laws, the Facilities Committee “shall support and assist the Board and the paid staff in preserving, maintaining, securing and enhancing the buildings and grounds owned by the Society. The Facilities Committee shall propose capital projects and maintenance activities for consideration by the Finance Committee in the annual budget. The Board may authorize the Facilities Committee to oversee or execute projects of capital improvement or facilities maintenance within the amount of the approved budget.”

2) In meeting these duties during the 2017-2018 program year, the Facilities Committee has held regular meetings with members and with the Director of Facilities, during which meeting minutes were taken, for later inclusion and filing with the congregation’s records. During this program year, we made recommendations and suggestions to the Director of Facilities about needed repairs, capital improvements, safety concerns and special projects. We made these recommendations through discussion at committee meetings and during ongoing in-person and e-mail conversations. We have also shared the background and “institutional memory” of various aspects of the historic upkeep and repair of our buildings, as well as the contact information for contractors who were hired for past building-related projects. More specifically, we have discussed many of the building-related issues that Director of Facilities Chris Johnson has been addressing, including: the electrical system, plumbing issues, heating and 50 Monroe boiler issues, the gas system, security issues, and plans for a proposed new fire detection system, and fire prevention measures. The Facilities Committee also recently provided feedback to the Director of Facilities on building-related budget proposals for the proposed 2018-2019 fiscal year budget.

3) Additionally, the Facilities Committee participated in the Annual “Faith in Action Expo,” held on Sunday, September 17, 2017 in the Undercroft. Liz Davis, Gloria Furman, Connie Newsom and Nancy Wolf staffed the Facilities Committee’s table, and spoke to many interested congregants about the FC’s work. We displayed three photo boards at our table, which were prepared by Liz Davis, showing past FC projects, including: 1) recent

Congregational Clean-Up Days, showing members and friends “Creating Community by Working Together,” 2) the Chapel Floor replacement project, and 3) the Kitchen Upgrade.

4) This year, the Facilities Committee also held a successful Servetus Library Clean-Up Day on Saturday, October 28, 2017. We had a good turnout of nine volunteers, who participated throughout the day. Together, we were able to clean the Library and prepare this much-used space for Congregational meetings and events. Volunteers worked to wash windows and window sills, and to clean and polish an antique, carved wooden table, and a round wooden table. We also made substantial progress in the large task of cleaning the nine built-in bookcases. Both large rugs were removed from the Library and were vacuumed. The floor and baseboards were also vacuumed and mopped. We began the day with breakfast in the kitchen, and enjoyed lunch in the church office, and left the patio door open to let in the beautiful fall air, while enjoying a delicious soup prepared by Connie Newsom. We had fun and created a sense of community as we worked. Special thanks are owed to Director of Facilities Chris Johnson, for his advance work in preparing the Library for the event. Volunteers included: Beth Evans, Nancy Welles, Nancy Wolf, Gloria Furman, Connie Newsom, Bob Newsom, Waciuma Wanjohi, Yi Zhang, and Liz Davis.

5) The Facilities Committee also held a Sanctuary Clean-up Day on Saturday, April 28, 2018, to prepare our Sanctuary for participation in The New York Landmarks Conservancy’s Sacred Sites Open House Weekend. Volunteers Larry Calia and Liz Davis worked to dust the Vestibule’s woodwork and remove wax drippings from the three candle-lighting stations. The following weekend, on Saturday, May 5, 2018 and Sunday, May 6, 2018 several members of the Facilities Committee, including Liz Davis, Nancy Wolf and Gloria Furman joined Larry Calia and Garnett Losak, and gave guided tours of our Sanctuary, to the general public. Nancy Wolf also worked with Bruce Wilde to update a brochure of the history and architecture of our Sanctuary, which was distributed during the Sacred Sites Open House tours.

6) In January Liz Davis and Gloria Furman represented the Facilities Committee and attended sessions about the new “Building Closing Procedures” for groups who use First Unitarian’s spaces when no custodian is on duty. Liz Davis also represented the Facilities Committee and attended a meeting of the “Building Security Task Force” on February 4, 2018. The Facilities Committee is also continuing to work with Director of Facilities Chris Johnson on a longer-term project, to organize and maintain create historical records about facilities use and repairs made. We are working to create accessible digital records, including spreadsheet summaries of prior building-related files and records which are currently stored in the church office. The following congregational members have attended meetings during the 2017-2018 program year: Liz Davis (Chair), Gloria Furman, Nancy Wolf, Steve Richetts, Gaither Pratt (who is an architect), Connie Newsom, and Al Blanco. Director of Facilities Chris Johnson regularly attends FC Meetings. This year, to accommodate members’ and staff schedules, the FC has started to hold meetings on Sunday afternoons, following coffee hour, in either the church office or the Library. The Facilities Committee welcomes all those who are interested in preserving and maintaining our historic buildings. Please contact Chair Liz David if you are interested in attending a Facilities Committee Meeting.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Lee Pardee – Chair

leepar@earthlink.net

The Finance Committee proposed the following policies and changes that were adopted by the Board of Trustees:

- Individuals authorized to make transfers from the congregation's endowment fund into its bank accounts are the Treasurer, Board President, Finance Committee Chair.
- Fire Safety Project put on hold pending the resolution of the congregation's real estate tax situation.
- Non-urgent facilities projects put on hold until FY19 due to budget limits.
- Develop a written schedule of financial tasks that need to be addressed annually, quarterly, monthly.
- Annual review of the congregation's finances to be conducted by a congregational committee rather than by an auditing firm, saving the congregation \$5000 per year.

The Finance Committee also assisted the Treasurer in drafting the budget for FY19.

Next year the Committee hopes to address

- Creation of an audit committee
- Identification of a less costly health care plan for staff
- Long-range financial planning for the congregation

If you are a member of the congregation who is interested in joining the Finance Committee, please contact Chair, Lee Pardee

Many thanks to this year's committee members.

Chair Lee Pardee

Members Lake Wise (Treasurer), Mike Alcott, Samira Kawash

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Mary Most, Co-Chair

The Leadership Development Committee (LDC) (David Garvoille, co-chair; Mary Most, co-chair; Edwin Lord; Kurt Steele; Nancy Witherell) is charged with identifying candidates for the elected leadership roles in our congregation, including delegates to the UUA General Assembly and the Board of Trustees.

2018 General Assembly delegates elected at Congregational Meeting on February 25:

- Vonda Brunsting
- Helen Harris
- Liz Komar
- Lindsey Lee
- Laura Manos-Hey

It should be noted that our congregation could have 6 delegates, but we did not have enough applicants. Interestingly, none of the applicants identify as male. Also, we were unable to enroll a youth who was over 16 and able to take the time off from school to attend as a Youth Delegate this year.

Co-chair David Garvoille organized a fundraiser event in January to support our GA delegates, raising \$1200 (about \$250 per delegate) through a baked bean cook-off, as a nod to this year's GA site in Kansas City, Missouri; followed by a swing dance party with lessons and a DJ that was open to NYC's swing dance community for a fun, well-attended evening with over 80 dancers.

Candidate slate for election at May 20, 2018 Annual Meeting

Board of Trustees, Class of 2021

- Vonda Brunsting
- Sam McElvie
- John Carroll

Clerk of the Congregation: Bruce Wilde (second one-year term)

Moderator: Michael Alcott (one-year term)

Leadership Development Committee (two-year terms)

- Sean Fischer
- Vincenza (Enza) Itri
- Laura Manos-Hey

Bios and pictures of the entire slate of nominees is available on the [church website](#) and on the bulletin board in the undercroft.

Edwin Lord and Mary Most continue to serve on the LDC for the second year of their two-year terms.

PROGRAM COMMITTEES AND TEAMS

IMMIGRANT SOLIDARITY

Marisa Lastres, Chair

The Immigrant Solidarity Committee was established by congregational vote at the May 2017 Annual Meeting.

Since then, we have:

- Created a short-term sanctuary plan in coordination with BDC, our community partner. *(June, July, August 2017)*
- Held nine discernment meetings ("cottage meetings"), including one specifically designed for the lawyers of First Unitarian. About 70 members and friends attended these meetings. *(September and October 2017)*
- Held a town hall meeting, during which participants could ask the Committee, BDC, and Katia Hansen of UURISE any lingering questions. *(October 2017)*
- Brought forward [a resolution to make First Unitarian a sanctuary congregation](#), which was approved by well over the two-thirds threshold. *(November 2017)*
- Ran a volunteer recruitment drive. *(December and January 2017)*
- Held two detailed volunteer trainings. *(February 2017)*
- Gratefully accepted \$1,259 in donations from Share the Plate. *(February 2017)*
- Created a detailed, step-by-step volunteer guide. *(March and April 2018)*
- Held a successful practice run. Officially launched First Unitarian's sanctuary program. *(April 2018)*

Throughout, we have endeavored to remain in close communication with volunteers, staff, and the congregation as a whole via tabling, conversation, and email.

This coming year, we plan to:

- Maintain what we have built: our volunteer pool, volunteers' readiness, our relationship with BDC, and our relationships with the staff and congregation.
- Host guest(s) in sanctuary, should the need arise.
- Help other congregations with sanctuary discernment and sanctuary programs, if the opportunity arises and we have the operational bandwidth.

MEMBERSHIP COUNCIL

Rachel Michael, Chair

The membership council has been hard at work welcoming the many newcomers that walk through our doors each Sunday. We are very excited to have offered an adult education class called Pathways: Deepening Your Relationship to First Unitarian for people who were interested in membership. This class came from the strategies laid out by our Forward First Plan. In Pathways we are providing potential members with the time and tools needed to connect spiritually to Unitarian Universalism and to learn more about our congregation and our larger denomination. We offered the class three times this year with a total of 37 participants.

We have hosted three new member breakfasts, welcoming 30 new members to our congregation. During the Service of the Living Tradition we will honor several members for their years of dedication to our congregation. This year Bob and Connie Newsom will celebrate 40 years of membership and Mary Most will celebrate 25 years of membership. All of our honorees will receive a special gift from the congregation on May 20th.

We hosted the November Sabbath Lunch, welcomed newcomers every morning during coffee at the welcome table and the table assigned for newcomers. The membership council also has the responsibility of checking people in for all congregational meetings.

I would like to thank the membership council for all their hard work and dedication: Garnett Losak, Marty Bernstein and Megan Munroe.

OUR FUTURE TOGETHER FUNDRAISING TASK FORCE

Cara Haft, Co-Chair

After the congregational vote in May, 2017 to fund a wheelchair-accessible lift so that our members and friends with limited mobility can attend services and events, a fundraising committee was appointed by the Board of Trustees. Led by Board members Lee Pardee and Cara Haft, the committee included Tom Check and Liz Komar, with staff support from Garnett Losak. The “Our Future Together” campaign kicked off soon after the start of the 2017-18 church year with an ambitious goal of 100% participation and \$100,000. As of May 2018, 154 member families (74%) have participated, with 29 additional contributions by friends, staff, and The Women’s Leadership Alliance through the Miriam Campobasso Memorial Fund, for a total so far of \$67,000. While it is somewhat disappointing that some members have not yet chosen not to contribute, it is never too late, and ***it is still possible to designate financial contributions of any amount to this project. Just write “OFT” in the memo line of your check or select it at the “Donate” button on the fuub.org website.***

Concurrent with the internal fundraising campaign, an effort to pursue financial grants from private and public sources has been underway. Unfortunately, mechanical systems (such as the fire alarm system replacement) are not eligible for funding by sources that support houses of worship, and many preservation-oriented organizations do not fund accessibility retrofit projects like ours. However, we submitted four grant applications and were awarded a \$10,000 matching grant by the New York Landmarks Conservancy Sacred Sites Challenge Fund on April 26, 2018. Thanks to Rosemarie Stupel, Matt and Claire Robinson-Henrie, David Andrew, and Elizabeth Ellis for giving of their research and grant-writing skills for this effort led by Cara Haft and Garnett Losak.

Meanwhile, our customized wheelchair lift is being fabricated, and specifications and construction plans have been developed. Recognition of contributors will be made at the ribbon-cutting ceremony when the lift is ready to be put to use for the first time—watch for announcements in Fall, 2018!! Many contributors dedicated their donations to family and loved ones, and these dedications will be displayed at that time.

QUEER CAUCUS

Laura Manos-Hey, Co-Chair

Queer Caucus Mission Statement:

Queer Caucus is a community of LGBTQIA members and friends at the First Unitarian Congregational Society in Brooklyn.

For its members, QC provides fellowship, fun, and a queer space for spiritual exploration; for the larger congregation, QC offers educational opportunities on queer issues; and for the wider world, QC fights for justice.

In our second full year, Queer Caucus has continued to welcome new members and grow our community. We use our table at coffee hour to connect with newcomers and our Facebook group (now with 84 members) and email list to communicate with the group. We launched a formal monthly newsletter, which both informs the community of upcoming programs and recaps completed projects. At the request of members, we also recently began sending emailed reminders 1-2 weeks before meeting and event dates.

Communications team: Laura Manos-Hey and Kayla Reiman

We hold monthly meetings to discuss what everyone is interested in, in terms of both outreach and fellowship events. We brainstorm all together and frequently break into smaller teams that lead the execution of a particular program. This year's efforts included:

- Leading the FUUB contingent to march in the 2017 Brooklyn Pride Parade.
- Launching the ongoing Queer Faith Discussion Group, where we discuss a topic and/or readings around the theme of queer life and faith chosen by a facilitator. Facilitators: Liz Komar, Parrish Turner, and Jennifer Joy

- Following up last year's Lingo Bingo with a Jeopardy Night, this time fundraising for the Trevor Project. We got to share LGBT themed trivia with the congregation, had fun, and raised \$479. Coordinators: Rachael Warner and Hugh Tipping
- At Rev. Ana's invitation, sending a representative on behalf of the group and FUUB to the launch and first meeting of the NYC Unity Project's Faith network.
- Hosting the May, 2018 Sabbath Lunch. Coordinator: Maria Petulla

We are currently planning the first Pride Sunday service at FUUB for June 24, 2018. For the first time we're planning to host a table at the Brooklyn Pride Festival in addition to leading the FUUB group at the Parade. Service planning team: Bryn Sumner, Kayla Reiman, Laura Manos-Hey, Parrish Turner, Gwendolyn Boniface, Crystal Huyett, Liz Komar

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COUNCIL

Becky Huffman, Chair

becky7676@gmail.com

Religious Education Mission Statement

Offer opportunities for children, youth, and adults to grow their souls, develop their Unitarian Universalist identities, and deepen their understanding of our diverse world.

Create joyful experiences that will support families in becoming healthier and more connected, and to build a community together that nurtures and supports all children and youth in their spiritual and personal development.

Teach children, youth, and adults how to develop a strong and resilient faith and help them develop spiritual practices that will sustain and support them all their lives.

Children's Chapel

This year, the Children's Chapels mirrored the sermon series theme, Women in the Hebrew and Christian scripture. Each month, the children heard these ancient stories and explored their relevance to our modern lives. There are so many children attending on Sunday mornings that we created two chapels, one for K-2 and another for 3-6.

Next year, the Children's Chapel will focus on technology and spirituality. We are really excited to be exploring the ways that technology can be a part of a healthy spiritual life.

Justice Sundays

This year, on most holiday weekends, the K-6th graders came together to learn about immigration and refugee justice. Some of these sessions were led by experts in the field. The children did some hands-on projects and acts of conscience including making posters and participating in a blessing of our immigrant sanctuary spaces.

Next year, we will be introducing “Creativity Sundays.” On holiday weekends, our children and youth will explore sacred dance, music, visual arts and other media with the congregation’s artists and teachers.

Our Whole Lives (O.W.L.)

This year, our junior high youth completed a year-long OWL class. We opened the class to the larger community and were able to have a larger group participate! Attendance and engagement were strong, and our dedicated teaching team did an amazing job with this crucial milestone age!

Seasonal Celebrations

Each year, we have four amazing family holiday celebrations - Halloween, Winter Festival, Easter/Spring Celebration and Everybody’s Birthday Party. Thank you to everyone who helped make these celebrations so fun for our children and youth!

For our Winter Festival this year, we went in a new direction. Under the inspired leadership of Meagan Henry, and with an original script by Mary Hamilton, the children enacted a modern nativity journey. All the kids were amazing, and Rev. Ana even got into the act! Here’s to new traditions!

Youth Group

Led by our wonderful Youth Ministry Coordinator, Shari Halliday-Quan, our teens have spent the year supporting each other and growing up together. They led a wonderful worship service this spring. This summer, they will participate in a service learning trip to West Virginia.

The REC council was wonderfully filled by volunteers Mariasara Alcott, Michele Ascione, Joy Gabriel, Andrea Parkinson, Chris Singh, Denise Wharton, and June Wohlhorn. We look forward to another year of supporting children, youth, and families at First Unitarian!

SHARE THE PLATE COMMITTEE

James Mills

First Unitarian is proud to share a portion of its collections with non-profit organizations working for justice, equity, and peace in our local community and throughout the world.

Since our Share the Plate program was established in 2008, we have given away more than \$10,000 annually, and this year, we are happy to announce that we have contributed \$17,874 to deserving organizations.

The Share the Plate Committee is charged with soliciting nominations from the congregation and selecting, from those nominations, qualified organizations to receive a portion of the collection each month. To that end, we launched the online nomination form for submitting community recommendations, which is currently available at <https://goo.gl/pBQPmW>. Participation from the congregation continues to be strong, with new submissions being made regularly. However, the Share the Plate Committee remains committed to establishing better avenues for feedback and recommendations and gladly welcomes all suggestions.

Now in its fourth year, the Committee consists of Joe Gabriel, Gloria Howard, Takako Kono, James Mills, and Hillary Scott.

Gifts since the 2017 Annual Report

May 2017	National Resources Defense Council	\$1275.00
June 2017	International Refugee Assistance Project	\$1801.00
Summer 2017	Global Fund for Women	\$908.18
September 2017	Harvey Hurricane Relief	\$732.13
September 2017	Direct Relief	\$937.14
October 2017	International Rescue Committee	\$1,603.56
October 2017	Minister’s Discretionary Fund	\$256.38
November 2017	The Doula Project	\$1,516.06
December 2017	Unitarian Universalist Service Committee	\$2,414.68
December 2017	Minister’s Discretionary Fund	\$181.88
January 2018	Phoenix Rising	\$1,559.91
February 2018	Immigrant Solidarity	\$1,259.62
March 2018	Make the Road	\$1,289.65
April 2018	Minister’s Discretionary Fund	\$2,138.87

SPRING AUCTION AND DINNER
 Pat Lawrence, Auction Committee

The First U Auction took place on May 5, 2018 at 6pm. A group of volunteers including Roger Cooper, Abby Grosslein, Cara Haft, Pat Lawrence, Garnett Losak, and Lee Pardee pulled together the event.

I put together an [auction blog](#), so people could get a head start at looking at items. I also offered to proxy bid for those who might be unable to attend the event. For the second year, David Garvoille set up online ticketing.

There were 35 Silent Auction items ranging from jewelry and home décor items to services like massages. The Silent Auction garnered about \$1600. There were 21 Live Auction items featuring vacation home stays, fun outings and dinners, and quirky special ones like the always popular “You Choose the Sermon.” The total for the Live Auction was \$5,785.

Food was overseen and prepared by Roger Cooper and a team of volunteers, featuring a make your own taco bar with fixings. Anita Shepherd baked a special dessert. The tables featured chips and salsa and guacamole. The Cash Bar was run by Matt Castle and Mary Huhn with a few additional volunteers. The cash bar featured beer, wine, and margaritas as well as non-alcoholic options. Each registrant received a ticket for a first free drink.

A new twist this year included a special Raffle item: “Dinner with Rev. Ana.” In previous years this had been a Live Auction Item, but it was felt it might be more democratic to give all an equal chance at it. Tickets went on sale the Sunday before the auction and that day alone brought in approximately \$300. The total of tickets sold is not finalized, but the offering probably brought in about \$700. It is recommended that if this is done next year, tickets start sales start even earlier.

The auctioneers were Pat and Jay Lawrence, who cajoled and bullied the assembled bidders to buy items. Our auction recorders were Liz Davis and Mitch Major, supported by Abby Grosslein.

On the revenue side of the event, the final numbers are still being tallied. Combined Silent and Live Items brought in about \$7,400. It is estimated the raffle generated about \$700. The Cash Bar brought about \$300. Door proceeds and other donations are estimated at close to \$900. This year’s auction should have a gross income of approximately \$9,000.

STEWARDSHIP TEAM

Koren Manning

The theme of this year’s Stewardship Campaign was “Giving Sanctuary”. We chose this theme because it sums up many of our congregation’s key accomplishments of the past year and aspirations for the kind of community we want to be. Not only have we chosen to become a literal sanctuary congregation, we now host several fellow congregations sharing their light in these dark times. In the past year we also supported women on their path from homelessness and deepened our ties to social justice movements. Our sanctuary is active - we make space for multiple groups meet every Sunday, our religious education programs are bursting, and we are taking steps to make our own building more accessible. Above all else, First U gives sanctuary to all looking for an affirming spiritual community.

These accomplishments and the sense of sanctuary we have developed is a result of the dedication and devotion of our members who have given time and energy to our community. It is also due in no small part to the financial support of our members and



friends. As our congregation has grown in size and aspirations, so too have our financial needs.

We asked members to stretch themselves in making their pledge to First U this year. The campaign asked members currently giving less than \$1,000 per year to consider moving to that level. We also encouraged folks giving less than \$3,000 per year to consider this as a goal for annual giving, if not this year, in future years. This is a national benchmark for average giving in healthy congregations and moving to an average pledge at this level would allow us to continue growing our vibrant ministries and Giving Sanctuary to members and our community.

First U members and friends stepped up and pledged generously in answer to this call. This year's campaign set a new record when it surpassed \$308,000 in total pledges. As of this writing, we have received pledges totaling \$315,000 from 171 households. This represents an increase of \$40,000 in pledges from the same households last year as well as \$10,000 in new pledges.

Thank you to everyone who has made a pledge of support this year. Your generosity allows us to continue giving sanctuary and expand the ways we are able to support one another and be a voice for change in our community.

We would also like to thank the members of the Stewardship team, Forward First team and Board who gave their time and energy to making this year's campaign a success: Lee Pardee, Bruce Wilde, Roger Cooper, Kurt Steele, Marty Bernstein, Dave Garvoille, Koren Manning, James Rohrbach, Liz Jones and Laura Kriska. Thank you to Michael and Mariasara Alcott and Jay and Pay Lawrence for hosting lovely stewardship events. Thank you also to Garnett for her tremendous work on every aspect of stewardship, as well as Rev. Ana, Meagan, and Wendy for their roles in the campaign.

WEAVING THE FABRIC OF DIVERSITY

Rita Pearl, Recording Secretary

WFD works on living our principles in action by looking inward and outward to work for justice and equality within our congregation and in the general community on racism, sexism, classism and LGBTQ issues. We form relationships outside our congregational walls, create informational forums, and take part in actions of witness.

DINNERS

Children of Abraham/Muslim Dinner (Saturday, 11/12/17): This was our 17th dinner. These dinners began in 2001 as a response to violence against the Muslim community after the September 11th attacks. These dinners are more important than ever based on recent world and national events. About 85 people attended.

Haiti: A Celebration Dinner with Entertainment (Saturday, 3/24/18): Our relationship with Haitian grassroots 501(c)3 organization FEDADSE (Federation des Associations pour le Developpment du Sud Est) continues to grow in warmth and scope. This is a jointly organized event with WFD and FEDADSE, each supplying an emcee, food, and entertainment for the dinner. This year was so well attended we ran out of table space and searched the building for extra chairs. We also saw more input of Haitian culture. Funds raised will be used for all-volunteer reforestation projects in Haiti. About 138 people attended.

Sabbath Sunday Community Lunch (Sunday 4/8/18) – Our team served a delicious build your own taco lunch following worship.

Juneteenth Service and Lunch (Sunday, 6/17/18) This annual event, which commemorates the day when the last American slaves found out they were freed, is first Sunday summer service and is followed by a picnic on Monroe Place. Juneteenth has become a popular event for our congregation. This years' service will honor the courage and leadership of our sisters of African descent.

FORUMS, DISCUSSIONS, and WORKSHOPS:

Sanctuary Cottage Meeting (9/24/17) run to help the Sanctuary Task Force to promote the possibility of extending sanctuary to individuals in danger of immediate deportation. We also helped promote additional meetings from which the Task Force ultimately gained approval from the congregation.

Environmental Justice Forum (11/16/17) There were presentations by 4 speakers including Rev. Ana and Rev. Clinton Miller. Chaim Gross spoke of a community sustainability project. Jeff Levy-Lyons moderated. Several new people were in the audience. It was followed by an Environmental Justice Workshop on the last Sunday in January. Attendance was 38.

Faith, Capitalism and Marx Discussions – (Second Sundays Beginning in December) A monthly discussion series to explore how to navigate the chaotic and often heartless world we live in and still keep our spirituality and faith in humanity. A short question and reading is presented, followed by a group discussion. Attendance has varied from 5 to 12 participants.

Environmental Justice Workshop (1/27/18) Presented by Abby Grosslein, Nancy Wolfe, and Rita Pearl. We used video, slides, and workshop activities to illustrate the issue. Attendance was 34 and the feedback was positive. We will create a Google Group for those who would like to continue to work on this issue

Where Do You Get Your News (3/4/18) This was a well-attended, lively, and informational exchange of information and ideas about how to get word about important events in the world: what kinds of stories go unreported and how we can find out about them. About 45 people attended.

Phoenix Rising Project Information Session (4/29/18) We held an information session with guest Rita Zimmer of Housing + Solutions with a view towards repeating this successful Life Skills Empowerment Program in the spring of 2019. A large percentage of the congregation was involved in the first program in the 2016-2017 church year. Attendance was a group of 8

Where Do You Get Your News – Continuing the Discussion (6/1/18). We expect another lively and informational discussion

YEARLY RETREAT (Saturday 6/2/18, 9:30-3:00) on the Terrace at First U. We extend an open invitation to First Unitarian members and friends to join us and lend ideas to help continue this social justice work in the coming church year.

JUNETEENTH SERVICE (6/17/18) This first of the summer services has been organized for many years by Bob Patterson with music direction by Bob Bero. It celebrates June 19, 1865 when the last Southern slaves found out they were free. It is always joyous and well attended. The service is followed by a picnic on the street in Monroe Place.

FUNDING – Our funding this past year was \$1350 from the congregational program budget. We wish to thank the Board for funding this important work.

MEMBERSHIP – We do not think of ourselves as having a fixed membership, although we do have regulars. This year our co-chairs were Robert Harper and Enza Itri. Rita Pearl was our recording secretary, and Bob Patterson our event coordinator. Attendees are those interested in our program and/or those who want to work on an event with us. These included Derek Pearl, David Provost, Meagan Henry, Sam McKelvie, Tom Check, Carolyn McIntyre, Michael White, Nancy Wolfe, Jeanie Wing, Adrian Gonzalez, Jamie Butler, Tim Gage, and Greg Dutcher.

THANKS - We would like to thank those in the congregation who attended our monthly meetings and worked with us in the kitchen and for setup during the dinners. These included Jeanie Wing, Elizabeth Ellis, Sam McKelvie, Carolyn McIntyre, Rita Pearl, Enza Itri, Jamie Butler, Waciuma Wanjohi, Mariasara Alcott, Dale Addington, Derek Pearl, Robert Harper, and others. Apologies if you helped and are not on this list. We would like to thank Bob Bero for musical expertise for the Juneteenth Service, Chelsea Saunders for hosting the Haitian dinner, and Bruce Wilde for his sound system expertise for the Haitian Dinner.