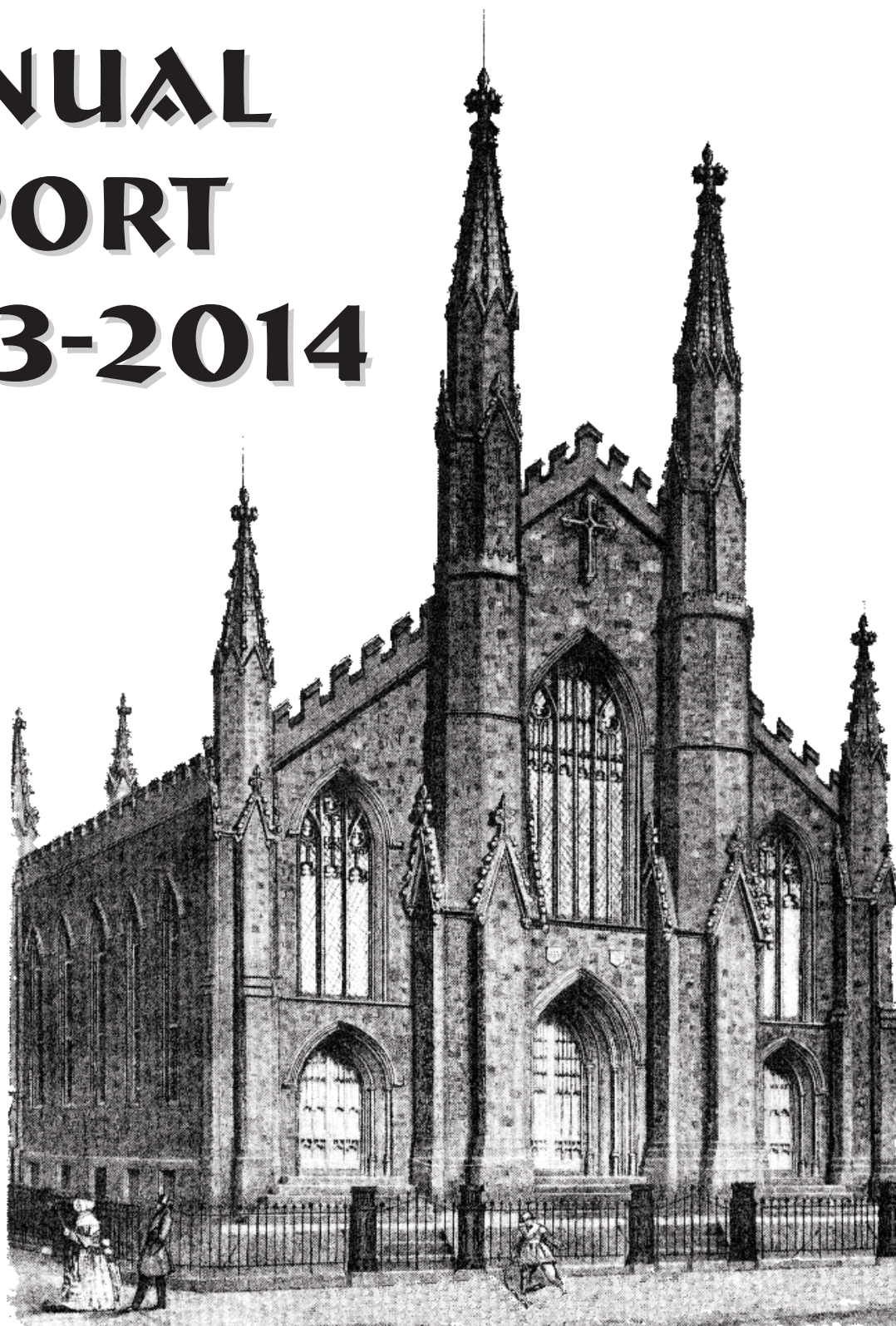


ANNUAL REPORT 2013-2014



*Founded
1833*

FIRST UNITARIAN CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY IN BROOKLYN



A Unitarian Universalist Congregation

A Welcoming Congregation • Dedicated as a Peace Site

Report From the Board of Trustees

To the congregation:

The past program year was one of achievement for congregants and staff. Our membership and attendance both increased appreciably, and contributions increased as a result. As you will read elsewhere in the annual report, congregants participated in a broad range of efforts. And trustees addressed many issues, with several deserving special mention.

Recognizing and addressing the effects of growth remain a challenge. Our budget and funding have yet to match our ambitions and enthusiasms, and we have yet to assess our approach to programming in a growth environment. Trustees have reviewed growth and the related concerns from a number of perspectives, and we expect that this subject will appear on many of the trustees' agendas in the coming year. A summary observation would be that this is a good problem to have.

During the year, trustees devoted many hours to the funding of a start-up congregation in Williamsburg. The issue presented itself as the result of the establishment of a special purpose fund at the time of the dissolution of the Flatbush congregation twenty years ago. Debating the issue raised questions regarding the viability of a start-up UU congregation, and in turn the viability of UU'ism, and the needs and viability of our own congregation. Trustees' decisions regarding the funding of the Williamsburg congregation will result in our providing about half of the special purpose fund to the

Report From the Senior Minister

This has been a high-energy, exciting year at First U. We have continued to grow in membership and worship attendance and the feeling in the sanctuary on Sunday mornings is warm and joyful. We have welcomed two new staff members: Meagan Henry as Director of Education Ministries and Garnett Losak as Director of Membership and Communications. Each has dived in with exceptional energy and professionalism and there is a marked difference already in both the spirit and effectiveness of each of their program areas. They are helping to propel our community forward, expanding our capacity to serve one another and the larger world in meaningful ways.

Williamsburg congregation, with the balance becoming part of our unrestricted endowment. Trustees adopted a balanced budget proposal for the 2014-15 program year – by 'balanced' we mean that our draw from the endowment is in compliance with withdrawal guidelines approved by the congregation two years ago. I would remind the congregation that a significant part of our endowment is the result of the relatively recent sales of our parsonage and the Camp screens. The proposed budget is the third consecutive balanced budget, reversing a many year trend of withdrawing amounts well beyond the earning potential of the endowment. The proposed budget includes funding for very necessary construction and maintenance projects and compensation increases for staff.

On behalf of trustees, I thank the staff and congregants for a successful year.

Mark Holloway
President, Board of Trustees

Michael Alcott
Tom Check
Brian Dauth
Diana Lu
Elaine Macken
Rachel Michael
Jeff Muller
Jaye Nelia

Here are some highlights from this year:

Worship & Music

Our Director of Music, **Bill Peek**, has truly outdone himself for his final year with us. The "special music" services of Christmas Eve, Palm Sunday, and Jazz Sunday (as well as the "Musical Madness" fundraiser) were nothing short of spectacular. The programs were uniquely conceived and beautifully performed. And Sunday music has been varied and consistently excellent. We will miss Bill's creativity, musicianship, and whole-hearted engagement with his work.

I delivered a sermon series on the **Ten Commandments** this year that has been particularly well received. People

seem hungry for a meaningful engagement with the theological and literary traditions that are the progenitors of our faith. We have also offered workshops and Small Group Ministries to help members delve more deeply into the applications of these Commandments in our personal lives.

We have also welcomed several interesting **guest preachers** this year, including NPR correspondent Margot Adler, Original Blessing founder Rev. Ian Maher, and philosophy professor and author Dr. Roger Gottlieb. Rose Schwab, our Seminarian-in-Residence also preached as part of a collaborative service on reproductive rights with the Women's Alliance.

Our **Lay Worship Leaders**, David Garvoille, Barbara Ratzlaff, Ethan Muller, Marquetta Drakes, Darnell Dawson, and James Goward, have led our services with great professionalism and warmth, creating a wonderful welcome for the community each Sunday. They participated in a series of workshops in liturgy, homiletics, and public speaking, and each delivered a homily on one of the Ten Commandments.

I am deeply grateful to the members of the **Worship & Music Committee** for all of their hard work in all areas of worship, from setting up the sanctuary on Sundays to running the music fundraiser, to planning summer services. They work behind the scenes to make possible and make beautiful so much of what we enjoy on Sunday mornings.

Music Director Search

The Music Director Search Committee and I have been hard at work this year in identifying our next music director. The Committee members are Lee Pardee, Julie Bero, Sean McLaughlin, Carolyn Ellis, Melissa Paul, James Goward, and Gregg Schaufeld. We began with a series of meetings and calls for written feedback from members of the congregation so we could learn what people value in worship music and hear their dreams for the future of our music program. Based on this input we began to form an image of the music director we seek and created a job description. We received around 50 applications, conducted some preliminary phone interviews, and live interview/auditions with seven. We are now doing a second round of auditions with three finalists. The Committee and I are thrilled with the quality of musicians who have applied for this position and are very excited about all three of our finalists.

Pastoral Care

This has been a difficult year for the community, with the death of two beloved, longtime members of First U and several others who are gravely ill. The community has come together beautifully and movingly to support these members and their families through this painful time. The Pastoral Care Committee has continued its work of helping members in need with meals, rides, domestic tasks, and companionship. Several members participated in a Lay Pastoral Care training sponsored by the District and we have also conducted our own workshops in listening skills, hospital visits, and trauma response ministry. This summer we will be offering a Bereavement Support Group to all members struggling with the loss or illness of a loved one.

Adult Religious Education

- Newcomer Orientation – a monthly class on Unitarian Universalism and First U
- UU Theology – a three-course series on Unitarian, Universalist, and UU theologies, once in the fall and once in the spring
- Sabbath Practicum to discuss the real life nuts and bolts of Sabbath practice
- Relationship as Spiritual Practice (with Jeff Levy-Lyons)

Public Ministry

In addition to the community projects of Weaving the Fabric of Diversity and other justice groups, First U has opened its doors to numerous events promoting the transformation of our world. Here is a sampling:

- Saturday, Oct. 5 we hosted an interfaith service to highlight the moral imperative for Congress to pass just and humane comprehensive immigration reform. We provided our space free of charge and Kate Hibbard from Weaving served as the host and greeter.
- Saturday, November 2 we hosted UU activist Tim DeChristopher for a public lecture and panel discussion on environmental activism. First U members as well as members of the wider community attended.
- Untouchability in India – on January 5, we hosted Derek Mitchell, Director of the UUA's Holdeen India Program, an organization working against the atrocities of "untouchability" in India.
- May 31, 2014 – E-Recycling pickup day

Publications

- "Sustainable Empathy," article and podcast in the UU Church of the Larger Fellowship's quarterly journal called *Quest for Meaning*

- “Fierceness and Reverence: Building the Religious Counterculture,” featured article in *Tikkun*, Autumn 2013
- “Devil’s Advocate,” *Tikkun*, Winter 2014
- “Lovingkindness to the Thousandth Generation,” *Tikkun*, Spring 2014
- “The Religious Counterculture: An Open Letter to Religious Liberals,” *Huffington Post* blog piece, Jan 24, 2014.

To date it has been shared 425 times on Facebook and received over 1600 “likes.”

Many blessings,
Rev. Ana

Report From the Director of Membership and Communication

First and foremost I want to thank the congregation for funding this position. It has been long time wish of mine to work professionally for the benefit of our congregation and for Unitarian Universalism. This past year has been one of great joy.

While my job has two areas of responsibility: membership and communications, in truth these two functions complement each other in significant ways. As Membership Director, I need to be aware of all functions and programs of the congregation. This allows me to work with our members, friends and newcomers, helping them to find their way. Knowing the who, what, where and when is critical to good customer service and as Director of Communications I am in a position to know a lot.

Communications

In the area of communications, my primary goals were to simplify the process for the communicators and to upgrade our four primary communications tools (website, Facebook, Order of service and e-list) to create a more robust and cohesive communications program. To that end, I worked with the Board to create a communications policy. The policy was shared with interested members of the congregation at an open forum in the fall and was made available on the website. The policy outlines areas of responsibility for the Director of Communications and provides guidelines for communicators. The result has been a general upgrading of all means of written communications as follows:

Website:

- Welcome page updated weekly, including information on the coming week’s worship service
- Created additional pages including pages for members that include the congregation directory, policies and other pertinent information (still under construction)
- Regular postings of activities that are of interest to

the wider community

- Sermon podcasts (thank you to the Worship Committee for making this happen)
- Edited and updated most pages
- Began members page to include on-line directory, policies and other documents pertinent to members of the congregation including the 2014 Annual Report

Facebook:

- Regular postings highlighting upcoming activities

E-list:

- Shortened postings by adding links
- E-list now links to separate RE e-announcement. Thank you to Meagan Henry for her work on this project.

Order of Service:

- Simplified the process of submissions to the OS
- Systemized postings to ensure that all announcements include pertinent information

This month I opened our first ever Twitter account. This is a brand new function. It is too soon to know how it will affect our overall communications strategy.

Communications by the numbers (as of May 11, 2014):

Facebook Friends: 772

E-list Subscribers: 792

Twitter Followers: 17

Orders of Service Printed: 250 for most regular services

Membership

I am so proud of the enthusiasm with which our congregation has welcomed newcomers. Visitors frequently report to me that they are impressed with the

friendliness of the congregation. The result is the most significant growth in membership and participation that we have seen in many years (see Membership Council report for more information).

My goal for this year was to insure that there was follow up on all visitors and that we had a system to track people from their first visit through membership. Activities to support these goals include:

- Creating new, larger, updated welcome card
- Creating and maintaining newcomer spreadsheet which tracks visitors from completion of a welcome card through the membership process
- Updating ACS and adjusting member-status categories to be more accurate descriptions of level of participation
- Creating several systems of metrics that provide the congregation with a clearer picture of how we're doing
- Contacting by phone or email, all visitors that completed a welcome card within one week of their visit

Membership by the Numbers (as of May 12, 2014)

Voting Members audited for the UUA (Feb., 2014): 202

Voting Members current: 220

New Members (September 2014-May 2014):26, Projected in June: 5, Total projected: 31

Members lost due to death or relocation: 6

Visitors who completed welcome cards: 283

Other Activities

Stewardship

As the staff liaison to the Steward Team, I handled the bookkeeping and administration for the team.

Small Group Ministry

I participated in this important function of our congregation as a small group facilitator and a member of the leadership team

Share the Plate Committee

I worked with the Board to create a charge and a policy for this new committee and convened the first meeting.

Chapel Chair Task Force

As the convener of this small team which also included

Nancy Witherell and Coco Wilde, I wrote the Board proposal, liaised with our supplier and managed the disposal of the old chapel pews. I am pleased that all unclaimed pews will be donated to Build it Green, the Gowanus based building supply reclamation non-profit. At least one pew is being refurbished for use in the Chapel Garden. Thank you to Paul Eisemann for this work. 100 new chairs will be in place for the beginning of the summer season. The Brooklyn Chamber Music Society has donated \$1,800 toward the purchase, which totaled just under \$5,000.

Denominational

Membership Chair, Lee Pardee and I facilitated a workshop at the Metro District meeting in May. The workshop, entitled "How to Be a 'Can't Miss' Congregation" highlighted the programs and structures that First Unitarian has put in place over the past ten years which have enabled us to be the growth congregation that we have today. About 15 people attended the workshop.

I want to thank the Membership Council for its support throughout the year. This committee is small, but mighty. It is an unsung asset to our congregation.

I would also like to thank Cooper Miller for his help and support with website administration.

Rev. Ana, Meagan Henry, Rob Petrillo and Bill Peek are extraordinary colleagues who make coming to work a real joy.

Thanks also to the Stewardship Team, the Share the Plate Committee and the Small Group Ministry Steering Committee all of which do great work on behalf of our congregation.

Garnett Losak

Report From the Director of Education Ministries

The first six months of my Education Ministry at First U has been an exciting time. I've enjoyed learning about the Religious Education program and the congregation. It is wonderful getting to know everyone and learning the cycles and annual traditions of this faith community. I already have a deep appreciation for the warmth and love embodied here. It's been a pleasure to work with the robust Religious Education Council under the leadership of Michele Ascione (2013) and Becky Huffman (2014). I am grateful for the wonderful working relationship I already have with the Rev. Ana, Bill Peek, Rob Petrillo, and Garnett Losak.

From the time I arrived in early November, I've concentrated my energy on the Children and Youth Religious Education Program. It's been a joyous time of celebrations, from the Winter Festival to the Spring Festival with an abundance of events and classes in between. I see many areas of great strength in our program, such as our dedicated volunteers and part-time staff as well as a core group of engaged families. I'm also energized around introducing new initiatives, such as an online RE registration form, Children's Chapel, regular social opportunities for our parents with infants and toddlers, and new ways of engaging the children and youth in worship.

Our average Sunday RE attendance is 42 children and youth and 14 adult teachers. We have 65 children and

Report From the Director of Music

The music program of the First Unitarian Church has had another very busy year. It has also been a year of change. We are grateful to all who have contributed their talent and efforts to make the music this year successful.

Our worship services have been enhanced by a wide variety of music from many traditions and sources. Our devoted choir members have brought this music to life. We offer our thanks to those who have sung with our choir this year; Rachel Arnold, Elizabeth Davis, Charlotte Fleck, Sharon Kennedy, Dawn Elane Reed, Amanda White, Marquetta Drakes, Lisa Kawamoto, Lee Pardee, Florie Maynard, Jacque Schultz, Kathy Titakis, Nancy Wolf, Bill Corry, Ari Hoogenboom, Gregg Schaufeld, Nick Titakis, and Bruce Wilde. Our outstanding quartet of section leaders / soloists, Marielle

youth who participate in our program. I expect our numbers to grow in the coming years, and I'm working with the RE Council to ensure we are prepared for additional participants. Some of these initiatives include enhanced teacher training and support, clear opportunities for parent participation, and social justice actions.

This year, in addition to the Nursery and Pre-Kindergarten classes, we had an especially large group of Kindergarten and 1st grade students, along with a very full 2nd - 4th grade class. We recently completed the Our Whole Lives 7-9 grade class with 7 youth participants and 5 volunteer teachers. Next year we will offer the Coming of Age class for 8th and 9th grades. The High School Youth Group has 14 participants, although attendance has fluctuated from as low as 3 students to as high as 14, and I hope to enhance this program next year.

I look forward to visioning with the RE Council at our retreat in late May. I am confident we will introduce positive changes to our program for next year that will allow us to continue to grow in numbers as we deepen our faith formation.

Warmly,
Meagan Henry

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.

There have been many musical highlights this year. The Christmas Eve Candlelight Music Service featured music from the Celtic tradition. We were joined by two of the finest Irish musicians in America, Jerry O'Sullivan on uilleann pipes and Patrick Mangan on fiddle. The program, which included music for choir, soloists, organ, fiddle, pipes, guitar, and bass, was enthusiastically received by the capacity crowd.

In March, Marielle, Melissa, K'idar, and Andrew offered two wonderful recital programs of works ranging from

the Baroque to contemporary. Highlights included selections from Brahms' *Liebeslieder Waltzes*, Vaughan Williams' *Songs of Travel*, a set of songs by William Grant Still, selections from Delibes' *Lakme*, and even a bit of vocal jazz. The quartet was accompanied by pianist Alden Gatt and me on harpsichord, organ, and piano. The money raised was used to pay music program expenses.

The Palm Sunday Music Service this year featured Bach's Cantata 79, *Gott, der Herr, ist Sonn' und Schild*, plus selections from several other cantatas. We were joined by an outstanding chamber orchestra for this powerful and challenging music.

On Easter, our choir was joined by Jody Kruskal on Anglo concertina and percussion and Marco Brehm on double bass for a unique program of Easter music ranging from English traditional to free improvisation for hammered dulcimer, percussion, and bass.

On May 11, we were again joined by the Ron Vincent Quartet for the annual Jazz Service. Andrew Beals, saxophone; Bill Mays, piano; Dean Johnson, bass; and Ron Vincent, drums accompanied our choir and soloists, supported congregational singing, and offered some wonderful pieces for jazz quartet. As always, the service was a hit with the congregation.

Auction

The 2014 Spring Auction was a resounding success with about 60 people attending for an evening of fellowship and bidding. The event raised about \$12,000 after expenses.

Many dedicated volunteers contributed to the event's success including stalwart auction veterans Jaye Nelia and Jeanie Wing. A delicious dinner was served with the help of Emily Fisher, Rolf Grimsted, Mitch Major, Sarah Morgan, Vera Wilde, and Vonda and Gabriela Brunsting. Karen Plemons, Catalina Bertani, and Garnett Losak did a beautiful job setting up for the silent auction and dinner. Bruce Wilde, John Pritchard, and Mitch Major were our scrupulous recorders. Our enthusiastic auctioneers David Garvoille and Peter Norling provided wry entertainment and encouraged generous bidding throughout the evening.

This year, Rev. Ana Levy-Lyons instituted a new system whereby one Sunday a month, I was given the Sunday off and a guest musician was engaged to lead the music for the service, offering more diversity for the church music program.

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. The organ has been maintained by Emery Brothers Co., we are very grateful to Nick Titakis, RPT, who has donated his services tuning and maintaining our pianos.

In October of 2013, I announced my resignation, effective June 2014. I have served this congregation faithfully for nearly three decades, directing the music at over 1100 worship services. I have been the longest serving music director in the 181 year history of this church. I have always endeavored to make the music program the best that it could be, and have tried to offer music appropriate for this congregation. I hope that in some small measure I may have succeeded.

William Peek
Music Director

We were very lucky to receive a generous donation of jewelry from Myra Addington's collection; many members now have some beautiful pieces to treasure and remember her by. Thank you to all of you who donated such fun events and unique items to the auction, and to everyone who attended and bid!

Koren Manning
Chair

Ceremonies

This will be my final Annual Report as Ceremonies Coordinator! After 7 beautiful, inspiring and fun years, we are transitioning this role to a paid position. We have asked Tracy Hopkins, a journalist and local Brooklynite, to take over as Ceremonies Coordinator as of June 1st. She will be working on a commission basis.

During the 2013-2014 church year 7 couples were joined in our Sanctuary. Since 2007, when I created the Ceremonies Coordinator position (inspired by my own wedding), we have averaged about 10 weddings a year. We have also had 3-4 memorial services and 3-4 child dedications for non-members each year. Our Ceremonies income has fluctuated between \$8,000 and nearly \$20,000 a year. We are hoping that with increased advertising and a professional staff we will be able to increase the number of weddings to at least a dozen a year, with a corresponding increase in revenue. The current fee for a Sanctuary wedding for a non-member is \$1600 (not including the minister's or musicians' fees)

Most non-member weddings here at First U are officiated by Rev. Jude Geiger. Rev. Hope Johnson and several

other area UU ministers also officiate weddings and lead memorials. Rose Schwab and Meagan Henry are currently leading non-member child dedications.

It has been a pleasure and an honor to be First Unitarian's Ceremonies Coordinator. I have loved working closely with our ministers. I have met some fascinating and inspiring couples, including a couple of celebrities! I have been privileged to help families in times of grief, and in moments of celebration.

My favorite part of being the Ceremonies Coordinator has been cueing the bride and her attendants as they walk down the aisle. Many times I have stood next to our Sanctuary doors and watched as a nervous bride fixes her dress for the last time, takes a deep breath and walks towards her future. What an honor it has been for me to witness that moment of bravery, love and trust.

Thank you,
Becky Huffman

Investment Committee

The First Unitarian Congregational Society of Brooklyn's {FUCSB} Investment Committee is charged with safeguarding the value of the congregation's endowment funds, while, at the same time, ensuring that prudent financial returns are earned on the fund's assets. This responsibility is defined by the Congregation's Investment Policy, which was adopted by the Congregation at its 2012 annual meeting.

During Fiscal Year 2014 the Endowment's underlying assets were managed by Walden Asset Management, a wholly owned subsidiary of Boston Trust Company. Walden is widely recognized as one of the country's premiere socially responsible investment managers. In the case of FUCSB's investment portfolio, Walden selects investments in companies that not only have solid financial returns but whose behavior toward their employees, the environment, and society at large, is in line with Unitarian Universalist Principles.

Walden, in accordance with FUCSB's investment policy, invests in both high quality, investment grade, equities

and bonds of U.S. based companies. The investment policy provides Walden with a good deal of flexibility when it comes to making individual investments and with respect to the mix, or balance, between equities and bonds. This allows them, as investment managers, to make quick decisions without having to check with the Investment Committee, as market and economic conditions change.

The FUCSB Finance Committee meets on a quarterly basis with Kim Gluck, the Walden investment manager responsible for the FUCSB relationship. These meetings focus on past performance, the economic outlook, future investment plans and a review of the FUCSB investment policy.

For the one-year period from April 1, 2013 through March 31, 2014, the FUCSB endowment principal balances grew from \$3,708,144 to \$3,871,370, representing a 4.4% increase. The endowment principal is comprised of nine restricted trust funds and an unrestricted general fund. As of March 31, 2014 the nine restricted

funds, taken together, and the unrestricted funds had a fair market value of \$686,999 and \$3,184,370 respectively. The nine trusts and the unrestricted funds are comingled for investment purposes.

The growth in principal over the year was comprised of three major elements.

Investment Growth: Walden invests on a total return basis. That is FUCSB does not directly concern itself if the income earned on the portfolio is earned from dividends, interest or capital appreciation. Rather it primarily focuses on the sum of all three of these elements without regard to the source of the income. A portion of this income is distributed to the congregation's treasurer for use in the annual congregational operations. During FY 2014 this distribution amounted to \$136,000.

The annual distribution is calculated based on the provision in the FUCSB's investment policy that limits the disbursement of income to four percent (4.0%) of the average fair market value of the entire portfolio taken over the past thirteen (13) calendar quarters.

The portfolio's earnings over and above this four percent are added back to the endowment's principal as a hedge against inflation and to increase the endowment's future earn power.

Sale of Asset: During FY 2014 FUCSB realized the proceeds related to the sale of the Tiffany Camp Screen formally located at the rear of the chapel. These proceeds amounted to \$172,800, after commission. These

proceeds were added to the unrestricted endowment funds in March 2014.

Disbursement of Principal: During December 2013 the FUCSB board of trustees voted to distribute \$75,000 of the restricted Flatbush Fund principal to a Brooklyn based start-up congregation, known as Original Blessing. This disbursement was made in accordance with the terms of the underlying trust agreement and was within the purview of the board.

The following table summarizes the cash flows associated with UCSB's endowment from April 1, 2013 through March 31, 2014:

Beginning Balance, April 1, 2013	\$3,708,144
Asset Sale Proceeds	\$172,800
Withdrawal of Principal	\$-75,000
Investment Income	\$267,926
Disbursements of Income	\$-202,500
Ending Balance, March 31, 2014	\$3,871,370

The investment income roughly equates to approximately 8.0% against average principal invested. The Investment Committee views this return acceptable, given the Endowment's mix between equities and bonds; and given the defensive nature of Walden's investment style.

David Provost
Chair

Facilities Management Committee

The Facilities Management Committee has have been studying the Sanctuary for needed repairs. We had a successful Sanctuary clean-up day, on March 8, with volunteers working in conjunction with the Welcoming Sanctuary Task Force and the group planning for First Unitarian – Brooklyn's participation in the NY State Sacred Sites 2014 tour, which includes our Sanctuary.

A second successful work day, was organized by David Garvoille and FMC member Liz Davis who has coordinated many workdays at First U. On May 10th, a large group worked to clean floors and woodwork in the Chapel, Frances White room, and passageway to the Undercroft in preparation for summer services. Special

attention was given to the up-lights which bathe the ceiling vaults and give indirect light to the space.

We have identified a new electrical contractor who will be upgrading the lighting in the Old Furnace Room, which in addition to being used partly for storage, houses the access to the main gas connection. We are working to maintain our rental properties: the two apartments in 48 Monroe Place, as well as Imagine Early Learning Center.

The FMC has been active throughout the year. During the summer members met monthly with the Accessibility group and with the Architect. We are conducting an

ongoing review of problem areas in our buildings and are identifying projects for the future while being respectful of the budget.

We are happy to report that Burda Construction will begin work shortly, all permits are in place, and the repairs to the stonework on the tower at the northwest corner of the Sanctuary (where the bridge and scaffold are now in place) the resurfacing and restoration of the main Sanctuary steps, which includes installation of new handrails.

The Facilities Management Committee meets the fourth Wednesday of each month. Contact Chair Elaine Macken for details. We are always working on the improvement of our spaces—inside and out. Please share any ideas or concerns about our historic building with any member of the committee: Liz Davis, Sara Faison, Gloria Furman, Mark Holloway, John Pritchard, David Thebus and Nancy Wolf.

Elaine Macken
Chair

Living Wage Taskforce

The fledgling Living Wage Task Force had its inaugural meeting on Sunday, March 30th with a panel discussion on raising the minimum wage. Three distinguished speakers presented diverse perspectives on the issue: Naquasia LeGrand, a fast food worker and organizer for Fast Food Forward, the group that is promoting nationwide protests in favor of increasing franchise workers' wages; Professor Ruth Milkman, a sociologist at CUNY Graduate Center who specializes in labor issues; and Tom Kennedy, labor lawyer and long-term member of First U.

Two related books were promoted at the meeting: *Behind the Kitchen Door* by Saru Jayaraman, which the UUA recommends as the current "common read" for member congregations, and *New Labor in New York, Precarious Workers and the Future of the Labor Movement*, a compilation of articles edited by Professor Milkman and Ed Ott, former Executive Director of the New York Labor Council and lecturer at CUNY's Labor Institute.

The second event hosted by the Task Force was screening May 16th of the film, *Inequality for All*, which features economist and former Labor Secretary Robert Reich explaining why middle class income has stagnated or declined in the last 30 to 40 years and showing the impact this has had on the nation's economy since consumer spending has become the driving force underlying economic growth.

At the next meeting, members of First U will be asked to join the task force and formulate an action plan for the next church year.

Nancy Welles
Convener

Membership Committee

The members of this year's Membership Council were Lee Pardee – Chair, Marty Bernstein – Chair of Welcome and Fellowship, Dawn Brekke – Greeter/Usher Coordinator, Rachel Michael – Trustee Liaison. Ex officio members were Garnett Losak – Director of Membership and Communications, the Rev. Ana Levy-Lyons, Mark Holloway – President of the Board of Trustees, and Meagan Henry – Director of Education Ministries.

New Members – Significant Growth

All year we have been welcoming lots and lots of newcomers every Sunday. And many of our newcomers are participating in lots of congregational activities and groups and then deciding to formally join our congre-

gation. The committee is working on developing new activities to help newcomers get involved – possible congregation-wide service days or congregational mentors.

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 201 members to the UUA, a 9% increase from 2013. On March 16 we welcomed our largest class in many years– 14 new members, whose photos and biographies are currently displayed on the Undercroft bulletin board. And we expect to welcome another 5-10 new members in June. Thanks to Marty, Bob Newsom and Leif Meneke for photographing all our new members.

Three of our new members this year have been youth who have graduated from our religious education program – Emily DePorto, Ben Eisenstadt, and Ethan Muller. As of the annual meeting, we have 220 members, and there is still one more New Member Sunday to come before the summer on June 8. That same day we will once again hold a New Member Reception for all of this year's new members.

In addition to increasing our official membership, we also have seen a tremendous growth in attendance at our Sunday worship services. We have been averaging a total attendance of 265 each Sunday (including RE). We also averaged 70 people each week at our summer services.

Long-Time Members – Service of the Living Tradition

On May 18 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:

Honorees:

50th anniversary: Peter and Suzanne Eikenberry

25th anniversary: Dale Addington, Tom Check, Julia Pane, Nancy Witherell

15th-19th anniversaries: Mariasara Alcott, Michael Alcott, Michele Ascione, Deborah Barbieri, Dawn Brekke, John Brekke, Larry Calia, Michael D'Elia, Robert Deporto, Cindy Eisemann, Paul Eisemann, Bert Eisenstadt, Carolyn Ellis, Jennifer Goldin, Arthur Hall, Ari Hoogenboom, Jr., Laurel Lesio-Eisenstadt, Edwin Lord, Wanda Lucibello, Jaye Nelia, Carolyn McIntyre White, Robert Patterson, John Pritchard, Katherine Titakis, Nicholas Titakis, Noreen Weiss Adler, Michael White, Lake Wise

Congratulations to all our honorees!

Greeters and Ushers

Greeters and Ushers were again headed up by Dawn Brekke this year. There were 73 people who participated in the program including seven outstanding Head Ushers: Michael Richardson, Edwin Lord, Marty Bernstein, Kurt Steele, Sean Fischer, Nancy Welles and Sara Morgan; and our wonderful Deacons: Al Blanco, Tom Check, Seth Faison, Olive Hoogenboom, Charlie King, Connie Newsom, Peter Norling, and Alice Wong.

Three congregants signed up for monthly Usher dates; Barbary Kennedy, Olivia Nunez and Cameron Morkel-Williams. We hosted a mid-year web training seminar and discussion to talk about programming and outreach. There is still a need to grow this program. However, there is support in recognizing Greeting and Ushering as an important part of our hospitality ministry, especially as it relates to growing our congregation.

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 now also have Membership Director, Garnett Losak, and Trustees staffing the table each Sunday. 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

This past year, Rev. Ana and Membership Director Garnett Losak continued our monthly Newcomer Orientation class. Ana again presented her three-session class on UU Theology, once in the fall and again in the spring.

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.

Soup & Sandwiches

Vonda Brunsting and Marci Lucia 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 Vonda and Marci 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 five groups that continued throughout most of the year. Rev. Ana gave the groups the added treat of sharing a pot luck lunch with everyone in March.

Stewardship

The Membership Council worked with this year's stewardship team to help the congregation institute year-round canvassing. We surpassed our FY13 goal of

\$260,000 and have brought in close to 90% of this year's goal of \$275,000 in pledges to fund the next year at First U Brooklyn. Please see the detailed report from Stewardship Co-Chairs David Garvoille and Peter Norling.

Lee Pardee
Chair

Marty Bernstein
Dawn Brekke
Rachel Michael (Board Liaison)
Garnett Losak (ex officio)

Mother Theater Project

PROGRAMS:

Summer Service

As a culmination of the monologue workshop from 2013, the MTP presented a summer service with original music, monologues and poetry with 10 members of the ensemble.

Mother Wove the Morning

In October 2013 we revived our production of "Mother Wove the Morning." In the two years since the previous production there has been a lot of growth in our community including our new Senior Minister, and we felt it was a good time to reintroduce that project. The cast included: Leif Meneke, Naarah Williams, Rachel Michael, Lisa Genn, Vonda Brunsting, Rachel Wiley, Mariasara Aprea-Alcoff, Tia Marie LeBlanc, Judy Gorman, Marcia Garnett, Ann Sackrider, Stephanie Trudeau, Monica Kuth, Carol Henning, Dawn Elane Reed, Dawn Brekke, and Alexa Vicich. In addition to the cast our team included additional directors and back stage staff; Cindy Eisemann, Charlotte Fleck, Kate Spencer, Lee Ilan, June Wohlhorn, Mary Most, Jeannie Wing and Koren Manning

Our audience included over 150 people over the three night run (10/24, 25 and 26) and we raised \$1500 after expenses. Proceeds were divided between the First U RE program, the Mother Theater Project and a donation to the Spiritual Alliance to stop Intimate Violence (SAIV).

Lecture

October 27, 2013 we hosted a lecture by Kaye Lindauer "Goddess: Her Stories", fees for Ms. Lindauer were paid for with a grant from the Flatbush Fund. Participation included over 20 guests and organizers.

Winter Solstice

On Saturday December 21, 2013, the MTP hosted an open service for the Winter Solstice. Congregants were invited to bring a song, poem or dance to honor the change of season. Attendance was approximately 30 people.

Spring 2014 Project

In January of 2014 we began work on a spring project on the Mind / Heart connection and disconnection. A core group of 8 members met weekly working with theater games, improvisation, visualization and discussion to explore ways we cope with the disconnection. We are also looking at modalities that offer reconnection between the heart and mind; meditation, yoga and Heartmath. In addition to the core group, we have remained open to "drop ins" and have had 10 participants join us in the exploration. We are planning an evening of sharing our writing and discovery the second week in June. Our goal is to continue working on a script that will be performed as a full play in the coming year.

The Key Group Leaders of this year's Mother Theater Project (MTP) were Dawn Brekke, Cindy Eisemann and Alexa Vicich. Participation included over 40 members and non-members of First U.

Dawn Brekke

Religious Education

This year was an eventful one for Religious Education! In November we welcomed our new Director of Educational Ministries, Meagan Henry. Meagan joined our congregation at one of our busiest seasons. Within weeks she was leading our annual Winter Festival and Celebration, helping plan our Spring Murray Grove Retreat, and working with our children and youth in multiple ways. Meagan has brought some wonderful ideas and inspiration to the RE team, and we are already planning some fantastic programs for the fall.

As a new member of the team, and a brand new chair, I am indebted to the hard work, years of wisdom and hard won experience of our RE Council. Some of our team will be moving on to other service in the congregation. We will be expanding our Council in 2014-2015. I want to invite new members, non-parents, Twenties and Thirties, youth, parents and grandparents to join in the wonderful work we do. If you are interested in helping with our Halloween Party, our Winter Festival, the Spring Celebration, next year's Coming of Age (COA) group, the amazing Our Whole Lives (OWL) program, the teen group, or the many other programs, events and curriculum the RE program provides, please contact me. Everyone is welcome! The more involvement we have from the congregation, the stronger our RE program becomes.

Next year we will have three semesters of: Nursery, Pre-K (ages 2.5-4) Kindergarten-1st grade, 2nd-3rd grade, 4th-5th grade, 6th-7th grade, 8th Grade Coming of Age, and Youth Group. The K-1 and the 4-5 classes will participate in OWL in the Winter/Spring semesters. For the past several years we have had 3-5 paid adult teachers

Shawl Ministry

The Shawl Ministry continues to benefit from the support of enthusiastic members. Through their dedicated crafting they regularly complete warm beautiful shawls that give comfort to congregants who have suffered losses, and support to bridging young people. This past year Mary Most, Dawn Brekke, Beth Evans, Edwin Lord, Lee Pardee, and Angele Coen have been particularly active. Special mention and thanks go to Beth Evans for offering to drive through snow-clogged

streets to a discount yarn store in Woodhaven when our supply of yarns had run low, and to Liz Shaw for managing the Ministry alone during the early part of the year.

working in our Sunday morning program. Next year, due to budgetary changes, we will reduce our paid staff to 2 adults and 2 youth. These teachers will work with our youngest members in our Nursery and Pre-K classrooms. All other teachers will be volunteers, who will teach Fall, Winter or Spring semesters (or all 3!) Once a month we will hold Children's Chapel, a child centered worship service with music, a story and movement activities designed to reinforce the Seven UU Principles.

In the 2014-2015 Church Year we will be inviting all families to "Give us Ten!" We encourage all families to give 10 hours of their Time, Talent and Treasure (TTT) to the Religious Education Program. There will be a wide variety of volunteer hours available, and all sign-ups will be done electronically, with simple reminders. When families register their children, they will be asked to commit to 10 hours of TTT for the year. Examples of TTT hours are: teaching 5 sessions of a children's class, helping prepare supplies, volunteering at an RE clean up day, assisting at a celebration, baking goodies for a party, doing data entry, being a teen mentor, or being a lay leader for Children's Chapel.

Thank you to our wonderful, hard working and creative staff, volunteers, mentors and teachers. I am thrilled to be leading such an incredible team.

Becky Huffman, *2014 Chair*

Michele Ascione, *2013 Chair*

2013-2014 Members: Tia LeBlanc, Kirsten deFur, Gate Pratt, Samira Kawash, June Wohlhorn, MariaSara Alcott

Diana Lu
Chair

Share the Plate

For many years, First Unitarian has shared a portion of its collection with non-profit organizations that work for justice in our local community and throughout the world. Since our Share the Plate program was initiated, we have given away more than \$70,000.

In an effort to create a more inclusive process for selecting Share the Plate beneficiaries and in the spirit of our mission to fulfill our responsibility to the larger society by promoting justice and peace, the Board of Trustees formed a Share the Plate Committee (SPC) which was charged with soliciting nominations from the congregation and selecting, from those nominations, an organization for the month.

An online and paper nomination form were created and shared with the First U community at the end of February. To date, nearly 15 nominations have been submitted from First U members and friends. The SPC is excited to work together and appreciates everyone contribution to this effort.

Since May 2013, the following beneficiaries received funds from our Share the Plate program:

May 2013:	The Global Fund For Women	- \$843
June 2013:	UUA Oklahoma Relief Fund	- \$954
September 2013:	Minister's Discretionary Fund	- \$1133
October 2013:	The Red Hook Initiative	- \$943
November 2013:	UUSC-UUA Phillipines Typhoon Relief	- \$4123
December 2013:	CHIPS	- \$1160
January 2014:	Horizons Leadership Project	- \$1177
February 2014:	The GO Project	- \$1147
March 2014:	Hudson River Sloop Clearwater	- \$1231
April 2014:	SHARE Cancer Support	- \$1444

Olivia Nunez for the Share the Plate Committee
Andrew Bongiorno, Jocelyn Smith, Bob Patterson

Stewardship

We are delighted to report that the 2013-14 Stewardship Campaign raised \$264,000 in pledges. This represents a growth of 8.5% (\$20,000) over the previous fiscal year! The pledges come from 155 generous families and individuals, a 7% increase over the year before. Because of the increased support, our congregation surpassed the Stewardship Committee's goal by \$4,000.

The 2014-15 goal has been set at \$275,000. As of this writing, we are already at 84% of this target. We have \$241,000 in commitments by members; of this amount, \$20,000 is in increased pledges from renewal members and \$6,000 from new members. We are on target for an overall 7% increase over last year in the amount pledged.

The trend for increased giving tells us a number of things. First, it reflects the current financial health of

our congregation, for which we are very fortunate given the vicissitudes of the economy. Second, it is a tangible "thank you" for the intangible gifts we receive as members of this wonderful community, from our ministerial leadership with Rev. Ana and Meagan Henry, board members and officers, and lay members who teach our children, serve on committees, organize forums, dinners, and all sorts of other events. And lastly, it reflects the professionalism and the passion the canvass team brings to its work of motivating our members to support First U.

The theme for this year's campaign is "I Feel Generous" (or "IFG"), tapping into the view that stretching together creates a culture of abundance. With that, we can keep our building in good repair, hire or retain the best people, and grow our programs. All members who pledge for 2014-15 were given the opportunity to add a

small, round, red “IFG” sticker to their name badge, so that, for example, during coffee hour people would ask, “What does ‘IFG’ mean?” and those who had pledged would explain, thereby deputizing everyone who pledged to be part of the Stewardship Team.

After a kickoff party, hosted by Sara and Senior Deacon, Seth Faison, other members opened up their homes to host stewardship parties. Each party was attended by a member of the Team and in many cases by a board member, Rev. Ana, or Meagan Henry, Director of Education Ministries. We found that meetings where food was served (brunch or dinner) were more popular than cocktail parties. Personal invitations by phone, email and in person worked best for getting people to commit.

Our communication strategy included printed notices in the Order of Service and online through email and Facebook. We also did a small Facebook social media campaign where members were photographed (using a cell phone) holding a sign where they wrote “I support First U because [fill-in-the-blank].” Members could “tag” their photos and share with friends. Several announcements were also made during worship services.

The Team is grateful to the following people who generously hosted events for the Stewardship Campaign: Sara and Seth Fason (kickoff party), board member Jeff Muller (wine/cheese) and board member Tom Check with his wife Nancy Witherell (dinner), Lee Pardee and Garnett Losak (brunch), Sarah Morgan (cocktails), Samira Kawash and Roger Cooper (dinner); Carolyn Ellis and Lake Wise (dinner), Nancy Welles (cocktails) and for hosting a spaghetti supper for parents with children, James Goward and Jackie Frost.

Finally, Peter and I would like to express our deep appreciation to Garnett Losak. She was instrumental in raising everyone’s expectations on what we can do as a congregation as the chair of the 2013-14 stewardship campaign. Now as our Director of Membership, her work behind the scenes has helped ensure a smooth and successful 2014-15 campaign, too.

Respectfully submitted by the Stewardship Team,
 Peter Norling and David Garvoille, Co-Chairs
 Bruce Wilde, Marty Bernstein, Koren Manning,
 Lee Pardee, Nancy Welles, Sarah Morgan,
 Rosemarie Stupel, Alice Wong, Cindy Eisemann

Stewardship Statistics by Fiscal Year			
	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15 AS OF 5/9/14
Number of Pledges	145	155	114
Average Pledge	\$1841	\$1702	\$2114
Median Pledge	\$1150	\$1000	\$1420
Mode (most common)	\$500	\$1200	\$1200
Budget	\$225,000	\$258,500	\$265,000
Pledge Total	\$242,858	\$263,810	\$232,319

Sustainability Committee

The Sustainability Committee continues to build momentum, one project at a time, toward the ultimate goal of getting our church certified as a Green Sanctuary through the UUA. Stephanie Gannon has been keeping tabs on the requirements and is consulting with us on how to meet them. Nancy Wolf, who also sits on Facilities, has been coordinating to figure out a lighting solution for the sanctuary that uses power-efficient LED lights but still allows us to dim the lights for heightened effect during services. She, David Meadow, Mary Most, and Mariasara Alcott also pressed for up-to-date recycling containers with the main office, and were rewarded with the new bins that can be seen all around the vestibule, undercroft, etc. The next focus for our building's recycling is making sure the custodians use the right lining bags so that the city collects and disposes of the items properly.

Activities already sponsored or co-sponsored:

- An environmentally-themed lay service led by Stephanie Gannon (July 2013), at which we collected info on what activities congregants want to be a part of, and determined that they mostly want community gardening and nature retreats
- A screening of Bidder 70 (Joan Beard; documentary about UU environmental activist Tim DeChristopher) at the Westbeth community Center (Oct. 30, 2013)
- A Spirit of Truth panel with Tim DeChristopher and environmental activist Jessica Roff (Nov. 2, 2013)
- A wisdom story by David, first presented at our recent Earth Day service (April 27, 2014), which might go up on a UUA page once it's vetted and polished

- Gardening days at Red Hook Community Garden (Oct. 12, 2013 and May 3, 2014) and Garden of Union (May 4, 2014)

Activities already planned for the future:

- Gardening Day at 4th Unitarian Universalist, Manhattan, May 17th
- First UU-specific screening of Bidder 70
- E-waste collection days at First UU (May 31 and June 1)

Possible activities for the future:

- Gardening days and gardening skill shares at First UU
- Green projects (shopping strategies, budgeting, petitioning decision-makers) woven into RE to get youth involved
- Nature retreats, hiking excursions, earth-honoring worship, nurture of earth-honoring spiritual practices among congregants
- One-stop micro-co-op for sustainable/socially responsible household products Co-op for affordable solar panels and other renewables General strategic plans: David is interested in using this committee, both to increase UU visibility and to partner with other faith and grassroots organizations, in New York City and beyond, which is worthwhile on its own but also a part of the Green Sanctuary requirements.

David Meadow (Chair)
Mariasara Alcott
Stephanie Gannon
Mary Most
Nancy Wolf
Dawn Brekke

Twenties and Thirties (TNT)

The TNTs have had an exciting year of growth! Featured by the UUA Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries as "a bridge to multigenerational community," the TNTs prioritized radical hospitality and giving back to the community. In addition to running Unifair lunch and organizing two Soulful Sundowns and a Summer Service, the TNTs now have three regularly occurring events. In addition to monthly brunch, we host two opportunities for young adults to engage in spiritual reflection -- Monthly Reflections with Rev. Ana and a reinvigorated Pastoral Pints. We also designed seasonal events and special events for the entire congregation and were very excited to co-host a luncheon with the Women's Alliance to create an opportunity for women of all ages to get to know each other better. This summer, we will continue to hold our monthly brunches and look forward to a camping expedition and group outings to concert series. By the end of the year, we will have hosted more than twenty-five events and we look forward to another exciting year ahead. The UUA article featuring the TNTs, it is available at www.blueboat.blogs.uua.org/2014/03/28/spotlight-uu-young-adults-of-brooklyn-ny.

A fantastic new endeavor included the creation of a monthly TNT e-newsletter to keep young adults in the loop about our events and congregational goings-on; in one year, this list has grown to 120 people. We look for-

ward to continuing to build this list in the coming year to include more opportunities for TNTs to plug into the broader community, including requests from the congregation for volunteers and committee members.

In the coming year, we intend to continue our three monthly events and help to empower more TNTs to organize events for young adults and for the broader community. We intend to continue to strengthen our bonds through spiritual and social gatherings and we aim to add a community service component to our programming.

Thank you to all of our congregation's young adults who hosted, participated in our events this year: particularly Koren Manning, Sarah Morgan, Mi Puchon, Anna Howell, Arpi Terzian, Merrill Csur, Rose Schwab, Alicia Lamberti, Melissa Paul, David Garvoille, and Devin McDougall. Thanks also to the many honorary young adults who support our goals and projects, especially Garnett Losak and Rev. Ana.

Julie Bero (co-chair)
For the TNT's

Karen Plemons (co-chair)
Katie Trossello (co-chair)

UniFair

The first Saturday in December is always a big day at First U, and December 7th was no exception. Starting around Labor Day, the church was deluged with used clothing for all shapes and sizes. A stunning array of white elephants came over the transom. Toys and antiques, books and records, linens and crafts piled up in all the available nooks and crannies. In November, the sorters sorted and the bakers baked in preparation. Fruitcakes piled up by the score.

On the day itself, the TNT's (twenties and thirties) outdid themselves preparing a hearty lunch. The jewelry table was inundated with curious shoppers investigating the current crop of treasures. The scent of holiday wreaths diffused the chapel while enthusiastic carolers enhanced the festive spirit.

By the time all was said and done, our coffers had grown by \$8,789.87.

Unifair is an all hands on deck event. Thanks to the many, many members and friends of the congregation who helped to sort, set-up, sell, donate, shop, cook and clean-up.

Nancy Welles
Chair

Weaving the Fabric of Diversity (WFD)

WFD works on living our principles by working for justice and equality within our congregation and in the general community. We form relationships outside our congregational walls, create informational forums, and take part in actions of witness. We also hold "In the Spirit of Truth" sessions to provide a safe space to discuss issues of oppression. We have had a relationship with local Muslim community since 2001 and have been working with a Haitian non-profit organization to raise funds for projects in Haiti. We are happy to organize events and actions based on suggestions from members of our congregation. We also present our congregation's first summer service on the 3rd Sunday of June to celebrate Juneteenth - the date in 1865 (June 19th) when the last slaves in the US were informed of their freedom.

DINNERS

CommonThreads Dinner with the Muslim Community (Sat. 10/19/13). This friendship meal began as a Ramadan Iftar (break the fast meal). Since Ramadan is now during our summer hiatus, we have made a friendship dinner. The gathering becomes warmer and friendlier yearly as our communities become better acquainted with each other.

Haiti: A Celebration - Dinner with Entertainment (Sat. 3/29/14). Our relationship with Haitian grassroots 501(c)(3) organization FEDADSE (Federation des Associations pur le Developpment du Sud Est) continues to grow in warmth and scope. The event is organized jointly by FEDADSE and WFD - each supplying an emcee, food, and entertainment for a truly multicultural experience. We anticipate that this relationship will grow stronger. Funds raised this year will be used for reforestation projects in Haiti. All labor for these projects is volunteer.

Juneteenth Service and Picnic (Sun. 6/15/14): This annual event includes our first summer service in the Sanctuary, followed by a lunch outdoors on Monroe Place. Both are organized by WFD and celebrate the day the last American slaves were freed. This year's service will review 19 years of social justice activity in our congregation. Lunch is pot-luck, but starter foods are provided.

FORUMS

Forum on the Selling of Public Assets (Sun. 11/3/13): Since Feb. 2013 Citizens Defending Libraries

(CDL) has been hard at work to prevent the sell-off of NYC public libraries. Libraries are not the only public assets being sold off: schools, hospitals, parks and public housing are also affected. This forum brought together various stakeholder groups with an eye towards common goals.

Battered Pride - Violence Against the LGBTQ

Community (Sat. 2/15/14): A safe space for people who have experienced or fear anti-(Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Transgender, Queer) violence. We also heard from Anti-Violence advocates and professionals in this field with suggestions for what allies of this community can do to help.

Forum on Police Abuse of Authority (Sat.

3/15/14): Stop and Frisk may be ending. Does this mean a kinder, gentler police force in New York City? This forum presented a broad question, framed to consider many different viewpoints including police surveillance of the Stop and Frisk policies.

In the Spirit of Truth - Violence Toward the

LGBTQ Community (Sun. 12/15/13): A safe space to discuss issues of oppressions.

ACTIONS OF IMMEDIATE WITNESS

Kyam Livingston Events: Since August of 2013 we helped organize and took part in monthly rallies or speak outs to protest the death of Kyam Livingston who was ill in a holding cell at Brooklyn Central Bookings and was denied medical help. She was arrested on a minor matter and was never charged with a crime.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Notes of Support for Embattled Families in Syria:

We have been asking our congregation to write notes of humanitarian support to people in the middle of a war torn nation.

Horizons Leadership Project: We have helped obtain weekend volunteers for this community program working with at-risk youth. We also organized for our congregation to "split-the-plate" to help Horizons.

Free Russell Maroon Shoatz Campaign: We helped spread the word about releasing prisoners from extremely long term solitary confinement. Mr. Shoatz has been released into the general prison population after 22 years in solitary confinement. Additionally, on the evening of 6/21/14, WFD will host a meeting of groups working to form a coalition to end solitary confinement.

THANKS

We would like to thank all in the congregation who attended our monthly meetings and worked with us in the kitchen or doing set-up for our dinners. We would especially like to thank Bob Bero and his jazz group for their performance at the Haitian dinner and for musical expertise for the Juneteenth service, and David Garvoille for hosting the Haitian dinner.

FUNDING

Our funding for the past 4 years has been through grants from the Flatbush Fund. All money has gone towards food and decorations for the dinners and Juneteenth lunch, as well as custodial and child care costs.

Welcoming Sanctuary Task Force

In the fall of 2013, The Welcoming Sanctuary Task Force (WSTF) reported on the findings of the worship space survey we conducted earlier that year. The analysis of the responses showed strong agreement on several key points:

Our sanctuary:

- is visually inspiring and spacious
- has beautiful Tiffany stained glass windows

Yet:

- is too dark and somber
- lacks obvious Unitarian Universalist symbols
- is in a state of disrepair and is often dirty

The WSTF has been discussing how to respond to these findings. Regarding congregants' experiences that the sanctuary is in a state of disrepair, WSTF has been working with Facilities Management Committee (FMC) to repair broken woodwork including 55 (out of a total of 75) broken or loose hymnal racks. If the Board approves this proposal, both WSTF and FMC expect the work to start this summer and we also expect the work to be finished by the ingathering worship service in the fall. To make the sanctuary cleaner, WSTF worked with the FMC on a cleaning day on March 8.

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."

Rita Pearl

For the Weaving the Fabric of Diversity Committee

Enza Itri (Chair), Michael Richardson (Co-Chair), Andrew Bongiorno, Kate Hibbard, Rita Pearl, Derek Pearl, Vinny Allegrini, Mark de Solla-Price, Bob Patterson, Wayne Christianson, Kassandra Khalil

The dark and somber issue has been addressed by replacing and/or tightening most of the non-working fluorescent lights in the sanctuary chandeliers during the March 8 cleaning day. Out of several approaches to lighten the sanctuary, WSTF has been focusing on how to increase the side aisle lighting. We are still in the discussing and planning stages. Some of the issues are: finding LED bulbs that give off an enhancing hue of white, that can be dimmed, that are affordable, and that our current wiring can support. The good news is that LED technology is changing rapidly in the direction of being able to meet our needs.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Alice Witherell, Chair

WSTF members: Edwin Lord,
Lee Pardee, Cooper Richey-Miller

Women's Alliance

The Women's Alliance has accomplished what we set out to do! In September, approached by the Pastoral Care Committee to develop a workshop on planning for the unexpected, we presented on legal and financial issues of aging and death. Many thanks to our presenters, Steve Schwartzman, Frank Patton of All Soul's Church, and Alice Wong. This presentation was well-attended.

Last year the Women's Alliance joined with the General Assembly of the greater UUA in adopting reproductive justice as our advocacy position. While this policy issue is stable in New York State, it remains actively opposed in many other states including Arizona, Texas, North Dakota, and Oklahoma. These issues were addressed eloquently at the Women's Alliance worship service on March 2nd with homilies by Julie Bero and Rose Schwab. We have voted to provide the New York Access to Abortion organization with advocacy money.

Continuum of Faith, our first intergenerational luncheon, was celebrated in March. Five groups had stimulating discussions about women's roles, change and Feminism. Pictures are featured in the Undercroft. Many thanks go to Julie Bero, Kathy Ivans, Katie Josephson and Alicia Glavin for their initiative and implementation.

Worship and Music Committee

The Worship and Music Committee had a very productive 2013-14 church year. I am very grateful for all of their hard work and the wonderful commitment and dedication they showed towards our church community.

Beginning in the summer, members of our committee were assigned as Worship Assistants to Worship Leaders for each summer service. This meant communicating with the leaders weeks ahead of time and helping to guide them through the process, then being present on the day of the service to make sure everything was taken care of and to accomplish the many assigned tasks.

Following is a list of accomplishments this year:

- helped identify and schedule Guest Music Leaders
- trained new Lay Leaders

We concluded our third film Series with *Wadjda*, the coming of age story of a Saudi Arabian girl who perseveres in her goal to purchase a bicycle. This is the first film directed by a Saudi Arabian woman. Perseverance and strength were central to the other films in the series: *ARISE*, *Dianna Vreeland*, and *Calendar Girls*. We thank Kay Corkett and Kathy Ivans for their work on this program.

Financial support was given to Rose Schwab as seminar-in-residence. We continue to manage the Miriam Campobasso fund for women with specific needs during an illness.

Our goals for next year? A second intergenerational celebration, a fourth film series featuring issues of significance to women and women's issues, developing guidelines to foster women's leadership, and a reduced membership fee for those under 30.

We thank Alice Wong for her years of service and commitment to the Women's Alliance. We remember Suzanne Eikenberry and Myra Addington, whose lives enriched the Women's Alliance and our church.

Langdon Holloway
President, Women's Alliance

- initiated the use of the i-phone recording of Sunday sermons for upload to the website
- launched a final drive to purchase the remaining teal hymnals needed for the sanctuary
- wrote articles in Newsletter and recruited leaders for Soulful Sundowns
- prepared the Sanctuary before Sunday services (e.g., replacement of candles; redistribution of hymnals; charge, set up and upload sermons)
- organized, publicized, sold tickets (six consecutive Sundays), ushered, and sold refreshments for two music fundraisers
- helped recruit new Lay Leaders

- wrote articles in Newsletter and began recruitment for Service Leaders for summer services
- had discussions about installation of dimmer and LED lights in the sanctuary, coordinated with Elaine Macken of the facilities committee
- had discussions about broken hymnal racks and then had follow-up correspondences with Rob Petrillo, Director of Congregational Services and Nancy Witherell of the Welcoming Sanctuary Task Force
- coordinated with Rev. Ana and Meagan Henry on Flower Communion
- began recruiting effort for new members of the committee
- began planning for Bill Peek's farewell party

One of our main objectives during the year has been to help Ana to realize her vision of worship for First U.

Guiding our efforts were many in-depth discussions about such topics as the function of worship in our faith; the importance and function of music; the central importance of community at worship; expanding the role of Lay Leaders; examining the elements and language of worship for greater fluidity; the importance of creating a service that is unified, immersive and seamless; hymn leadership and the skills and qualities we are looking for in the next Music Director.

The Committee is looking forward to the challenges and tasks of the coming church year.

Bob Bero
Co-Chair

Jacque Schultz - co-chair (September to January),
Julie Bero, Cara Muller, Lee Pardee, Bob Patterson,
Karen Plemons, Drew Peterson Roach, Claire Sexton,
Bruce Wilde

Vision Statement

The First Unitarian Congregational Society in Brooklyn is a celebrated center of liberal religion and spirituality in New York City.

We are welcoming and accessible to all. We honor the dignity and worth of everyone and welcome people of all races, ages, physical and mental abilities, sexual orientations and genders to join our joyful congregation. We are continuously transforming ourselves into an anti-racist, anti-oppression community.

We are a spiritual community. The artistry, creativity, beauty and breadth in our multiple and diverse forms of worship inspire each of us to move forward on our personal paths toward wholeness. Developing the gifts and talents in all of our seekers is our quest. We inspire, educate, and challenge all who enter here to seek truth.

We live our faith in the world. We take the Unitarian Universalist message of hope, faith and religious freedom to the wider community, and we bring the beliefs of others, as well as our own spirituality, into our religious education. We witness our shared Unitarian Universalist principles: striving to achieve social justice in our own community and in the wider world, and by respecting and taking responsibility for the well-being of the earth and all its inhabitants.

We are a loving and learning congregation. We create community through a wide variety of first rate programs, workshops and events. With careful listening, creative educational programs, and respectful treatment, we nurture our cherished children and youth. We minister to each other in times of joy and in times of need with laughter, compassion, empathy, appreciation and love. We actively resolve conflicts following the promise of our faith and covenant.

We are the stewards of our congregation. We support our ministers, staff and lay leaders through leadership development and training. We give our employees just compensation for their work. The democratic process governs our congregational business. Our policies, practices, and meeting minutes are easily understood and readily accessed through a variety of means. We maintain our landmark home so that it may be enjoyed by generations to come. We maintain a strong connection to the Unitarian Universalist Association, to which we pay our fair share.

We joyfully accept our responsibilities and give generously of our time, talent, energy and financial resources to keep this vision alive.

This vision statement is associated with a goals statement that contains more specific ideas to implement this vision.

Statement of Goals

First Unitarian Congregational Society in Brooklyn Strategic Goals

- We will live in right relationship with each other, continuously transforming ourselves as an anti-racist, anti-oppression community, actively solving conflicts and discussing concerns together.
- We will grow our congregation in order to become a program church, organized to support individuals with a wide variety of spiritual and social programs.
- We will be responsible for the stewardship of our church, and educate our members on the joy and benefits of generous giving.
- We will develop a variety of lifespan religious education and ministry programs to support children, youths and adults in their Unitarian Universalist spiritual education and growth.
- We will be a congregation actively participating in human justice and social action programs, working with our community to effect positive change in the world.
- We will be a congregation actively promoting and participating in the best green, or ecologically responsible, practices.
- We will use accessible communication methods to make our structure, operations and practices transparent to congregants, including our newsletter, an interactive and current website, and office staff.
- We will develop lay leadership within our congregation and encourage participation in denominational and Metro District events.

This goals statement is associated with a vision statement that contains broader ideals underlying these goals.

Right Relations Covenant

We are mindful that, as individuals and members of this spiritual community, we are each accountable for our words, deeds, and behavior. Therefore, whenever we worship, work together, or relate to one another, we agree to follow the following behavior covenant.

I will strive to:

- Respect and cherish diversities of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual and/or affectional orientation, identity/ gender expression, age, ability, beliefs and ideas.
- Assume good intentions. Trust in and speak well of one another. Give the benefit of the doubt. Examine my intentions.
- Foster an environment of compassion, generosity, fellowship, and creativity. Smile and be welcoming. Share in the responsibilities of congregational life. Actively support the congregation's activities, and pledge financial support.
- Express appreciation and gratitude for the rich variety of gifts and talents shared among us. Empower others.
- Speak the truth as I experience it with kindness, care, and respect.
- Make decisions democratically through agreed-upon processes. Promote fairness and decency. Speak out against injustice.
- Face others directly in agreement or disagreement. Act with respect and humility when I disagree with others.
- Be mindful that words and actions may cause unintended pain.
- Seek out understanding and wisdom in the presence of conflict. Resolve conflicts through intentional compromise and collaboration and, when necessary, request mediation. Understand that sometimes it is necessary to take "no" for an answer. Be forgiving.
- Practice self-care.
- Be open to hope.

Clergy and Staff

Rev. Ana Levy-Lyons - Senior Minister
Ana@fuub.org • 718-624-5466 x107

Meagan Henry - Director, Education Ministries
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Robert Petrillo - Director, Congregational Services
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Dr. Donald W. McKinney - Minister Emeritus
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Rev. Orlanda Brugnola - Chaplain Emerita
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Bert Eisenstadt - Director of Children's Music
beisenstadt@lagcc.cuny.edu

Rose Schwab - Seminarian

Eric Cherry and Carl Davis - Hosts

Elizabeth Deterville - Nursery Caregiver

Officers

Mark Holloway - President, Board of Trustees

Trustees: Michael Alcott, Tom Check,
Brian Dauth, Diana Lu,
Elaine Macken, Rachel Michael,
Jeff Muller, Jaye Nelia

Clerk: Liz Davis

Darnell Dawson - Treasurer

Seth Faison - Senior Deacon

Deacons: Alfred Blanco, Thomas Check,
Olive Hoogenboom, Charles King, Constance
Newsom, Peter Norling,
Lee Pardee, Nancy Wolf,
and Alice Wong

Olive Hoogenboom - Historian

Alfred Blanco - Church Warden

Affirmation

*Whoever You Are, Whomever You Love,
Wherever You Are On Your Life's Journey, You Are Welcome Here.*

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

OFFICE: 48 Monroe Place, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2603

PHONE: 718-624-5466 FAX: 718-797-2916

HOURS: Mon-Thurs: 9:30AM-4:00PM, Fri: 9:30AM-12:00PM

WEB: www.fuub.org EMAIL: Office@fuub.org

The following households generously pledged financial support to our congregation for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2014. All donations of time, treasure and talent are received with gratitude. (On behalf of the Stewardship Team, we regret any errors.)

Dale & Myra Addington	Barbara Dildine & Peter Norling	Elizabeth Huffman & Andrew Bongiorno
Derek Adler & Noreen Weiss Adler	Marquetta Drakes*	Lee Ilan & Peter Engel*
Michael & Sara Alcott☼	Douglas Eads❖	Kathy Ivans & Robert Bero
Vincent Allegrini & Mark de Solla Price☼	Peter & Suzanne Eikenberry	Marie Johnson & Alexander Caputo☼
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Wayne Christiansen	James Goward & Jacklyn Frost	Elaine Macken☼
Richard Coate	Jennifer Hampshire*	Mitch Major*
Kay Corkett	Lisa Hanson	Koren Manning☼
Brian Dauth	Elizabeth Henderson	Florence Maynard
Elizabeth Davis	Laurel Hesch & David Thebus*	Allison McCluer ☼
Darnell Dawson*	Lorna & Marc Hollander☼	Devin McDougall*
Kirsten de Fur	Langdon L. & Mark Holloway☼	Rod McFarlin
Adriana & John De Terebessy	Ari Hoogenboom, Jr. & Jaye Nelia	Sean & Arielle McGlaughlin☼
Michael D'Elia	Ari & Olive Hoogenboom, Sr.❖☼	Michael & Emily McLarney☼
Wendy & Lenny Derevensky	Anna & Jack Howell	Amit Mehta & Marci Lucia

Leif F. Meneke ☼	Mi Puchon & Ashley Curl*	Adam Steventon & Desiree Cooper*
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Sarah Morgan*	Cooper & Juliette Richey-Miller ☼	Katie Trossello*
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Cara Muller	Joanie & Bill Schaffer	Elizabeth Wade*
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Rita & Derek Pearl	Jocelyn Smith	Leah Wolin
Karen Plemons*	Jami Smith*	Alice Wong ❖
Gate Pratt*	Kurt Steele & Pat Steele	Mike & Jen Zafaranloo ☼
John Pritchard ❖	Scott Steib	Leslie Zentai & Janice Hepburn ☼
Nancy & David Provost	Jennifer Stevens	

*New Pledger ☼ Increased pledge by 10% or more

❖ Has indicated that they have included First U in their estate planning