

## Report From the Board of Trustees

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What a wonderful year at First Unitarian Congregational Society in Brooklyn! We installed our 13th Senior Minister, the Reverend Ana Levy-Lyons. Under her dynamic and loving leadership, Sunday worship is a place of vibrant joy. Attendance is increasing to the point that our galleries are being used on a regular basis. Ana's pastoral touch is amazing in its sensitivity and compassion. Our Religious Education programs continue to grow as well as the amazing Reverend Jude Geiger continues to expand religious and spiritual horizons for children, youth and adults.

Financially, we were able to manage expenses this year and stay within the budget that was passed at last year's Annual Meeting. This year's canvass under the leadership of Garnett Losak is the largest in congregational history and will allow First Unitarian to continue on its path of sustained and sensible growth.

At the Board level, an Accessibility Initiative was headed by Tom Check which will help make our sacred spaces accessible to all those who want to be part of First Unitarian. This comprehensive effort is an

example of how we are working today to ensure the vitality and inclusiveness of tomorrow's FUUB.

On a bittersweet note, Reverend Jude has been called to be a Senior Minister at a congregation on Long Island – how lucky they are!. His thoughtful care and wise nurturing of the congregation as a whole and – more specifically – our religious education efforts will be missed. But at least he is not going too far – Brooklyn is – after all – part of Long Island (though we do not admit it often).

Finally, I thank my wonderful partners on the board whose work and dedication made me look so much more capable than I actually am, and all the wonderful support and help I received from the entire congregation.

In gratitude,

Brian Dauth  
President

## Split the Plate

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Our Split the Plate program has been one of First U's proudest achievements. Every year we give half of our non-dedicated Sunday plate away to organizations that work for justice and/or provide needed services in our communities and throughout the world. This year the following organizations were selected to be beneficiaries of our generosity:

September 2012	Minister's Discretionary Fund = \$1254
October 2012	Hetrick Martin Institute = \$1020
November 2012	Georgia's Place = \$930
December 2012	Ali Forney Center = \$1105
January 2013	Team Rubicon = \$1267
February 2013	Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence = \$1311
March 2013	UU-UNO / Standing on the Side of Love / Murray Grove = \$540 each /\$1620 total
April 2013	Green Communities Fund: \$1108
May 2013	Global Fund for Women: pending

In addition to our Split the Plate program, over \$9,000 was collected to aid victims of hurricane Sandy. These funds were split between our Minister's Discretionary Fund, The CERG UU Disaster Relief Fund and The Red Hook Initiative.

Split the Plate designees are selected by the Board of Trustees. Input from members and friends of the congregation is welcome. Thanks to Rob Petrillo, our Director of Congregational Services, for administering the disbursement of funds.

# Report From the Senior Minister

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The first year of my ministry at First U has been a year of tremendous growth, both for me personally and for the congregation. The congregation has grown in membership and worship attendance, but almost more importantly it has expanded itself in new directions of identity and self-understanding. Each committee and group has taken the opportunity of a new ministry to re-examine its practices and traditions, explore how we could serve our mission even better, and take bold steps to make it happen. We have been re-imagining ourselves this year, a process that has been bumpy at times but extraordinarily rewarding. Here are some highlights:

## Membership

The Membership Committee and I have been working this year on solving a puzzle: Usually a congregation's worship attendance averages half of its total membership (so a 200-member congregation would expect 100 at worship). In our case, worship attendance is greater than our current membership. This suggests that a lot of people are attending but not joining and we could do a better job engaging newcomers and integrating them into the life of the congregation. We've tried a number of approaches: we've added more classes geared toward newcomers, I have personally called each new person who filled out a Welcome Card, we are working on a system for tracking and reaching out to newcomers who are considering membership, and I have made a point of inviting newcomers to join committees and dinner groups and to offer reflections during worship. The new Membership staff position that we are proposing for next year is also an attempt to address this issue. Lastly, I offered to meet with every current member of the congregation individually and many people have taken me up on that offer. The offer is still good, so please reach out to me if you haven't already. I would love to get to know you better.

## Worship & Music

We have been doing some experimenting in worship this year, building on the excellence of the service as it was to create a more participatory, high-energy experience for all. In consultation with the Worship & Music Committee, I've been working to tighten up the liturgy, create a faster flow, and add theatrical elements including lowering lights during prayer. We've

added the "teal hymnal" to our repertoire and we're looking for ways to make congregational singing more inclusive and joyful. Lay leaders have written and offered personal reflections on worship themes at several services. We have had some wonderful guest/special worship leaders including UUA president Peter Morales, the Women's Alliance/Mother Theatre Project, and percussionist/social activist Matt Meyer. Our Easter service was a great success – we shared a ritual involving burning flash paper to "let die" what needed to die in our lives. I joined lay leaders in leading the Passover Seder this year, which was a beautiful, community-building evening with a delicious sustainably-grown, humanely-raised meal. Our special music services, including Palm Sunday and Christmas Eve were wonderful, creative, and well attended.

## Public Ministry

Our congregational response to Hurricane Sandy was very positive. We raised \$9000 between the morning service on November 4 and the installation that evening. This was split three ways between the CERG (UU hurricane relief), Red Hook Initiative, and the Minister's Discretionary Fund where it was given to members of the community affected by the storm. We collected many carloads of food, clothes, blankets, flashlights, etc. and teams took them to both Staten Island and Red Hook. Our "Split the Plate" program has continued to be a great success this year and we have started intentionally selecting recipients that work toward systemic change as well as direct service organizations.

First U has served as a host site and participant in many community activities throughout the year including an interfaith concert ("Say YES!") featuring a choir from Dubai, the electronic waste recycling program, Brooklyn Pride (in June), Sacred Sites Open House, and the Brooklyn Heights Interfaith Clergy Group of which I am a member.

The Servetus Library Committee has convened and begun work with a mix of long-time members and newcomers. Over the next year or two this project will transform our library (previously the minister's study) into a public lending library of books and media about liberal religion.

I have published articles this year: “Sabbath Practice as Political Resistance” (Tikkun magazine), “Beyond the Limits of Love” (Tikkun), “We should be more countercultural” (UU World). I have also begun publishing edited versions of some of my sermons as blogs on Tikkun Daily.

My first sermon of this program year was entitled “Dreaming Aloud,” and in it I invited the congregation to dream boldly about who we are and who we

might be; to move fearlessly toward our congregational ideals. I would say we have risen to this challenge and we are very much in the midst of the process of growth and transformation. I look forward to continuing dreaming and building with all of you in the year to come.

Many blessings,  
Rev. Ana Levy-Lyons

## **Report From the Minister of Lifespan Religious Education**

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I want to begin by thanking the congregation for being so supportive with my news of leaving Brooklyn to lead the UU Fellowship of Huntington, Long Island. I will very much miss our community here, but am honored for the new opportunity. All your well wishes and congratulations have meant so much to me. Thank you also for the time together these five years.

Our Religious Education program continues to grow. Average Sunday morning attendance has grown to 45 children and youth, and 18 adults. We added a toddler room at the beginning of this year, as well as another elementary grade this past February. With 9 youth completing our Coming of Age program this year, next year’s Senior High School youth group bodes over 15 youth strong.

I still marvel at the growth of our Twenties and Thirties group. When I first arrived at Brooklyn there were about 25-30 TnT’s. As I write this report today, our TnT group includes over 180 members, friends, and frequent visitors. This is just remarkable. It is wonderful to see Young Adults now involved in every aspect of our congregational leadership and support.

Stephanie Gannon chairs our Small Group Ministries program that continues to support 5 groups meeting monthly. Roughly 20% of the congregation attends these regular spiritually-minded discussion groups. I continue to write our sessions that blend monthly themes with sessions that go deeper into the content of Rev. Ana and my sermons. Stephanie is stepping down from chairing this committee as she moves forward with her seminary education. Our Seminarian-in-Residence, Rose Schwab will step into this role

next year as she continues on with us for another year thanks to a generous grant from the Woman’s Alliance.

Adult Education had a strong year. I led a 4 week Credo Workshop which had 8 attendees. Claire Sexton, Kirsten deFur, Elizabeth Bukey and I led an 8 month (twice a month) Young Adult Our Whole Lives program. Membership and Rev. Ana led numerous Newcomer Orientations, as well as UU Principles one-shots. Special thanks goes to Cindy Eisemann and Stephanie Gannon for leading year long Yoga classes and donating the proceeds to supporting expanded childcare in our nursery.

This year I led 12 Sunday services, a Christmas Eve Family service, and the Good Friday service. I officiated 11 weddings, 1 memorial, and numerous child dedications.

Warmly,  
Rev. Jude Geiger

## Report From the Director of Music

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The music program of the First Unitarian Church has had a very busy year. We are grateful to all who have offered their talent and hard work to make this year a successful one.

Our worship services have featured a wide variety of music from many sources and traditions. We have offered choral and vocal works sung in many languages, including English, French, German, Italian, Latin, Hebrew, Czech, Swahili, and Arabic. Music has been heard that was composed over a thousand years ago as well as music that was composed this year. Our devoted choir members have brought this music to life. We offer our thanks to those who have sung with us this year: Dawn Elane Reed, Kendra Rouse – Showell, Charlotte Fleck, Liz Davis, Kathy Titakis, Marquette Drakes, Florie Maynard, Lee Pardee, Shelley Roberts, Jacque Schultz, Nancy Wolf, Bill Corry, Ari Hoogenboom, Bill Schaffer, Wayne Christiansen, Tim Daoust, and Nick Titakis. We are privileged to have an outstanding quartet of soloist / section leaders this year. Marielle Murphy, Melissa Paul, K'idar Miller, and Andrew Cook – Feltz have offered beautiful and varied solos in our worship services and have been tremendously supportive and helpful in rehearsal and performance.

We have offered a number of special services and programs this year. In October, the choir presented an evening of songs by former congregation member and deacon Clark Gesner. The show included songs from Clark's musicals *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* and *Animal Fair*, as well as many songs written for television and cabaret. The selections ranged from hilarious to poignant and moving. The program raised funds for the music program and was enjoyed by all who attended.

In November, we provided music for the installation service of Rev. Ana Levy-Lyons. The choir performed a reprise of Clark Gesner's deeply moving choral work "Migration" and "Three Prayers for Peace", a Renaissance choral piece sung with texts from the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim scriptures. The service music also included works for trumpets and organ. The Christmas Eve Candlelight service was again a high point of the year. The music included works from 19th century France, 20th century England, and

a set of African American spirituals accompanied by saxophone, piano, bass, and percussion. The sanctuary was filled to capacity for this beautiful service. The following Sunday, we revived the tradition of the Holiday Vespers Community choir; our choir was joined by many members of our community to offer an enjoyable selection of holiday songs.

The Palm Sunday Music Service was another musical high point of the year. The choir and soloists, supported by a fine string ensemble, offered works by Purcell, Bach, Vivaldi, and Mozart. The program also included two works for organ and strings.

On April 4, our choir participated in *Say Yes! Brooklyn*, a very special event held in our sanctuary. This concert, organized by Darren Lougée, featured performances by his ActorCor choir, Nassim al Saba – a choir from the American University of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, as well as the Choir of the First Unitarian Church. The program, which featured diverse music and sacred texts from Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, was enthusiastically received by the audience.

We are pleased to offer the annual Jazz Service this Sunday. We are again joined by the Ron Vincent Quartet, four of New York's finest jazz musicians. The service features our choir, soloist Melissa Paul, and includes congregational singing accompanied by the quartet. This service has been an eagerly anticipated event for many years.

The special music programs and services have been supported by the Julie McKinney Music fund. We are very grateful to all those who have contributed to this fund during this fiscal year; these programs would not have been possible without this support. This year the music committee was merged with the worship committee. The Worship and Music committee has worked hard to find ways to make the worship experience the best it can be. We are all grateful for the support of music at First Unitarian offered by our clergy and staff.

We are privileged to share our building with two outstanding concert series. The Brooklyn Chamber Music Society continues to offer monthly concerts by some of the world's finest classical musicians. The

First Acoustics Concert Series, expertly piloted by Coco Wilde, has offered concerts by an impressive roster of Folk and Jazz artists.

We hope that the music program of First Unitarian will remain healthy and continue to grow for years to come.

William Peek, Music Director

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## Arts Committee

The Art Committee adds value to the church community by encouraging participation in and enjoyment of the arts in an annual arts festival. This year, a special emphasis on crafts brought out many new artists, with beautiful weavings, pottery, stained glass, photography and even hand crafted wooden cars. The venue was our beautiful McKinney Chapel, where wine, cheese and music created a special evening for everyone. The

spiritual gifts of creating with our hands and minds are, we believe, most important, and it was wonderful that so many participated.

Florie Maynard  
Chair

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## Deacons

Because of the increased activity and responsibilities of the Deacons, an effort was made to maintain a regular meeting schedule. It was our pleasure and our honor to host the new Senior Minister, The Rev. Ana Levy-Lyons, at our first fall meeting. It was our wish to welcomed her, inform her of the role of the deacons, convey our concerns and hopes and finally, to offer the assistance of the Deacons in any manner she might find appropriate.

The Deacons participated in the various communion services of the Congregation, with the high light being the Good Friday Service. After that service a small gathering in the Library provided the Deacons the opportunity to toast the Rev. Jude Geiger and wish him well in his new position.

Listed below are the Members of the Month for this past church year, chosen by the Deacons:

### 2012

Oct. Garnett Losak  
Dec. Dawn Brekke

### 2013

Jan. Ari Hoogenboom  
Feb. Larry Calia  
March Barbara Kennedy  
April Sean Fischer  
May Nancy Alice Witherell

Seth Faison  
Senior Deacon

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## Flatbush Fund Committee

The Flatbush Fund was created when the Flatbush Unitarian Universalist Church, which was located on Beverley Road and East 19th Street, was sold and that congregation legally dissolved. As a result of a legal agreement between that congregation and our congregation, the Flatbush Fund of \$100,000 was established in 1994. The fund has two purposes:

- First Unitarian promised to hold the principal of this fund in trust for twenty years, disbursing it only to “further Unitarian Universalist presence in Brooklyn,”

by supporting a new UU congregation or furthering the growth of an existing UU congregation in Brooklyn, other than First U.

- The fund supports social justice and religious education programs at FUUB with small grants from the fund’s earnings.

The Flatbush Fund is invested along with our church’s endowment. As stipulated in the legal agreement, every year the Flatbush Committee informs the UUA

President, Moderator, and the Metro New York District of the fund's existence and places an advertisement in the UU World. The Flatbush Fund is now in its nineteenth year.

During the 2012-2013 church year, the Flatbush Fund recommended that the Board of Trustees make grants to the following FUUB groups:

- The Mother Theatre Project for a workshop to explore myths and stories of the goddess from several cultural perspectives.
- Weaving the Fabric of Diversity to cover costs of the Common Threads dinner with the Muslim community, the annual dinner with the Haitian community to raise funds to rebuild roads and schools in that

devastated country, and our annual Juneteenth Sunday service.

- A grant for Spanish language brochures and teal hymnals for an exploratory committee to do outreach in the Latino community.
- In addition, we gave a grant of \$12,000 to Original Blessing to develop a start-up business plan for their new UU congregation.

Members of the Flatbush Fund Committee are: Myra Addington, Chair, Larry Calia, Elizabeth Davis, Claire Sexton, and Jennifer Stevens.

Myra Addington  
Co-Chair

## Fundraising

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### NEW TAKES ON OUR GOOD OLD FUNDRAISERS: UNIFAIR 2012 AND AUCTION 2013

First, of course, the results: this year, UniFair was budgeted at \$10,000 and made approximately \$11,600. The Auction was budgeted at \$12,000 and made about \$9,500. We didn't quite do "business as usual" this year, obviously. What was different?

Hurricane Sandy, for one, put its mark on UniFair as it did on almost all of Brooklyn. Our generous neighbors donated hundreds of items of clothing and blankets for the relief of Sandy victims, and when the relief sites couldn't take any more textiles, UniFair benefited. Our racks were stuffed with even more wonderful clothing than usual, and the brief hours of UniFair seemed insufficient for shoppers to even look at it all.

Paradoxically, the White Elephant table was practically bare. Sandy claimed the daily routines of thousands of people, and donors probably gave away their housewares and other usefuls to those in immediate need. UniFair received only about a third of the usual miscellaneous stuff (but to the credit of our excellent salespeople, all that was left of the White Elephant table at day's end was...the table.)

Some of you have heard that a group called the Rainmakers is forming to examine the way we do fundrais-

ing and how best to use our resources. The UniFairian formula may in fact need updating. Barring a hurricane—with excellent goods left to sell, might we extend UniFair to a second day? Do we use our space well enough, do we practice right relationship, do we sell what we feel good about selling? With people who don't know us, are we sharing the message of inclusion, wholeness, justice, and love as our UU faith calls us to do? (And can we do that in a not-creepy way at a holiday fair?)

In fact, the Rainmakers focused on inclusion for our Auction in April, directing publicity especially toward newcomers with a discounted entry and a dollars-off coupon. Though built of the same elements – donated items plus devoted volunteers—the Auction asks us to bid on things like eating meals together, walking Brooklyn together, vacationing together—and even receiving our massages from each other. No wonder it has a reputation as an "in-crowd" event!

Though the dollars were somewhat down, the good news is that 22 new people came to the auction, had fun, and bid heartily, including six long-time members who'd never attended before. The Rainmakers will be looking into ways the Auction might become more democratic and invitational to newcomers in the future.

So, please plan to give feedback to the Rainmakers, who will provide opportunities beginning this summer. And if you have thoughts to share about having more fun or making more money, contact Jaye Nelia or

Nancy Welles. We want to make it rain year-round!

In faith,  
Jaye Nelia

## Investment Committee

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During FY 13 the Investment Committee determined that the long term relationship that the Congregation shared with the investment firm of Neuberger Berman needed to come to an end. Neuberger Berman was no longer providing First Unitarian with either the level of service or the financial returns that they had in the past. This was due, to some degree, to retirements at Neuberger resulting in personnel shifts within the group at Neuberger. This, in turn, resulted in a different approach to the financial markets that proved to be inconsistent with the Congregation's investment policies.

Working from the newly adopted Investment Policy, approved by the Congregation at its annual meeting one year ago, and from a heightened desire to "do well while doing good," the Committee began researching investment management firms whose investment style not only yielded satisfactory financial results but that had a positive track record of working with clients who were sensitive to issues related to social justice.

After comparing notes, the Committee opted to interview two firms this past fall. As a result of this interview process and the earlier research, the Committee selected Walden Management, a subsidiary of Boston Trust, to manage the Congregation's endowment funds. We are pleased to report that Walden has been extremely responsive to the Committee over the first few months of our partnership. By way of illustration, this past November, Kim Gluck, Walden's Senior Vice President and our relationship manager, came to Brooklyn and discussed their firm's history, philosophy and investment track record at an all church forum following the Sunday worship service.

This relationship is new and only time will tell if Walden's investment philosophy and tactics will yield the financial results that meet our agreed upon benchmarks.

As mentioned above, the Congregation approved a revised Investment Policy at its annual meeting in May 2012. That policy calls for systematic draws

from the endowment, for operational purposes, in line with a modified Ford Foundation Model. This means that for FY 13 we limited the draws from our investment pool to 4.5% of the rolling average market value of the underlying portfolio over the previous 13 calendar quarters. This policy worked very well for us during FY 13. For FY14, based on the Congregational vote, the draw from the endowment will be reduced to 4.0% of the above cited average. The proposed operating budget reflects this decrease.

During April 2013 the Board of Trustees voted to repay the remaining balance of the roof loan owed to the New York City Landmarks Commission. The \$228,500 in capital required to repay this loan was withdrawn from the endowment. This action was taken because the debt service for this loan was greater than the earnings on the underlying assets sold. A secondary benefit of repaying the loan is that it releases the Congregation from certain contractual restrictions that governed the ways assets that were pledged as security for that loan can be invested. This in turn will allow Walden to reallocate those restricted investments in a manner consistent with its market outlooks, which, in turn should further improve our financial returns over time.

The absolute dollar reduction in our unrestricted endowment draw of \$8,450, from FY 13 to FY 14 is the result of the reduction in the draw percentage {4.5% to 4%}, taken together with the reduction in the principal balance of our investments {resulting from the loan repayment}. This was offset, to some degree, by the increase in the market value of the remaining investment assets.

Following is a quarterly snapshot of the investment balances, by fund, for the past four quarters:

	6/30/2012	9/30/2012	12/31/2012	3/31/2013
<b>Temporarily Restricted Assets</b>				
Flatbush Church Fund	384,445	384,445	384,445	384,445
Davol Memorial Fund	129,068	129,068	129,068	129,068
Harrington Fund	31,905	31,905	31,905	31,905
Chambers Fund	35,473	35,473	35,473	35,473
Madeline Fund	28,664	28,664	28,664	28,664
McKinney Social Justice Fund	63,501	63,501	63,501	63,501
S. Lee McElroy Fund	33,391	33,391	33,391	33,391
Edward Hunt Fund	55,552	55,552	55,552	55,552
Betsy King Fund	5,225	5,225	5,225	5,225
<b>Total Temporarily Restricted Assets</b>	<b>767,224</b>	<b>767,224</b>	<b>767,224</b>	<b>767,224</b>
<b>Unrestricted Assets</b>	<b>3,025,879</b>	<b>2,868,664</b>	<b>2,863,864</b>	<b>2,946,145<sup>1</sup></b>
<b>Total Investment Funds</b>	<b>3,793,103</b>	<b>3,635,888</b>	<b>3,631,088</b>	<b>3,713,369</b>

<sup>1</sup>\$228,500 of this balance was used to repay debt in early April

For the quarters ended June 30th and September 30, 2012 the endowment was managed by Neuberger Berman. The management of the assets was transferred to Walden during the quarter ended December 31, 2012. Walden was the sole manager for the quarter ended March 31, 2013

Over the course of the nine month period July 1, 2012 thru March 31, 2013, \$55,000 was withdrawn from the endowment to meet current operating requirements. It is anticipated that there will be additional draws between April 1st and June 30th.

David Provost, Jim Gunning, Mark Holloway, Brian Dauth

## **Membership Committee**

The members of this year's Membership Council were Lee Pardee – Chair, Marty Bernstein – Chair of Welcome and Fellowship, Myra Addington – Chair of Pastoral Care, Garnett Losak – Chair of Stewardship, Dawn Brekke, Sally Ellis, Chelsea Showalter, Rosemarie Stupel, Coco Wilde. Ex officio members were the Rev. Ana Levy-Lyons, Brian Dauth – President of the Board of Trustees, and Rob Petrillo – Director of Congregational Services.

### **Membership – Significant Growth**

Since the last annual meeting, the congregation has welcomed 27 new and returning members and retained almost all previous members. On February 1, 2013 we reported 191 members to the UUA, an 11% increase from 2012. As of the annual meeting, we have 203 members, and there is still one more New Member Sunday to come before the summer. We shifted from

monthly New Member Sundays to approximately every other month. This seemed to work well, giving us bigger “classes” of new members to welcome into the congregation. New Member Chelsea Showalter worked with Marty Bernstein to get every new member's picture and short biography up on the undercroft bulletin board.

We will once again hold a New Member Reception June 9 for all of this year's new members. We also have planned an event on June 2 for our graduating seniors and returning youngest adults – those who graduated high school in the past 4-5 years.

In addition to increasing our official membership, we also have seen a tremendous growth in attendance at our Sunday worship services. Since September we have been averaging a total attendance of 250 each





Sunday (including RE), up from 185 last year. We also averaged 70 people a week at our summer services, up from about 50 the previous year.

### **Greeters and Ushers**

Dawn Brekke took on organizing our Greeters and Ushers this year and well organized they were – virtually no last-minute scrambling for volunteers. We had over 71 different people fill the Usher/Greeter position this year plus Deacons. We structured the assignments with a monthly head Usher, and 3 – 4 weekly usher/greeters recruited by Dawn. The Deacons assigned monthly Deacon Greeters. We started having congregants sitting in the balcony on a regular basis and Dawn and the ushers insured that these congregants were served as well as those downstairs. We still need some work in recruiting and supporting the weekly positions, but this system seems to be very agreeable.

### **Welcome and Fellowship**

Marty Bernstein, as chair of Welcome and Fellowship, has ensured that newcomers are greeted by friendly faces and useful information at the Welcome Table in the undercroft each Sunday. Among the most steadfast of those friendly faces are Barbara Kennedy, Derek Pearl and Nancy Provost. We thank them for helping our newcomers find their way.

Marty is also the Council's main back-office support. He enters newcomer information into the congregational database, ensures they are added to the electronic listserve and monthly newsletter list, updates membership information, and ensures that members receive the monthly magazine – UU World.

### **Adult Religious Education and Pre-Membership Classes**

During this past year, the Membership Council worked with Rev. Ana and Rev. Jude to find the most welcoming and effective ways to help newcomers find their way into membership at First U Brooklyn. Rev. Ana continued our monthly introductory class, renaming it Newcomer Orientation. These classes have been generally very well attended and appreciated by the newcomers who have attended. Ana added a class called UU Principles and Theology which she led three times this year. Rev. Jude led a 4-session Credo Workshop twice – once in the fall and again in the spring. The Council's lay leaders presented a UU at First U class twice this year.

### **Pastoral Care**

This year the Pastoral Care Committee continued to reach out to congregants - those in need and those celebrating life milestones. Although much of what the committee does is confidential and cannot be reported, they are striving to raise the visibility of their work by offering members and friends of the congregation opportunities to give concrete assistance to others, such as bringing meals to families with new babies and accompanying individuals to medical appointments. And Pastoral Care has sponsored the TLC (Tender Loving Care) Group, which meets Friday nights, 6:15-7:30 pm in the library. This open and ongoing weekly group provides community and caring for anyone going through tough times of transition and/or loss.

### **Soup & Sandwiches**

Rosemarie Stupel and Vonda Brunsting shared organizing our weekly Soup & Sandwiches this year, ensuring that all of us were able to get some food each Sunday before heading off to the next First U activity. Many thanks to Rosemarie and Vonda for taking care of us all year and to all our congregation's cooks for their delicious soups.

### **FUUDGE – First Unitarian Universalist Dinner Groups Extraordinaire**

This year we continued FUUDGE – monthly gatherings of groups of newcomers and long-time members for food and fellowship, chaired by Lee Pardee. We had four groups that continued throughout most of the year. Rev. Ana gave the groups the added treat of hosting each group for lunch with her once during the year. Many thanks to Ana for this wonderful opportunity to spend time with her and her family.

### **Service of the Living Tradition**

On May 19 we are holding our third annual Service of the Living Tradition at which we recognize our long-term members. This year we recognize the following members for their years of dedication to First U Brooklyn:

60th anniversary:

Elaine Macken and Donald McKinney

50th anniversary:

Alfred Blanco and Charlie King

40th anniversary:

Gloria Furman and Jeanie Wing

25th anniversary:

Marty Bernstein, Pat Bernstein,

Barbara Jacobson, Bob Levine,  
Allison McCluer, Kathy Sonderman

20-24 years:

Dale Addington, Carin Boyer, Tom Check,  
Liz Davis, Rosalind Depas, Beth Evans,  
Charlotte Fleck, Sandy Foutz, Larry Kenny,  
Garnett Losak, Mary Most, Julia Pane,  
Bruce Wilde, Coco Wilde, Nancy Witherell,  
Leah Wolin

Congratulations to all our honorees!

## Stewardship

The Membership Council worked with this year's stewardship team to help the congregation institute year-round canvassing and achieve its goal of \$260,000 in pledges to fund the next year at First U Brooklyn. Please see the detailed report from Stewardship Chair, Garnett Losak.

Many thanks to Rob Petrillo, Director of Congregational Services, who keeps tracks of congregants' generous donations and produces lists and reports for the Membership Council.

## Mother Theater Project

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The members of this year's Mother Theater Project were Group Leaders Dawn Brekke, Cindy Eisemann, Alexa Vicich – Core Program Participants, Dawn Elane Reed, Diana Lu, Narrah Williams, Peter Engle, Wayne Christensen, Judy Gorman, Mariasara Aprea-Alcoff, and several other one or two time participants, a total of 32 participants over the past few months.

### Programs:

Over the past year we have organized three distinct programs:

- Monologue Workshop – Two (2) meetings per month, second Tuesday and fourth Sunday

- Intuitive movement – 4 sessions once a month
- Woman's Alliance Service on March 18th

### Ongoing Work

We have determined that there is a growing interest in supporting this exploration and are planning for further programming in the coming year including a summer lay service on the work collected from the Monologue Workshop, a production of "Mother Wove the Morning" in the fall, and a guest lecturer on the Goddess Stories, for which we have received funding from the Flatbush Fund.

## Nominations Committee

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The Nominating Committee expanded its responsibilities this year by identifying leadership positions beyond those mandated by the by-laws. We put together a manual of best practices and continued the effort to widen the pool of applicants by posting information about the positions we needed to fill: job descriptions and deadlines on the website, in the order of service, on the listserve and on Facebook. We also ensured that hardcopy letters of interest and job descriptions were available for those who aren't online.

We were inspired by Koren Manning who very ably coordinated the Rev. Ana's installation. Vonda Brusting and Beth Evans willingly agreed to serve as Assistant chairs for Unifair and the Auction, respectively, working with Jaye Nelia and Nancy Welles. We were so pleased that Tom Kennedy agreed to join the Finance Council.

We also helped identify new members of the Religious Education Council: Samira Kawash, John Kenny, and Maria Maida. Additionally, we formed a much-needed accessibility committee. It was gratifying that every First U member we reached out to, asking them if they'd join this effort under Tom Check's guidance said yes without hesitation: Charlie King, Bob Levine, Peter Norling, Margaret Weber, and Coco Wilde.

To maintain a needs-blind delegate selection process, we organized a Noodle Night fundraiser on March 2 which grossed over \$800. This ensured that all of our delegates could attend Metro and GA. Attendance of approximately 30 congregants was somewhat disappointing as there was so much else going on during the Stewardship campaign, but a good time was had by all.



Delegates to the annual Metro meeting were: Bob Bero, Lee Pardee (who was originally identified as the alternate and stepped in when Harrison Beck was unable to serve), Michael Richardson, and our youth delegate Melody Salerno.

Our GA delegates will be: Paul Eisemann, Nora Kenney, Charlie King, Jacque Schultz, and alternate Carin Boyer.

Trustee slate: Elaine Macken, Rachel Michael, and Jeff Muller.

We are delighted that phenomenal Clerk Liz Davis has agreed to run again.

Nominating Committee slate: Larry Calia, Adriana DeTerebessy, Dari DeGuzman, Jennifer Goldin, Langdon Holloway, Barbara Kennedy, Koren Manning, Julia Payne, David Provost, and one more who either will be publicized via email and Facebook, or will be nominated from the floor.

We may need to reevaluate whether the committee can effectively promote leadership development and also plan and implement fundraisers. We request that the FY '14 budget include funding for delegates in the amount of \$2,150 so that the committee isn't put in a position of limiting the prospective delegates strictly to members who are in a financial position to fund their attendance at General Assembly or the Metro annual meeting. No one from this year's committee was in a position to run again next year, but Catalina and Rosemarie, who already are serving their second term, will be available in an advisory capacity in an effort to provide some continuity.

Catalina Bertani  
Brian Dauth  
Kathy Ivans  
Justin Parkinson  
Jocelyn Smith  
Rosemarie Stupel

## **Pastoral Care**

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The Pastoral Care Committee continued to reach out to congregants - those in need and those celebrating life milestones. Much of the committee's work is done confidentially and cannot be reported.

Pastoral Care is working to raise the visibility of its work by offering members of the congregation opportunities to offer concrete assistance to others, such as bringing meals to families with new babies & accom-

panying members to medical appointments. There is also Alexa & Sally's TLC group, as it is an open group.

TLC Peer Support Group meets Friday nights from 6:15pm-7:30pm in the Library. It is an open and ongoing weekly group for anyone going through tough times of transition and/or loss who needs community and caring.

## **Stewardship**

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The success of this year's Stewardship Campaign is a result of years of hard work and dedication to the financial health of our congregation. If there is a lesson to be learned from the past decade it is that open discussions of money and financial support, transparency of financial matters and clear expectations for members as well as a mission based message are the keys to developing a generous congregation.

The Stewardship Committee created three goals for the year::

- 1) Create a system of year-round stewardship
- 2) Begin the process of developing a planned giving program
- 3) Commit to open and clear communication to include regular notices about the pace and status of the campaign and recognition of members and friends who commit finances to the congregation.

In order to reach these goals, we began by reaching out to all members of record and non-members who had turned in pledge forms for FY2011-2012. Most received thank you notes for completing pledges, oth-

ers received reminders to complete pledges and still others received reminders to turn in pledge forms. The results of this program were gratifying. Many members brought their accounts up to date and several more turned in their outstanding pledge forms.

Next, we committed to creating a program of year-round stewardship. Two years ago the congregation overwhelmingly passed a by-law change to require an annual pledge form from all voting members of the congregation. In answer to this, the Stewardship Team, with support from the Membership Committee, began canvassing all new members with the expectation that a pledge form be completed as a prerequisite for signing the membership book. The response to this policy has been extremely positive. With very few exceptions, new members have pledged enthusiastically and generously. (For more information on membership please see the Annual Report from the Membership Committee).

These two programs resulted in new pledges of over \$27,000 for fiscal year 2012-2013, most from new members, but also from those who returned to voting membership by complying with the new by-law.

At the end of 2012, the Stewardship Team met with Board President, Brian Dauth and Senior Minister, Rev. Ana Levy-Lyons to design a Stewardship Program for the 2013-2014 fiscal year which was to kick off in early February. It was determined that the general good feeling in the congregation, due in part to the enthusiastic response to the first year of Rev. Ana's ministry, would lend itself to a program of small group parties followed by an all-congregation celebration luncheon. Several families were recruited to host events in their homes or in the church building, these included cocktail receptions, dinners and brunches with varying menus and styles to be held over several weeks from early February through mid-March. Members and friends were asked to sign up for the event of their choice and canvassers were assigned to each event. At the same time, we reached out to congregants who were unable to or chose not to attend events, some were canvassed in person, others by e-mail and still other turned in pledge forms at the final celebration which was attended by over 100 people. Additionally a "financial leaders" wine and cheese event was planned for the Saturday before the Stewardship Campaign kick-off

As of this writing the pledge total is just over \$240,000, a number equal to the total for the whole of the current fiscal year. The Committee has enthusiastically declared that it will over reach our initial goal of \$260,000 by the end of the 2013-2014 fiscal year!

In keeping with our goal to communicate openly with our congregation about stewardship goals and progress, numerous notices were uploaded to Facebook and printed in the Order of Service and the E-List serve. Several announcements were also made during worship services. Additionally, we endeavored to thank everyone who submitted a pledge form with personalized thank you notes. Additional notices and communiqués are planned for the spring and summer.

In order to begin a process for planned giving, the Stewardship Team added a check box to the FY2013-2014 pledge form asking members to indicate if they had already included the congregation in their estate planning. Seven families declared that they had made those arrangements. We are still in discussions about next steps.

The Team is grateful to the following people who generously hosted parties for the Stewardship Campaign:

Nancy Welles (cocktail party)  
Lee Pardee (cocktail party)  
Jaye Nelia and Ari Hoogenboom, Jr. (dinner)  
Garnett Losak (brunch)  
Coco and Bruce Wilde (dinner)  
Sean Fischer (dinner)  
Rosemarie Stupel (dinner)  
Becky Huffman and Andrew Bongiorno (family dinner)  
Laura Kriska and Patrick Gunn (family dinner event)  
Alice Wong (dinner)  
Sara and Seth Faison (Leadership wine and cheese)

Thanks also to the many people who helped with the Stewardship celebration luncheon especially Bob Bero and the Unitones for providing entertainment and Bill Peek for accompanying our opening song. Most of all, thank you to the members and friends of First Unitarian who continue to give generously in support of the mission and goals of our congregation!

Garnett Losak, Chair  
Myra Addington, Marty Bernstein, David Garvoille  
Koren Manning, Peter Norling, Lee Pardee,  
Rosemarie Stupel, Nancy Welles, Alice Wong

## Stewardship Statistics

	<u>2011-2012</u>	<u>2012-2013</u>	<u>2013-2014 (as of 5/9/13)</u>
Median Pledge	\$1,150	\$1,000	\$1,200
Mode (most common)	\$1,200	\$500	\$1,200
Number of Pledges	126	144	113
Budget		\$225,000	\$258,500
Pledge Total	\$227,030	\$240,958	\$240,280

## Weaving the Fabric of Diversity

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By the end of this church year WFD will have hosted three major congregational dinners (a dinner and entertainment program organized as a fundraiser with the Haitian grassroots charitable organization FEDADSE, a friendship dinner with the local Muslim community, and a Juneteenth picnic lunch, one Sunday service, two informational forums, one In the Spirit of Truth session, a forum on Socially Responsible Investments, two anti-oppression workshops (on Gender Identity, and on Racism), and two book discussions on Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow*. We participated in several actions of immediate witness against hospital closures, and police brutality. In addition we co-sponsored a petition originated by a Haitian union to institute steps to stop cholera in Haiti, a film (*We Women Warriors*) shown by the Women's Alliance on a women's movement in Colombia, a film showing of *Two Who Dared* about Unitarians who saved people from Nazi concentration camps, and an interfaith concert organized by ActorCor bringing together music from the three Abrahamic faiths. We also hosted a hand woven carpet sale to raise funds for women's education in Afghanistan, are supporting an initiative to build a Spanish-speaking UU congregation in a local Latino neighborhood, and helped launch the Rainbow Alliance to support LGBTQ issues.

### DINNERS

**Common Threads Dinner (Saturday, October 13, 2012):** Our 13th annual friendship dinner with the local Muslim community took place after Ramadan this year because the holiday occurred during our congregation's summer break. These dinners began in 2001 as a response to the violence shown against the Muslim community after the September 11th attacks. Every year it becomes a warmer and friendlier event as our communities become better acquainted with each other.

**Haiti A Celebration – Dinner With Entertainment (Saturday, April 6, 2013):** Our relationship with Haitian grassroots 501(c)(3) charitable organization FEDADSE (Federation des Associations pour le Developpment du Sud Est) continues to grow in warmth and scope. This year we continue that friendship with a fundraising dinner with entertainment. The event was organized jointly by WFD and FEDADSE – each supplying an emcee, and food and entertainment for the dinner. We continue to anticipate that this relationship will grow stronger as time goes by. Funds raised will be used by the FEDADSE home-town associations to buy materials for their local projects such as road-building, and supplying books and computers to a FEDADSE-built community library. One important project this year is reforestation. All labor for these projects is volunteer.

**Juneteenth (Sunday, June 16, 2013):** Our annual Juneteenth event includes the first Sunday summer service in the Sanctuary, followed by a picnic outdoors on Monroe Place will take place on June 16, 2013. This is a celebration of the day when the last American slaves found out they were freed. Juneteenth has become a popular event for our congregation.

### SERVICE

**Juneteenth.** As mentioned above this is the first Sunday summer service. The service is an event including many different voices within the congregation and we sometimes have outside speakers, poets, singers, or other artists. The theme this year is "A Celebration Of Life From Emmett Till To Kimani Gray". It is followed by a street picnic – weather permitting.

**LATINO OUTREACH INTITIATIVE:** A committee member, who is an ordained Lutheran minister,

wants to acquire ordination in the Unitarian Universalist denomination. He wishes to investigate beginning a Spanish-language UU congregation in a Latino neighborhood, with a specific focus on inclusion and acceptance of homosexuality and alternate gender identities. We have begun discussions with the Board of the UUA and are helping him to plan his project.

### **AFTER SERVICE DISCUSSIONS**

**(Sunday, October 7, 2012) In the Spirit of Truth: Gender Bias.** In the Spirit of Truth is held periodically to provide a safe, confidential space for members and friends of our congregation to discuss issues of race, racism, and other oppressions. This session was co-sponsored by Women's Alliance. It was moderated by Marquetta Drakes and Bill Schaffer.

**(Sunday, November 11, 2012) Socially Responsible Investments:** An advisor from Walden Asset Management spoke to us about SRI in general, and our congregation's investments in particular. WFD co-sponsored and helped publicize this Investment Committee event.

**(Sunday, May 12, 2013) Possible Hospital Closures:** This will be run more as an "In the Spirit of Truth" discussion for people to express their feelings, but outside guests will be invited. One special guest is Michelle Green from the New York State Nurses Association who will lend her knowledge to this issue.

### **WORKSHOPS**

**An Introductory Racial Justice Awareness (Sunday, February 24, 2013)**

Based on the principles used in the UUA's Anti-Racism Transformation Teams and Anti-Racism Training Jubilee Workshops. We will discuss an analysis of the powers of racism, and how it manifests institutionally. What makes it such an integral part of our society? How do we recognize it, and evaluate it in order to ultimately eliminate it? How do we focus a Unitarian Universalist anti-oppression lens on today's world? This workshop to begin the conversation is open to all members and friends of our congregation.

**Gender Identity (Sunday, March 3, 2013)**

Awareness of the difference between gender and sex. How is gender identity different from sexual orientation? What does "Transgender" mean? Where does each of us fit on the continuum? This eye-opening

workshop was well attended and animated. It showed how invented terms separate us and how gender is used to oppress. The workshop was led by members of the new Rainbow Alliance.

**BOOK DISCUSSIONS** We held two discussions on Michelle Alexander's book *The New Jim Crow* as lead-ins to our forum on the effects of the societal measures described in the book.

### **FORUM**

**The New Jim Crow (Saturday, December 6, 2012)**

A panel discussed the effects on our society of the Stop and Frisk initiative and the mass incarceration of young men of color. It was very well attended, and very interesting with a great deal of discussion and interaction amongst the panel and the audience. People were enthusiastic and remained in discussion after the event officially ended.

### **ACTIONS OF IMMEDIATE WITNESS**

Two Rallies to keep Downstate Hospital open at Downstate Medical Center.

March to save Long Island College Hospital (April 7, 2013)

Rally and March on the Anniversary of the Death of Ramarley Graham (February 2, 2013)

**YEARLY RETREAT** – Saturday June 8th, 2013

Our yearly retreat will take place on Saturday, June 8th from 11:00-3:00 on the Terrace at First Unitarian. 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.

**WFD MISSION STATEMENT** (*adopted 12/10*)

We, the members of the Weaving the Fabric of Diversity Committee, dedicate ourselves to promoting social justice, through activities both within our congregation and in the wider community.

We hold public educational forums, and organize and participate in advocacy and direct action in support of Civil Rights and Human Rights, in all their manifestations.

By so doing, we seek to put into practice our Unitarian principles, especially the covenant "to affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person."



## Women's Alliance

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The Women's Alliance, an affiliated women's organization with the First Unitarian-Universalist Congregation, reports a successful second year for our winter film series. We began with a film and discussion with the young woman director of the film, *Arranged*. Other films this year focused on the power of women in indigenous struggles in Colombia, in the economic struggle of an immigrant, and family challenges at the turn of the century.

We are supporting the reproductive justice advocacy position selected by UUA. Women, and men, in New York should appreciate the privilege we have living where health care is accessible and non-discriminatory. Reproductive justice is denied in other states where the issue is used for political gains. We will continue advocacy on this issue next year. Another advocacy project was the donation of \$320 for women in Colombia under the auspices of the Global

Fund for Women, given with generosity by movie attendees and the WA.

The Women's Alliance is supporting Uni-fit, a new fitness class with Andrea Parkinson. We collaborated on a Women's History Month Sunday Service with the Mother Theater Project and several group explorations with Weaving the Fabric of Diversity committee. We continue to provide a stipend to women who are training at FUUB. We also sponsor a Book Club. Women in need during a medical illness may apply for assistance through the Miriam Campobasso fund.

Join us June 2nd for the annual meeting. Our speaker will be Mary B. Robinson, a successful director on Broadway. Bring your ideas for upcoming presentations and projects.

Langdon Holloway  
President

## Worship and Music Committee

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This has been a year of change and action for the Worship and Music Committee. The first business of the year was to meld two previously separate committees into one. This has worked well and has enabled Worship and Music to work more collaboratively and with greater transparency. Ana guided us to clarify the function of the committee and the respective roles of committee members and staff. The Worship and Music Committee has been engaged in three main initiatives this year: to bring Singing the Journey (a.k.a. the Teal Hymnal) to our congregation, to revive Soulful Sundowns, and to organize summer services.

The first initiative we pursued was bringing the Teal Hymnal to First U. To make this campaign a success, the Committee raised awareness about the project through the listserv and tabling in the Undercroft, organized hymn sings, and oversaw the purchase and dedication of the supplement. We now have 150 hymnals and we aim to fundraise for a final 50. We were particularly appreciative that the Board approved the purchase of Teal Hymnals for each of our youth "Keepers of the Flame" to dedicate as they wish, in thanks for their service to our congregation this year.

Our second major initiative was bringing Soulful Sundowns back to the McKinney Chapel on Friday nights once a month. Becky Huffman, Dawn Reed, and Rose Schwab (with our Coming of Age youth) all brought well planned and beautifully executed services to our congregation, each one unique and creative in its inspiration. Attendees have been very positive about what has been offered and Stephanie Gannon will be leading our last Soulful Sundown on May 17th. The Committee put in a great deal of preparatory work to make these services a reality, including the creation of a new proposal form and several discussions about the purpose, format, and take away from these services. We also did a great deal of recruitment and advertising to include a broad range of voices and subjects and assigned a worship assistant from the Committee to each service leader.

Most recently, the Committee has been busily preparing for lay-led summer services in the McKinney Chapel. We revised the proposal form to make it more user-friendly, held an information session for potential leaders on April 28th, and continue to advertise in the listserv and Order of Service. We are beginning to review applications and we will soon assign

Committee members to be worship assistants to lay leaders throughout the summer.

Other highlights of our work over the course of the year included:

- Bringing musician and worship leader, Matt Meyer, to First U to lead both a unique service and an exciting drumming workshop.

- Assisting Bill Peek and the choir to organize their music fundraiser honoring Clark Gesner and his music.

- Engaging in essential discussions about a long-term vision for worship, such as the relationship between worship and community; creative worship; the placement of symbols in the sanctuary; and annual rituals that take place during the worship service.

- Addressing issues of safety and noise for congregants sitting in the balcony during service.