



FIRST UNITARIAN
CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY
BR  KLYN
A UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

2016-2017 Annual Report

Senior Minister - Ana Levy-Lyons

This year has been a particularly vibrant and exciting one at First U because of our rapid growth and because of the aftershocks of the 2016 presidential election. The staff and I have had to be quick on our feet to try to meet the quickly shifting needs of the congregation in this unstable political and cultural time. I sense that the congregation has really come together, supporting each other, and eagerly looking for ways to build the beloved community at First U and in the wider world. The level of engagement, the diversity of types of engagement, the introspection, the resisting, the building, and the sheer hard work on the part of our congregants has been truly awe-inspiring.

The program staff (Meagan Henry, Adam Podd, Garnett Losak, Kevin Jagoe, Shari Halliday-Quan, and I) has functioned as a healthy and dynamic team with each member contributing actively, flexibly, and creatively to create our worship services and programs. Chris Johnson and Rob Petrillo have been the solid, invaluable bedrock of support for everything we do. We all have great trust and respect for one another. Every single staff member works hard and brings their full selves to their work. First U is truly blessed to have this team.

Our post-election worship service (Nov. 13) was a creative collaboration of the entire staff and ultimately of the entire congregation as well. The performed music and congregational singing were a powerful outlet for the emotions of that day and we literally lifted up the prayers and visions of the people with prayer flags strung across the sanctuary. The children also made prayer flags and joined with the adults for singing at the end of the service. I preached on “Preparing to Be Deployed,” preparing ourselves physically and spiritually for the vital work ahead. Almost 500 people attended that day and attendance has been in the high 200’s since. I believe that this service advanced all of our Forward goals and was an important moment of spiritual growth for the congregation.

After a long hiatus First U has become a “teaching congregation” again. This means that we engage a student preparing for Unitarian Universalist ministry as an Intern Minister. An internship is a critical aspect of preparation for UU ministry. My role is to mentor and supervise the intern and give him or her broad ministry experience. We have been extremely fortunate that for our initial foray into this project we have had Kevin Jagoe – a grounded and compassionate person with great organization experience and pastoral sensibilities. Kevin has been a real gift to us all. His internship position has been funded for two years by an anonymous donor in our congregation. Beginning with the 2018-2019 program year, however, First U will be expected to contribute substantially to the stipend for any future Intern Ministers.

Our lay worship leaders have been excellent this year – Katie Trossello, Matt Hawkins, Dale Ho, Rachael Warner, and Brad Young. Kevin Jagoe and Shari Halliday-Quan, our field ed seminarian from Union, have also served in this role. They’ve all set a warm, welcoming tone, helped keep the services flowing smoothly, and offered insightful homilies. Volunteers and I worked with them throughout the year to hone their writing and presentation skills. When I took a brief sabbatical for the month of February the lay worship leaders stepped up and – with leadership and preaching by Meagan, Kevin, and Shari – made it a great month of worship services.

My overarching worship and teaching theme for this year has been exploring a spiritual approach to intersectionality – the ways in which all of our various “issues” are connected and stem from the same source of spiritual impoverishment and alienation from the earth. Healing can come about through recognition of our interdependence and oneness. Many of the programs and events, organized below by our Forward goals, orient around this theme:

Goal: Promote spiritual exploration, development and practice

- **Six Stories of Humans and the Earth:** Our worship series this year was an exploration of stories of humans’ relationship to the earth, one story from each of our six UU sources (the Biblical flood story, the story of the reintroduction of wolves to Yellowstone, the story of Tim DeChristopher, etc.). Each service was followed by a time for reflection with me on the question, “Where is God, hope, or love present in this story?” with a vegan lunch prepared by the Food Justice Ministry.
- **Christmas Eve:** The theme of this service was “Wild Hope” in the royalty/ divinity of each of us – the capacity to transform the world in times of strife. As each person given gifts of gold (chocolate), frankincense, and myrrh on the way out of the sanctuary.
- **Palm Sunday and Easter:** These services were buoyant this year. I preached on Jesus’ call to preserve spiritual spaces uncorrupted by consumerism (Palm Sunday) and the chutzpah modelled by leaders like Harriett Tubman to break out of our containers and lead others to freedom (Easter). We shared the fire ritual in which people were invited to burn up whatever was containing them. This is becoming an annual tradition.
- **World Religions Guest Preacher Series:** This was a new innovation this year that came directly out of a need we identified through our “Identity Group Meetings” last year. A small team, led by Bob Bero, invited and hosted excellent preachers from Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, and Humanist traditions. Each service was followed by a Q&A session that was very well attended.
- **Reflections With Rev. Ana:** This ongoing monthly vegan potluck for young adults was themed this year on UU Philosophers. We discussed one each month, along with a check-in and social time.

Equip people with the skill and confidence to become change makers

- **Forward Team:** I have participated with the Forward Team charged with advancing this goal in finding ways to facilitate congregants’ work in the justice areas around which they are most passionate. We have been experimenting this year with a number of different ways (forums, organizing meetings, sign-ups) to identify people’s passions and connect them with ways to engage, both at First U and beyond. The new Immigration Sanctuary initiative is an example of the kind of engagement we are working to nurture.
- **Black Lives Matter banner:** The BLM banner that the congregation voted to hang on our fence was repeatedly stolen. The staff has put new ones up every time and we have now added a banner that declares us a sanctuary for immigrants and refugees. I preached on the BLM banner thefts and published an article about it in the Guardian.

- **“Welcoming the Refugee” Passover Seder:** I led this service lifting up struggles for liberation worldwide as well as the plight of refugees. Proceeds from the event went to the International Refugee Assistance Project. Many thanks to the volunteers, led by Mike and Mariasara Alcott, who lovingly make a fabulous Passover meal.
- **Meeting Facilitation Skills:** Jeff Levy-Lyons led a workshop for leaders both within and outside the congregation in productive meeting facilitation.

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

- **White Supremacy Teach-In:** On May 7, we joined UU congregations across the country in a special worship service to examine the ways in which systemic racism shows up in our congregation. The end goal is to build a beloved community of which everyone is truly a part.
- **Daytime Discussion Group:** This is a discussion circle for retired and/or non-traditional schedule people. We discuss a different topic each month, ideally one with both personal and universal application, based on a reading provided by a member.
- **Pastoral Care Forum:** In the fall we held a forum, led by Kevin Jagoe, to assess what the congregation’s calling, expectations, and needs are in that area of pastoral care.
- **Pastoral Care in the Chapel of All Faiths:** This is a program of the Pastoral Care Committee in which a specially trained member of the Committee is available after services in the Chapel of All Faiths to offer pastoral care and make appropriate referrals for people in distress.
- **Brooklyn Heights Interfaith Clergy Association:** This year I continued my service as secretary of this group that sponsors, among other things, a Sept. 11 memorial service and interfaith Thanksgiving.

Become an environmentally responsible congregation

- I preached on environmental themes several times this year through the “Humans and the Earth” series, Standing Rock, and in a service challenging all adults to serve as “allies” to the children who will inherit the world we leave them.
- **The Food Justice Ministry/ Forward Team** is charged with the task of “promoting ethical eating and food justice” in our congregation and wider communities. They have done an extraordinary job this year, serving (literally) and educating the congregation. See the FJM annual report for details.
- **Multi-Faith Vigil for the Earth:** Working with an interfaith team, I organized a religious-environmental vigil on the Brooklyn Bridge during inauguration weekend. A large group from First U participated.
- **Multi-Faith Bus to the People’s Climate March:** A First U team, led by Alison Derevensky, Lee Illan, Kevin Jagoe, and Shari Halliday-Quan, organized a bus for First U members and members of five other Brooklyn faith communities to travel together to the People’s Climate March in D.C. on April 29, 2017. We all marched together with the First U banner as part of the Faith Contingent.
- **Greenfaith:** I completed my 2-year fellowship program with Greenfaith in religious environmental leadership.

Develop and responsibly manage congregational resources

- **Staffing:**
 - Chris Johnson: I supervise our new Director of Facilities who, thankfully, needs very little supervision. He has hit the ground running in every conceivable way, tackled long-standing problems, and has made our spaces a pleasure to inhabit. See Chris's report for details.
 - Kevin Jagoe and Shari Halliday-Kwan: Lucky for us, both Kevin and Shari will be with us for another year.
 - In June, I will write performance evaluations for each of my direct reports, Garnett Losak, Meagan Henry, Chris Johnson, and Adam Podd, based on goals (supporting the Forward Plan) we worked together to set at the beginning of the year. I am currently writing an evaluation for Kevin Jagoe as well.
- I am serving on the Forward team looking at stewardship and development. We are striving to think outside the box and research ways to increase income. We recently had a rental expert tour our facilities, pro bono, and make recommendations. We'll be looking closely over the next year at what changes would be required to maximize our rental capabilities.
- **Auction sermon:** March 26 I preached a sermon on ethicist Peter Singer's book, *The Most Good You Can Do*, about effective charity, at the request of last year's auction winner, Mitch Major

Life Cycle Ceremonies

- May 21, 2017 Memorial service for Seth Faison
- December 18, 2016 Memorial Service for Mark Holloway
- June 18, 2016 Wedding for Chris Singh & Danny DiGiacomo

Publications:

- "The Sixth Day of Creation: Dominion and the Factory Settings" was published as part of my "Building the Religious Counterculture" column in the Fall, 2016 issue of *Tikkun* magazine, where I am a contributing editor.
- My post-election piece, "Notes on the election, Climate Change, Thanksgiving, Standing Rock, and Preparing for Revolution: a two-part series" was published in Tikkun online.
- Opinion piece, "Our Church's Black Lives Matter Banner Was Torn Down – Now We Know Why" was published in the Guardian, October 26, 2016. The article has been shared 339 times.
- Sermon on the Biblical first day of creation was published in the UU Church of the Larger Fellowship journal, summer, 2016.
- Forthcoming book: *No Other Gods* (subtitle TBD), about the Ten Commandments as practices of political resistance and spiritual liberation, to be published by Center Street/ Hachette, spring 2018

Board of Trustees

Trustees:

Term Ending 2017

Liz Davis

Mary Most

Kurt Steele

Term Ending 2018

Roger Cooper

Sean Fischer

Lee Pardee (President)

Term Ending 2019

James Goward*/[successor]

Patrick Gunn

Cara Haft

*James Goward is unable to continue for the second and third years of his term. The Leadership Development Committee has nominated a successor to be elected at the 5/21/17 annual meeting.

Clerk: Sarah Morgan Treasurer: Lake Wise

Our clerk for the past two years, Sarah Morgan, is not running for another term because she has moved to Texas. We will miss her at our meetings and in the congregation. Please visit, Sarah!

The past year has been a busy one as usual at First U and for your Board of Trustees. We set to work shortly after we were elected at the last annual meeting and haven't stopped since. I have framed my report this year in alignment with the goals of our Forward First Brooklyn plan.

Goal #1 Promote collective and individual spiritual exploration, growth, and practice

This year we welcomed three additions to our clergy staff:

- Rev. Kelly Murphy Mason, our affiliated community minister, who has led our Good Friday service beautifully for the past two years.
- Kevin Jagoe, our ministerial intern who will be with us for two years
- Shari Halliday-Quan, our seminarian who will also be with us for two years

Approved a one-month sabbatical for Rev. Ana Levy-Lyons to complete her book on the Ten Commandments. That sabbatical went extremely smoothly thanks to the excellent work of all our staff and most especially thanks to the work of our ministerial intern, Kevin Jagoe, who stepped up and filled in wonderfully.

Goal #2 Cultivate a caring, welcoming community that models a just and loving world.

The Board was concerned that our facilities continue not to be physically accessible. Many congregants and visitors struggle with the steps to the sanctuary or are completely unable to enter. This year those congregants included our senior deacon, Seth Faison, who was unable to attend worship services for the last few months of his life at least in part because he could not get up the steps.

The congregation has sought a solution to this situation for decades. This year, the Board directed Director of Congregational Life Garnett Losak to develop a plan that would make our sanctuary and also our bathrooms accessible to the substantial majority of congregants and visitors, at a cost that the congregation could manage. Garnett, together with Director of Facilities Chris Johnson and architect Andrew Wright, has developed a plan for a wheelchair lift into the sanctuary and a chairlift between

the chapel and undercroft that is being presented to the congregation for approval at the 5/21/17 annual meeting.

On the recommendation of the Membership Committee, the Board approved Seth Faison, former Senior Deacon, and Olive Hoogenboom, Church Historian, as Lifetime Members. We appointed new members to the Committee on Ministries and the Share the Plate Committee.

The Board approved an updated Conflict Resolution Policy.

Goal #3 Equip people with the skills and confidence to become change makers for justice in their communities

As a group, the trustees prepared, served, and cleaned up for one of the Phoenix Rising mentoring project dinners. We joined our guests and mentors for the meal as well.

The Board held two congregational meetings:

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|-------------------|--|
| October 30, 2016 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• General Assembly report-back and votes on resolutions• Updates on Forward Plan, budget, chairlift project, Phoenix Rebirth project |
| February 26, 2017 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Election of General Assembly Delegates• Vote on Congregational Endorsement of UUA/UUSC Declaration of Conscience• Vote to Display of Brooklyn Heights Houses of Worship banner welcoming refugees and immigrants• Showing of “This is My Religion” video created by Joe and Joy Gabriel. (This wonderful video was subsequently posted to the main webpage of the UUA.) |

The Board approved the Jambalaya Cook-Off to raise funds to send out delegates to General Assembly in New Orleans in June 2017. Thanks to the Leadership Development Committee for a fun evening in support of current and future leaders of our congregations.

The board approved by-law changes developed by the Forward First Brooklyn Governance Team. The proposed by-laws better reflect current practice and also make several changes to prepare our congregation to meet future needs. The proposed by-laws will be presented to the congregation for approval at the 5/21/17 annual meeting.

The Board approved an immigrant and refugee assistance resolution to be presented to the congregation at the 5/21/17 annual meeting for final approval.

Goal #5 Develop and responsibly manage the resources needed to support the congregation's work and growth.

The Board hired a full-time Director of Facilities/Sexton. On August 1, 2016 we welcomed Chris Johnson into our terrific staff team. Chris made himself invaluable almost instantly. He has spent his first ten months with us making repairs, cleaning, working with other staff and trustees on facilities projects, and developing an ever-growing list of building improvement projects. On Chris's recommendation, the Board decided to change from a part-time custodian to a cleaning service to provide custodial services to the congregation. Our buildings are visibly much better cared for than we have seen in recent years. And behind the scenes Chris has been attending to deferred maintenance needs almost too numerous to count.

Last summer we installed a beautiful new floor in our chapel. We can't thank longtime member Elaine Macken enough for her generous gift that made this wonderful improvement possible!

On a less happy note, over the summer we coped with the unexpected challenge of having both of our Black Lives Matter banners stolen, followed by the theft of Black Lives Matter flyers in several locations. Fortunately, this problem seems finally to have abated. However, we have experienced a couple other security problems this year. Chris and our office staff have worked together to cope with logistical challenges that have resulted as we have worked to improve security in our facilities.

After several historic churches in the NY Metro Area burned in recent years and after the Board learned that the congregation's current fire alarm system is woefully inadequate and out of date, Trustee Kurt Steele and Director of Facilities Chris Johnson developed a proposal to upgrade the fire alarm system for our facilities. That proposal is being presented to the congregation for approval at the 5/21/17 annual meeting.

Because the Board is recommending two urgent, but costly, capital improvements for the 2017-18 fiscal year, the Board also approved the creation of a grant-writing team to seek funding for the two proposed capital projects described above. The Board will also be pursuing several avenues of internal fundraising to minimize the impact on our endowment.

In the fall the Board engaged the services of John Wimberly, the consultant who guided us through our Forward First planning process, to conduct a staff analysis to assist the board in planning for current and future staffing needs. (The cost of the consultant was covered by an anonymous donation.)

In response to the inability to find a volunteer this year to take on the large job of coordinating UniFair, the board hired Kevin Jago to take on this project. While UniFair didn't bring in quite as much money this year, it ran very smoothly with minimal angst thanks to both Kevin and Chris Johnson.

The trustees and officers supported the annual Stewardship campaign by making their pledges in advance and at leadership levels. Many thanks to our generous leaders. And deep thanks to Stewardship Chair Joy Gabriel. What a great campaign – our most successful yet!

Our fundraising events were wonderful, fun, community-building events this year: Jazz and Pie in the fall, our annual UniFair in December, the spring Cabaret and our Auction in April. Many thanks to Trustee Cara Haft for coordinating Jazz and Pie, to Bob Bero for leading the Cabaret, and to Adam Podd for his wonderful musical contributions at both of these terrific events. And super thanks to David Garvoille for his inspired Earth Day Auction that set a new fundraising record for this event! Thanks as well to all the other volunteers and staff who contributed so much time and talent to these events.

Report on Congregational Finances from our Treasurer, Lake Wise

Regarding the Congregation's operating budget, absent any unexpected expenses, we should end the current fiscal year with expenses and revenues (including a "prudent draw" on the endowment) close to budgeted levels. For the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2017, the Board intends once again to propose a budget incorporating a prudent draw, although some austerity measures will be required given that projected increases in spending, especially items related to the upkeep of our buildings, are not entirely covered by increases in our expected revenue.

The Congregation's endowment grew by about 5% net of withdrawals over the last year and now stands at about \$3.9 million. Our investment policies preclude securities issued by companies engaged in the tobacco, firearms or fossil fuels businesses.

I can't end my report without mention of the 2016 election that has had such a large impact on all of us at First Unitarian. I am deeply grateful to our amazing staff and worship team who comforted and challenged us immediately after the election and who continue to support all of us as we work for social justice and stewardship of the earth. We have needed our congregation more than ever this year and it has not let us down. We continue to show up at First U and in the streets to stand up for liberal religion and our values. It has been a scary year for the world, but a wonderful year for First U. We are the people we have been waiting for. Thank you all for your dedication to our congregation and to Unitarian Universalism. It has been a privilege to serve as President of the Board of Trustees for the past two years.

Lee Pardee

Director of Congregational Life – Garnett Losak

As Director of Congregational Life, I am fortunate to work with an incredibly collaborative staff that encourages me to participate in a wide range of activities. This has enriched my professional life and provided an environment for growth that has benefitted First Unitarian beyond the boundaries of my job description.

Professional Development

Conferences Attended:

June 2016 – General Assembly (Columbus, OH): Rev. Ana and I led a workshop at the UUA General Assembly on Sabbath. I also attended the Unitarian Universalist Association of Membership Directors professional days

November 2017 – Defying Gravity (Shelter Rock Congregation). I attended this regional meeting with several members of our congregation. The theme this year was governance.

March 2017 – UUAMP Mid-Year Conference (Milwaukee, WI) Obtained very useful tools for developing a comprehensive Pathways to Membership program at First U.

Statistics

	2015-16	2016-17
Attendance at Worship Does not include Summer attendance	211	270 (as of May 10)
Certified Membership*	257	267
Current Membership	--	288
Pledges	\$301,000	\$288,300 (as of May 10)
No. of pledging families**	201	174 (as of May 10)
Visitors	217	263 (as of May 10)
E-News Subscriptions	963	1163
Facebook Fans	1059	1300

* Official membership sent to the UUA in February

**As of the 2016 Annual Meeting, we had received \$275,000 in pledges.

I have written the balance of my report to align with the goals of the Forward First strategic plan.

Goal #1 Promote collective and individual spiritual exploration, growth, and practice

Worked closely with Rev. Ana, Rev. Kelly Murphy Mason, Meagan Henry and Kevin Jagoe to support lifespan religious education programs, i.e. creating and administering on-line registration, ordering and distributing materials, scheduling and promoting programs.

Goal #2 Cultivate a caring, welcoming community that models a just and loving world (core responsibility)

- ☞ Developed a program of “neighborhood” care to provide home cooked meals for several families with pastoral care needs
- ☞ Instituted weekly live streaming of our worship service
- ☞ Created a designated “visitors and newcomers” space in coffee hour
- ☞ Wrote a well-received newsletter article that outlines strategies for newcomers to become more closely integrated into congregational life
- ☞ Redesigned our welcome card to better reflect the program offerings at First Unitarian, including a designation for LGBTQ concerns. This has helped me to direct self-identified Queers to the leaders of the Queer Caucus and has helped that group to grow to over 50 members (see Queer Caucus report)
- ☞ Facilitated monthly newcomer orientations
- ☞ Communicated directly with (as of this writing) 263 visitors. Each contact included the following services :
 - Subscription to weekly e-news and/or young adult ministry newsletter
 - Connection to Queer Caucus or Young Adult Ministry (if indicated)
 - Connection to clergy or staff (if indicated)
 - Name tag created (thank you Marty Bernstein)
 - Invitation to attend a newcomer orientation and sanctuary tour
- ☞ Facilitated the membership process for 59(!) new members since June 2016. This process includes:
 - completion of an Intent to Join form
 - meeting with a canvasser or attending a stewardship event
 - organizing and hosting a new member breakfast and worship service welcome ceremony.
- ☞ Worked closely with Director of Facilities, Chris Johnson, and architect, Andrew Wright, to develop a proposal for building accessibility. As of this writing that proposal has been adopted by the Board, but not by the congregation.

Goal #3 Equip people with the skills and confidence to become change makers for justice in their communities

- ☞ With the membership committee and several additional volunteers, hosted one Phoenix Rising dinner
- ☞ Added a “Protests & Actions” section to the weekly e-newsletter
- ☞ Supported the Justice at First Unitarian Facebook group
- ☞ Supported and maintained Black Lives Matter banners and subsequent signs
- ☞ Coordinated the 3rd Annual Faith in Action Expo

Goal #4 Become an environmentally responsible congregation that serves as a powerful voice for sustainable living

Provided support and guidance to several committees and groups charged with this work including the Food Justice Ministry and The GreenFaith Fair.

Goal #5 Develop and responsibly manage the resources needed to support the congregation's work and growth (core responsibility)

- ☪ Worked closely with the Stewardship team to administer and create presentation for the 2017-18 Campaign.
- ☪ Edited three printed newsletters, 48 E-Newsletters, and several special E-News communications
- ☪ Moderated and created content for the Congregation's Facebook page and Twitter feed.
- ☪ Maintained the website, including adding several pages, insuring that the content is completely up to date
- ☪ Maintain and update congregation database. This year I have begun to add additional demographic and biographical information
- ☪ Served as a member of the governance Forward Team that rewrote our By-Laws to correspond with current practices and support our congregation going forward (vote to adopt at the Annual Meeting)
- ☪ Provided general support and guidance to congregation support staff, Chris Johnson (facilities manager) and Rob Petrillo (Director of Congregational Services)

I was extremely fortunate to have worked with three hard-working and dedicated committees, The Membership Council, led by chair, Rachel Michael (see report), the Stewardship Team, led by chair, Joy Gabriel (see report) and the Governance Forward Team (led by Lee Pardee). None of the tasks and accomplishments that I report on in this document could be completed without the help of these three groups to which I am extremely indebted.

Respectfully Submitted, Garnett Losak

Director of Education Ministries – Meagan Henry

This has been an extraordinarily challenging and busy year in our own faith community and in our larger society. I find that much of what I've done in my work this year has been in response to the U.S. presidential election. At the same time, we've experienced an influx of new families and several babies were born into our community. The number of children and youth registered in Religious Education is up from 86 last year to 102 this year. We had successful programs of Our Whole Lives for lower and upper elementary grade levels, Coming of Age, Children's Chapels once a month, and Justice Sundays to engage with various social justice projects in addition to our regular RE Sunday morning classes. Our Adult Religious Educations offerings have increased this year, with the addition of our ministerial intern, Kevin Jagoe, and new Community Affiliated Minister, Rev. Dr. Kelly Murphy-Mason leading classes on Unitarian Universalist history and exploring our Christian identity.

Thanks to a generous grant from the Women's Leadership Alliance, we supported a Field Education Student from Union Theological Seminary, Shari Halliday-Quan. It just so happened that I was also looking for a Youth Ministry Coordinator, and with Shari's background working with UU Youth, it was a great fit to hire her for that position as well. Shari jumped in and was a valuable member of the staff team through her engagement in the form of helping to organize a vigil immediately after the election, providing pastoral care and support to our Youth Group, coordinating the Coming of Age program, leading worship services, and much more.

For the remainder of my report, I have organized items according to the goals as set forth by the Forward First Plan. Much of the work I do is made possible because of the constant support I receive from the Chair of the Religious Education Council, Becky Huffman. See her report for even more information about our program this year.

Promote spiritual exploration, development and practice

- Monthly Children's Chapels explored the spiritual themes of our Six Sources of Unitarian Universalism, in conjunction with Rev. Ana's sermon series.
- Children had the opportunity to practice different types of prayer and meditation during Children's Chapel.
- Forward First Team presented proposal for Adult Faith Development program to the Board. Members of the team: Waciuma Wanjohi, Nancy Welles, and June Wohlhorn.
- Offered several Adult Religious Education classes and groups throughout the year.

Equip people with the skills and confidence to become change makers

- Justice Sundays engage our children in a variety of justice issues throughout the year.
- Offered Our Whole Lives (OWL) class for lower elementary (grades K-1) in the fall semester and upper elementary (grades 4-5) in the winter.
- Preached a sermon on responding to post-election hate speech, behavior, and rhetoric, followed by a bystander intervention training.

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

- Coming of Age and Youth Group sent interfaith holiday cards to prisoners.
- Justice Sunday with children ages 5 - 11 in which they learned about the growing hunger crisis in the world and ways to support sustainable eating practices with a guest presenter from Heifer International.
- Gathered toys and supplies to give as gifts and hosted a party for refugee children in our community with the organization, CARECEN.
- Collaborated with the worship team to create a worship service in the spirit of the white supremacy teach-in conceived of in response to systemic racism within the Unitarian Universalist Association.
- Worked with children's RE teachers to curate resources and create classes on racism for teach-in Sunday.
- Participated in panel discussion on the topic of church and faith community support of the Black Lives Matter Movement, co-hosted by Weaving the Fabric of Diversity and Brown Memorial Baptist Church.

Become an environmentally responsible congregation

- Sabbath Sunday lunch in collaboration with the Food Justice Ministry - Youth and adults cooked and served a vegan lunch for families.
- Gradually using more reusable cups for Religious Education snack.
- Continued using an online Religious Education registration form instead of using paper forms.
- The RE Council met online using the Zoom video conference tool, enabling us to meet from home rather than traveling to the church building for monthly meetings.

Develop and responsibly manage congregational resources

- Careful tracking the Religious Education Program expenses.
- Continued use of existing supplies in order to use what we already have instead of purchasing new supplies.

- The RE program pays for much of its own supplies and programming through fundraisers and soliciting donations from families. We also ask parents to pay a registration fee per child to help cover the costs of supplies and snack.

In Fellowship, Meagan Henry

Adam Podd – Director of Music

As I complete my third full year as Music Director at First U, I am even more enthused and inspired than when I first began. Our choir has steadily grown (with a record high of 31 singers for Palm Sunday), and our repertoire has broadened even further, with brand new arrangements and compositions in many styles and traditions. The congregation's continued enthusiasm and appreciation for quality music at worship keeps the choir and I motivated, week after week, to work hard at reaching new heights on both the technical and emotional ends of the music-making experience. Our two special music services (Palm Sunday, and Christmas Eve) were great successes! Utilizing the gifts of the choir, section-leaders, and additional instrumentalists, we prepared and performed challenging and diverse programs for our music-loving community. On Christmas Eve we played and sang the music of Camille Saint-Saëns and Stevie Wonder - an intentional culture clash which illustrated the diversity of our faith, our congregation, and our borough of Brooklyn. This program included the usual piano, organ, and choir as well as violin, harp, trumpet, and drums. Palm Sunday featured the music of Estonian composer Arvo Pärt - a living "sacred minimalist" with a unique voice in modern choral music. This repertoire was quite different from "the usual" here at First U, and seemed to deeply affect both the choir as they prepared and performed the pieces, as well as the congregation as they listened and meditated on these beautiful compositions.

Our second year of monthly jazz services has continued to get great positive feedback from our members. Musically speaking, it has been a blast. The Rad Trads have continued as our band-in-residence each month, bringing their incredibly positive energy and love of jazz to share with the whole congregation. Financially, however, we're not in place where we can keep doing this (as is) indefinitely. In other words, our congregation's enthusiasm for the music, and even our increased membership and worship attendance have not yet translated to enough of an increase in donations to the Julie McKinney Fund, which is how we pay for the jazz musicians. We still have a small reserve from past years which is what subsidized the "overdrawn" McKinney fund for the past two years. Our hope was that our members' love for the jazz services would lead to those services "paying for themselves" in a sense, with increased McKinney funds coming in and going out. The staff has agreed to try a third year of the McKinney-funded jazz services before considering alternatives like cutting back on how often we can afford to have Jazz Sundays, or where else the money could come from.

One additional component to the music scene here at First U is our increased digital and social media. Last year we made an appeal for camera equipment to capture some of our special performances. We have put these to good use so far, thanks to another dedicated volunteer, Luke Yu. We have recorded a handful of musical performances this year and uploaded them to our new Youtube channel. This has been a great way to share some special music here at First U far and wide, and now that we have a system set up to capture and produce more content, adding to our videos will be even easier going forward.

The musical community at First Unitarian has also put on two major fund-raising events, Jazz & Pie (in the fall) and the Spring Cabaret. The two events raised a total of \$4,022 before expenses. Special thanks to everyone who participated and attended, especially Bob Bero, for spear-heading the Spring Cabaret.

Another special thanks to those who gave to the Julie McKinney fund this year. The total contributions were \$7,825. As I mentioned before, we hope this fund continues to grow and is soon able to sustain all the new and exciting additions to the musical landscape that has made this past year of worship at First Unitarian so special.

Community Minister – The Rev. Dr. Kelly Murphy Mason

My very first year in ministerial affiliation with Brooklyn has been a particularly busy time – not only here at FUUB, but also in the wider world where I work as a Unitarian Universalist community minister. My primary work continues to be done at the Psychotherapy & Spirituality Institute in New York, NY, where I have been Managing Director since April 2015. This coming summer, I will again teach in the PSI 2017 Certificate Program on “Spiritually-Informed Psychotherapies,” which provides continuing education to licensed clinicians in NY State, including LMSWs, LCSWs, CASACs, and LMFTs.

In academia, I taught graduate students both at the Fordham University Graduate School of Religion in Fall 2016 (offering the “Psychology and Religion” course) and at Union Theological Seminary in January Term 2017 (offering the “Forming Our Faith: Articulating UU Identities” course). This year, I was named a Lecturer in Church Institutions at Union and will be teaching there again come the fall. In June 2017, I will travel to Hong Kong to teach a week-long pastoral counseling intensive course at the Tao Fong Shan Christian Centre, and so will miss the UUA General Assembly in New Orleans. But I will vote absentee.

At the UU denominational level, I just completed my final year as In Care/In Covenant Coordinator for the UUMA program in our Metro NY district, working with seminarians, aspirants, and candidates for UU ministry, supporting them in both their ministerial formation and UU credentialing. I arranged a retreat upstate for the seminarians in Fall 2016, organized a UUMA vocational advising network, held monthly discussions at Union Theological throughout the year, and recently led the 2017 Commissioning Service for graduating UU students. It’s been a rich experience working with our emerging religious professionals.

As the Good Officer on the Board of the UU Society Community Ministries, I worked on a task force with the UUA in reviewing the current MFC requirements for community ministers in preliminary fellowship. I also helped facilitate the first-ever national UUA retreat for ordained and fellowshiped community ministers held at the Mercy Center in Burlingame, CA in May 2017.

Here at the First Unitarian Congregational Society in Brooklyn, I once more preached the sermon for our annual Good Friday service and commemorative communion led by the Deacons. The sermon was titled “Two Thieves, Four Nuns, Seven Monks, and Us” and grew out of the Adult Religious Education course I taught in March-April 2017 titled “Unitarian Universalist Christian: One or the Other? Both or Neither?” Attendees asked that similar offerings be made available in coming years at FUUB.

In addition, I conferred with our Pastoral Care Team at a meeting last fall and spoke on a November 2016 panel sponsored by the FUUB Women’s Alliance on the topic of “Mental Illness and Its Challenges”. This

past Thanksgiving, I helped the Rev. Ana Levy-Lyons celebrate the first FUUB Hunger Communion. In December 2016, I married an out-of-town couple in our sanctuary. In January 2017, I served as the Protest Chaplain on the bus FUUB sent to the historic Women's March on Washington. That was a hugely inspiring event for all of us there. Throughout the year, I've also been a big booster of our FUUB Crafting Ministry.

Last July, I carpooled and provided ministerial presence at the FUUB "Day in the Country" in upstate NY with Director of Congregational Life, Garnett Losak and others from the church; we all had a lot of fun. This July, I'll be leading a "Sort of Churchy Tour" of the Cloisters for the highest bidders at the FUUB annual auction in April 2017; I was glad to be part of that fundraising effort this year, raising \$320 with that event. It may become a routine item at the auction if people enjoy it as much as I hope they will.

Recently, I received word from Skinner House Books that my personal essay "Borderline Child of God" will be published in an anthology titled *Testimony: The Transformative Power of Unitarian Universalism*, forthcoming in October 2017. I look forward to that and to another year in affiliation with FUUB as its Community Minister. It truly has been an honor and a privilege being part of this fine faith community.

Director of Facilities – Christopher D. Johnson

Introduction

I wish to first give a heartfelt thank you to all Congregational Members and Staff at this historic church. Your welcoming spirit has certainly helped me in my transition moving from the Hamptons where, for many years, I lived and owned a successful construction business, to Brooklyn and starting a new job and new chapter in my life.

My first day here was August 1st of this year. It was interesting to wake up very early as is my way, and find out I was the only one around. As a self-starter though, I soon found myself making a list of necessary repairs and needed capital improvements and acquainting myself with the building and systems. (No small task). Moving to the city has been a real challenge for me, as one who appreciates and craves the quiet and solitude of nature and of ocean beaches. The job itself though, as your Director of Facilities, has given me the opportunity and enjoyment of being able to draw on a life time of experience. As a merchant marine Officer and moat captain, construction and landscape business owner as well as incorporating other abilities and life experiences in the area of personal/spiritual development, I have been able to understand, intuit and implement that which I thought the congregation needed here most. I thank all those persons directly involved, for allowing me the freedom to responsibly recreate and advance the position as was and is needed, a process that continues to evolve.

I have gotten to know some persons better than others, but as I continue to get to know more of you, I am keenly aware of everyone's desire to be of service in their own way, and to make a difference in the world in which we live. My way of doing this is very internal, disciplining myself each day in various forms of prayer and meditation. In keeping with that I do my best to go through my day in right

thought and action. I see my job here as a calling and I hope that this is evident through my work and interactions with all of you.

Overview

The 2016-17 Facilities budget had a combined total of \$65,000 for all supplies, vendors, and capital improvements. At the end of this fiscal year there will be a zero balance. Below are some of the more outstanding expenditures, in no particular order.

* CHAPEL FLOOR: The new Chapel floor, graciously donated by Elaine Macken, went over budget and left the Church a balance of \$12,684.00 which came out of this year's budget. It was put into use for 8 months before a seal coat was properly put on. The cost of professional cleaning, seal coating and waxing was \$1,000.00. That was also paid from the budget. Due to the Chapel's heavy traffic, this process will have to be repeated every 6 months to one year. There were also many small items that were not completed such as reinstalling door saddles, one of which still needs to be done. Any of that work was/will be completed by me.

* NEW KITCHEN LIGHTING AND OTHER KITCHEN ELECTRICAL: \$3,020.00.

* NEW COPPER LEADER: from N.E. Sanctuary roof gutter to street. This solved the problem of water leaking into the Chapel. \$3,500.00

* MAJOR PLUMBING REPAIR DAYCARE: This was a momentous undertaking by Weiss Plumbing and me that involved several government agencies since the work was done in the daycare classrooms. The plumbers made the repairs to the plumbing. I made the repairs to walls and floors saving the Church thousands of dollars. \$4,139.00

* NEW HOT WATER HEATER: Building #48. \$2,150.00
Other Plumbing: \$780.00

* STARBOARD ARCHITECT: Accessibility Project: \$5,652.50

* U.C. RADIATOR COVERS: \$2,390.00

* RUBBISH REMOVAL from boiler room clean outs: \$818.00

* FRANCES WHITE ROOM COUCH REFRERBISHING: \$2,250.

* ZONE VALVE REPLACEMENT: \$6,600-plumber

* ZONE VALVE ELECTRICAL REPAIRS: Numbers unavailable at the time of this writing as the work is currently in progress. Estimating at about \$3,500.00

*NEW SNOW BLOWER: \$800.00

I have worked closely with and have the support of Rob Petrillo, our Director of Congregational Services, who currently does the Facilities bookkeeping. I have also worked closely with the Facilities Committee who has been behind my efforts to make and create a clean, safe environment while keeping key elements of the historical structure intact. They have provided me with historical data that would ordinarily be unavailable to me otherwise.

COST SAVING REPAIRS/EXPENSES:

I have taken it upon myself to perform a number of repairs myself to offset financial strain to the Facilities Budget as well as the overall operating expenses by performing much of the needed repairs rather than hiring outside vendors. Below are cost saving estimates.

* Repair of the ceiling and walls in the Chapel due to water leakage through roof. \$7,000.00

* Numerous plumbing repairs. +\$\$

* Install a new three phase motor in old furnace room for heater blower system in Sanctuary, thereby increasing heating efficiency. Blower came out of the budget. \$800.00. The labor by an electrician would have been about \$2,000.00 plus a 50-100% mark up on the blower.

* Temporary roof repair: \$850.00

* Refuse dumping expenses saved by utilizing my own truck instead of calling an outside vendor. \$500.00

* Breakdown of the old nonfunctioning A/C unit in the U.C. and create a clean usable storage area. Currently In progress. \$8,000.00

I have left much out of this list as well. My hope is that the Church will become a more visually appealing, cleaner, and better functioning environment for all to enjoy.

COMMITTEES/WORKSHOPS, OTHER:

* I have been directly involved in the Fire/Safety committee working closely with Kurt Steele and High Rise Fire Suppression.

* I have also been directly involved in the Accessibility Project working with Garnett Losak, Director of Congregational Life, as well as Andrew Wright, Architect.

* I took a seminar on securing Religious Institutions at Brooklyn Borough Hall.

* I gave a seminar for all Church members on securing Religious Institutions at FUUB.

The next large project that I have planned will be bathroom access for the Chapel during day time hours that will not be in conflict with Imagine Daycare's use of the Undercroft. This will allow for greater rental potential and revenue. My overall plan is to provide a safe, clean and improved environment for all to enjoy while keeping the historical areas intact.

Respectfully submitted, Christopher D. Johnson, Director of Facilities FUUB

Ministerial Intern – Kevin W. Jagoe

This year has been an incredible learning experience for me as I develop my skills for ministry. I joined the staff in August 2016, leading the final summer service of the year. Ana and I developed three main learning goals for my internship:

1. Develop my abilities in worship arts, particularly in preaching.
2. Develop self-care and spiritual practices.
3. Furthering my work in pastoral care that began in my Clinical Pastoral Education internship.

Developing my abilities in worship arts, particularly in preaching.

I have had more opportunities to be part of our worship services than I anticipated. Of thirty-seven services, I have had an active role in sixteen of them. I have been able to preach either a homily or full sermon five times this year and have one more date on the calendar before summer services begin.

During the month of February, Rev. Ana went on a one-month sabbatical and I was able to be much more involved in leading worship as well as helping to plan our services for the entire month along with our staff team.

In the realm of rites of passage, I have performed two memorials and witnessed a baby blessing since my internship began. The memorial services were incredible moments to witness and help make possible for the families with whom I worked.

Develop self-care and spiritual practices.

This area has been the focus of conversations with my internship committee. I would like to thank them for their commitment to this learning process and being an excellent committee to learn with throughout this year: Alison Derevensky, Dawn Brekke, Edwin Lord, John Carroll, and our chair, Nancy Welles. The ways I am practicing and reflecting on my own spirituality beyond leading worship are through reflective conversations with mentors, a personal meditation and reading practice, and knitting for others as a spiritual practice, something I've done since childhood.

Beyond my personal work, I have had opportunities to lead reflections with several groups of the congregation as well as classes. During Ana's sabbatical, I lead our monthly day-time reflection group where each month someone selects a piece of writing and we reflect on the ways the themes of the piece intersect with our lives. I also have lead and participated in multiple young adult discussions about figures in Unitarian Universalism. Recently, I was asked to select a discussion topic. I chose James Luther Adams and we read his "Five Smooth Stones" essay. Lastly, I lead multiple sessions where we discussed intersectionality in justice work and our Unitarian Universalist values.

I also believe that deepening our knowledge of history helps deepen our identities as Unitarian Universalists. To that end, I have been part of most of our monthly new member orientations and given a brief overview of UU history as well as answered questions about our theologies. I have been able to go deeper on this topic by facilitating a four-session UU History course for a small group of members this spring.

Furthering my work in pastoral care that began in my Clinical Pastoral Education internship.

Pastoral Care has been a major area of focus for my internship this year. I have facilitated our Pastoral Care Team meetings, coordinated our weekly chapel team, and worked with Ana to respond to pastoral care requests throughout the year. I have also lead two trainings around pastoral care, one in the fall and one recently this spring. The goals of these trainings have been to share with more people what pastoral care is, to listen to members about what their needs are, and to invite members into pastoral care programming.

Beyond the three main learning goals, I have been able to participate in other areas of congregational life. Just a few highlights are:

- Coordinating the annual UniFair Fundraiser
- Attending several Board Meetings
- Participating in the Brooklyn Heights Interfaith Clergy group
- Attending the UU-United Nations Office Intergenerational Spring Seminar which focused this year on disarmament
- Being a Co-Captain for our Multifaith Bus to the People's Climate March in Washington D.C.

Finally, I want to say thank you to the entire congregation. This year represents just half of my two-year internship and already I've learned so much from you all. I'm very excited to be part of this community for another entire year.

Deacons

- Seth Faison, our beloved senior Deacon and member for 75 years, passed away at the age of 93. There will be a memorial service for him in our Sanctuary on May 21st at 3 p.m followed by a reception at the Brooklyn Historical Society.
- Al Blanco was unanimously elected senior Deacon by the Deacons.
- Olive Hoogenboom, our church historian and longest-serving female Deacon remains in a nursing home. It was Olive who introduced the practice of an even number of female and male Deacons.
- Outstanding volunteer service was acknowledged in three Member-of-the Month presentations. Judy Boals, Pat Bernstein, and the Sonderman-Levine family were all honored in the past year.
- A Deacon ushered each Sunday in the past year. The Deacons also ushered for the memorial service of past president of the Board, Mark Holloway.
- This year the Deacons introduced a series of sanctuary tours for newcomers. The tours speak to the history of our congregation and our historic sanctuary. Three tours, each guided by two Deacons, were conducted with considerable success.
- The solemn Good Friday Commemorative Communion was prepared by the Deacons. The Rev. Dr. Kelly Murphy Mason officiated.
- The Deacons also participated in the Phoenix Rising project by preparing and serving a meal to female military veterans on May 8.

Respectfully Submitted, Connie Newsom

Annual Auction and Dinner

The First U Auction took place on Earth Day, April 22, 2017 at 6 pm with over 100 people attending. The event was a massive collaboration. Over 50 members and friends helped pull it together. We received over 100 auction donations from 70 people ranging from vacation homes, handmade crafts and baked goods and lots of earth-friendly experiences like walking tours and home-cooked dinners. Auction bids raised \$14,000 and ticket sales raised another \$3300, making the netting the congregation \$16,000 after \$1,000 in expenses.

Auction co-chair, Danny DiGiacomo-Singh, and the Food Justice Ministry handled the food for the event. New member, Anita Shepherd, worked with Danny to create the evening's menu. Alex Gecker, co-chair of the Food Justice Ministry, coordinated volunteers to help shop, chop, stir and serve. We were all honored with a gorgeous sit down dinner of Mediterranean moussaka, stuffed mushrooms, and arugula and baby spinach salad. Danny and his husband Chris DiGiacomo-Singh generously donated the prosecco and other ingredients for the evenings signature cocktail, the Flaming Chalice. Wines were selected by Julianne Housler who also donated a portion of the wine. Vonda Brunsting and her shopping team procured much of the ingredients from the Park Slope Food Coop which charged only 20% above wholesale.

On the revenue side of the event, I am incredibly grateful for the support of new member, Patricia Lawrence. Her merchandising of the donations on our first ever auction and her event slideshow brought added value to everyone's donation. One favorite item was Catalina Bertani's "weekly reminder that you're going to die" that sold for \$170. Danny Yoder also helped wrangle all the auction data and created the bid sheets we used for all the silent and live auction items. Dawn Brekke and Elly Fong-Jones both worked the door, bringing in \$1300 in receipts. An additional \$2000 in ticket and contributions was raised through online ticket sales via Brown Paper Tickets.

Gratitude goes to designers Rachael Warner and Steve Richetts and the many folks in the Queer Caucus who transformed the chapel with illuminated papier maché earth globe centerpieces and other New York harbor-inspired decorations. Bruce Wilde and Jay Lawrence set up the tech and A/V. New member, Jack Rossiter-Munley, really dove into congregational life by emceeding the event, performing cocktail hour music (along with Jacques Hoffman), and playing backup for singer/songwriter and activist Judy Gorman who provided gravitas to the Earth Day inspired event by honoring the songs of Pete Seeger -- a Unitarian Universalist, environmentalist and national treasure. Samira Kawash and Lilla LoCurto set up a beautiful silent auction and Abby Grosslein brought it all together at the end of the night. Our auctioneers were a wonderful mix: Lee Pardee, Lodz Joseph, Pat and Jay Lawrence, and Mary Most and Spencer Brill. Finally, our auction recorders led by Liz Davis and Mitch Major and supported by Laurel Lesio and Bert Eisensdadt did a stupendous job.

A special thank you goes to Rob Petrillo, our director of congregational services, for doing all the auction credit card processing. Koren Manning, an auction veteran helped with auction cleanup as well as Mary Most, and Maria Petulla. This year we had a "Last Chance!" auction table set up in the undercroft for the two Sundays following the auction. This was added work but raised another \$800 for the congregation and helped fill unsold seats at various dinners and events.

Respectfully submitted, David Garvoille, 2017 Auction & Dinner Co-chair

Ceremonies – Nicole Tuszynski, Coordinator

Key Activities

- Field information requests from the public
- Give tours and promote rentals during in person meetings
- Coordinate scheduling for spaces and with other First Unitarian Staff including Rev. Ana
- Work with clients to vision and plan their ceremonies (weddings, baby blessings, memorials, private parties)
- Lead rehearsals as needed
- Attend all events to oversee logistics and coordinate facilities staff
- Follow up with clients as needed

Events Hosted in 2016

- 1 Memorial netting \$600
 - November 17, 2016, In Memory of Deborah Atherton, \$600
- 4 Baby Blessings netting \$2,000
 - May 1, 2016, Beazley family, Sanctuary
 - September 18, 2016, Witko family, Sanctuary
 - October 15, 2016, Babb family, Sanctuary
- 2 Weddings netting \$4,000
 - June 18, 2016, Danny DiGiacomo & Chris Singh, Sanctuary
 - November 10, 2016, Amanda Puerto & Andrew Thorne, Sanctuary

19 additional event requests fielded in 2016

Events Hosted in 2017

- Blessing, February 26, 2017, Ott family, Sanctuary, \$600
- Blessing, February 18, 2017, Ajwani Family, Sanctuary, \$600
- Blessing, March 12, 2017, Livingston-Alderman Family, Sanctuary, \$600

Upcoming

- Wedding, June 10, 2017, Farrell Brody & Giulia Previti, Sanctuary, \$2,000
- Wedding, November 5, 2017, Tameca Miller, Sanctuary, \$2,000
- Wedding, November 11, 2017, Joe Baptista & Allison Parker, \$2,000

Nicole Tuszynski, Ceremonies Coordinator

Craft Ministry

The Shawl Ministry shifted its mission this year in two respects. The first is to include all those congregation members and friends who are interested in doing handcrafts of any kind. We now call ourselves the Craft Ministry and welcome all who wish to share an hour and a half one Sunday afternoon a month in relaxed fellowship. Participation of any kind and at any level is welcome. Some come for conversation, others are busy doing their projects, and still others offer instruction, demonstration, and yarn crafting supplies.

The second shift in mission is to expand our "product line." Because there have been a number of births in the congregation, we now make gifts to welcome very young members to the FUUB family. We continue, of course, to make shawls for bridging young people, for those leaving the congregation through retirement or family duties, and for those in need of special comfort because of illness or personal loss.

Respectfully Submitted, Diana Lu

Facilities Management Committee

- Facilities Management Committee (F.M.C.) members have discussed a range of topics during the 2016-2017 program year related to the preservation and maintenance of our historic church buildings. We were very happy to welcome our new Director of Facilities, Chris Johnson to First Unitarian in August, 2016. We have discussed many building-related issues with Chris during F.M.C. Meetings this year, including infrastructure systems, and plans for a proposed new fire detection system, and fire prevention measures.

Chapel Floor Replacement Project:

- Thanks to a generous gift from long-time member congregational member, and former F.M.C. Chair Elaine Macken, to create a restricted fund for a “Special Capital Project” to replace the Chapel floor, a new tile floor was installed in our historic McKinney Chapel during June and July, 2016. The new floor has enhanced our congregational life and the Chapel’s use for outside rentals. The new tiles are made of environmentally sustainable, natural rubber and were manufactured in the U.S. by the Roppe Corporation of Fostoria, Ohio. The tiles have a marble color pattern, and the design includes a black border near the Chapel’s walls and Vestibule, and cream-colored and brown “nutmeg”-colored tiles, which complement the Chapel’s woodwork.
- The work to replace the Chapel floor, which spanned two fiscal years, began on June 15, 2016, and was completed so that summer worship services could be held in the Chapel starting on July 17, 2016. The need for this project was first identified after an area of the Chapel floor, near the main entrance, collapsed in November, 2014. The former Chapel floor, with its tile arranged in a checkerboard pattern, was thought to have been installed some time in the 1920’s. The first phase of demolition involved removal of the existing rubber tile, and one of the underlying subfloors. After some structural issues were identified and corrected, a new plywood subfloor was installed over the lower layer of the existing subfloor. The first phase of the project was performed by Verrazano Flooring Co., of Brooklyn. The second phase of the project involved the installation of rubber tile by ProStar LLC, of Mount Vernon, NY. The project also involved removal of the Chapel’s radiators, by Weiss Plumbing. Architect Andrew Wright, of Starboard Architects, provided technical advice during all phases of the project.
- Elaine Macken supplemented her initial donation of \$25,000, which she made on December 15, 2015 for this “Special Capital Project,” with a second donation of \$14,400, in July, 2016, for a total donation of \$39,400, to address the structural issues that were later identified with some of the Chapel’s underlying floor supports. The full extent of those structural issues was revealed once various flooring layers were removed during the demolition. We thank Elaine for her amazing generosity. To further address those structural issues, the remainder of the cost of the project, \$12,684, beyond the amount donated by Elaine, was funded through the 2016-2017 fiscal year Maintenance Projects budget line. Elaine Macken managed the project, with assistance from F.M.C. Members, including Liz Davis, Nancy Wolf, and Gloria Furman. The Facilities Management Committee extends our thanks to all who helped with this complex project. We were appreciative that Chris Johnson, Director of Facilities, finalized and completed some work that was needed to put the Chapel “back together again” for all of its many uses by our Congregation, soon after he began working at First Unitarian.

- **Faith in Action Expo:** The F.M.C. participated in the “Faith in Action Expo,” held on Sunday, September 18, 2016 in the Undercroft. Liz Davis staffed a table, and spoke to many interested congregants about the F.M.C.’s work. We displayed three (3) poster boards at our table, which were prepared by Liz Davis, which included photos of: 1) the Chapel Floor replacement project, described above, 2) the Kitchen Upgrade, which was completed in spring of 2016 as the 2015-2016 year-end congregational appeal, and, 3) recent Congregational Clean-Up Days, showing members and friends “Creating Community by Working Together.”
- **Frances White Room Sofa:** Longtime member Connie Newsom arranged for the green sofa in the Frances White Room to be reupholstered and refurbished. The project was funded, in part, by donations from members and friends during the 2016-2017 year-end congregational appeal, with the remainder funded from the Maintenance Projects budget line. The sofa was reupholstered in late March, 2017 by Das Upholstery, on Cortelyou Road, in Brooklyn, for \$2,250. Many congregants have reported that they like the appearance of the reupholstered sofa. We believe the refurbished sofa will enhance our congregation’s use of the Frances White Room during the many events that are held there. We thank Connie for her work on the project.
- **New Garden Bench:** F.M.C. Members are also working on purchasing and installing a new bench in the Chapel garden, to encourage the use of this beautiful outdoor space during warmer weather. Nancy Wolf is coordinating this effort, which is expected to be completed during the 2016-2017 fiscal year.
- **Other Projects:** The F.M.C. is also planning possible volunteer work parties and clean-up days for late summer, 2017. We are also working on a longer-term project, to re-organize the permanent building-related files and records which are stored in the church office.
- **F.M.C. Meetings:** The following congregational members have attended meetings during the 2016-2017 program year: Liz Davis (Chair), Elaine Macken, Gloria Furman, Nancy Wolf, Steve Richetts, and David Thebus. Longtime member Connie Newsom is serving as a consultant to the F.M.C. Director of Facilities Chris Johnson regularly attends F.M.C. Meetings. The F.M.C. generally meets on the fourth Wednesday each month at 7:30 PM, in the church office. Please contact Chair Liz Davis at: eadu142@yahoo.com if you are interested in attending an F.M.C. Meeting.

Respectfully submitted, Liz Davis, Chair, Facilities Management Committee

Food Justice Ministry

Team: Vonda Brunsting, Danny DiGiacomo-Singh, Alex Gecker, Jack Hornickel, Liz Komar, Sarah Morgan, Rev. Ana Levy-Lyons, Anita Shepherd, Marie Spinney, Brad Young

Co-Chairs: Alex Gecker (through June 2017) and Sarah Morgan (through April 2017)

Agriculture sits at the intersection of many justice issues, including worker justice, racial justice, climate change, and food access. So the FJM has kept busy! In our first year we have focused in large part on particular helping the congregation become more familiar with plant-based food and its importance as “low-hanging fruit” in addressing climate change.

Activities this year have included:

- ☼ Setting up a listserv for sharing food-justice-related topics and upcoming events (currently 96 members)
- ☼ Providing info (and fair-trade chocolate!) in the undercroft during coffee hour repeatedly
- ☼ Cooking plant-based meals for the discussions that followed Rev. Ana’s Stories of Humans and the Earth sermons
- ☼ Cooking a plant-based lunch for UniFair
- ☼ Screening the educational documentary *Cowspiracy*, followed by discussion with Rev. Ana (30-35 people attended the film)
- ☼ Providing easy large-group recipes to Phoenix Rising teams who requested it
- ☼ Providing a February cooking class taught by our two chefs Danny and Anita!
- ☼ Providing info, fair-trade chocolate, and homemade hors d’oeuvres at a table at GreenFaith Fair
- ☼ Providing a gourmet plant-based dinner cooked entirely by FJM and volunteers at the First U Annual Auction
- ☼ Providing a plant-based pizza lunch and “cooking class” with RE kids (who got to share the food with their families afterward)
- ☼ Providing a Dietitian Q&A on plant-based eating (as requested during the *Cowspiracy* discussion)
- ☼ Organizing a visit to the Woodstock Animal Sanctuary (an upcoming all-ages trip to a farm animal sanctuary on June 10, 2017)

Alex Gecker

Forward First

Forward First is the strategic plan adopted by the congregation in May 2015. The plan is intended to help guide the work of the congregation over 3-5 years. This year is the second year of the plan. For more information or to read the plan, visit <http://www.fuub.org/home/community/forward-first-brooklyn>.

The first year was largely devoted to convening new teams and conceptualizing the work. In the second year, several of the Forward teams have made important progress toward their goals.

Promoting Food Justice and Ethical Eating (Goal #4): Our Food Justice team (Chairs: Alex Gecker & Sarah Morgan) has done a tremendous job preparing vegan meals after services and at congregational events, and they have shared information throughout the year on various topics such as ethical food options and recipes with fellow congregants. This team has submitted their own contribution to this Annual Report which discusses their work in greater detail.

Increasing Justice Work and Leadership (Goal #3): Our Justice Leadership and Religious Grounding team (Chair: Sam McKelvie) has spent the past year exploring ways in which FUUB can “amplify” justice opportunities for interested congregants. This team is keenly aware of the burgeoning interest in justice-related actions stemming from the current political and social climate, and they are working to find new ways of promoting justice-oriented collaboration and connections. The newly launched Facebook page, titled “Social Justice at First U Brooklyn”, came directly out of this team’s work. The team is exploring other additions to our current congregational activities and systems while considering common challenges such as project ownership, attention to congregational policies and processes, and the ongoing sustainability of the work.

Streamlining FUUB Governance (Goal #5): Our Governance team has devoted a lot of time this year toward updating our congregational bylaws to better align them to our mission and current work. At the time of this writing, the newly proposed bylaws are slated to be voted on by the congregation at the Annual Meeting on May 21. This team is also currently reviewing the congregation’s other policies and procedures and will make recommendations to the Board and specific committees on ways that the congregation can streamline its work and promote greater communication and collaboration.

Creating an Adult Spiritual Growth Program (Goal #1): Our Adult Spiritual Growth team (Staff Lead: Meagan Henry) has created a plan for expanding our religious education ministries to include a greater focus on adult congregants. Some ideas include a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) learning circle and a faith podcast. The team plans to present its full slate of ideas to the congregation for feedback and input this fall.

Moving New Members toward Greater Congregational Involvement (Goal #2): The Membership Council (Chair: Rachel Michael; Staff Lead: Garnett Losak) piloted a new mentor program for new members this year and is exploring additional ways of connecting new members to congregational life.

The Membership Council has submitted their own contribution to this Annual Report which discusses their work in greater detail

Developing FUUB Leaders (Goal #3): Our new Leadership Development Committee (formerly known as the Nominating Committee; Chair: Dave Garvoille) is currently assessing potential development opportunities that promote new and current leaders' connection to FUUB and its mission and recognize leadership as an important ministry for the congregation. It plans to continue its exploration and planning over the coming months as it develops a robust program for the congregation.

One of the hallmarks of the Forward work is that as teams form and implement ideas, they are gathering feedback from congregants and incorporating this guidance into the next stages of their work. In some cases, this feedback is gathered in group settings such as small meetings and forums. In other cases, one-on-one discussions with specific members that are directly impacted by the work have provided valuable perspectives for ongoing improvement.

In reviewing the plan, readers will notice portions of the Forward plan that are not represented in this report. Given the ambitious size and scope of the plan (and the number of people required to implement it), we have learned that a gradual implementation may be the best path forward. This approach allows for some work to be completed before beginning new work and allows us to learn on a smaller scale. These lessons are useful as new projects begin.

For next year, existing teams will continue piloting new ideas and engaging with members of the congregation to learn from their experiences and continue to revise and improve their work. The Board will also form new teams as appropriate given feasibility and capacity considerations.

Respectfully submitted, Sean Fischer

Leadership Development Committee (formerly, Nominating Committee)

The Committee met, in person and by phone, on the following dates:

August 14, 2016, October 13, 2016, November 14, 2016, November 28, 2016, December 5, 2016, January 9, 2017, February 19, 2017

Reverend Ana Levy-Lyons was a guest by phone at the August meeting. She gave her perspective on the role of the board with respect to our congregation's future. Michael Alcott was a guest by phone at the October meeting. He discussed leadership training. Sean Fischer was a guest in person at the February 19 meeting breakfast. He discussed recruitment for committees.

Committee activities this year included hosting a New Orleans/social justice themed Jambalaya Dinner on January 14, 2017 as a fund-raiser to support the candidates to GA. Generous members of the congregation and others attended. Additionally, several generous congregants donated air travel mileage to the GA delegates.

Another activity included a meet and greet for GA delegates, new and old, on April 1, 2017. This provided the new delegates an opportunity to ask questions about GA and to view as a group the live stream of the UUA presidential debate.

The Committee nominated and the congregation the following members to serve as delegates to attend General Assembly in New Orleans June 21-25, 2017: **Julie Bero, Hannah Mancini, Mary Most, Juliana Paton, Chelsea Saunders, Parrish Turner**

The Committee nominated and the congregation, on the same date, approved the following members to serve as alternate delegates to GA: **Alternate #1 - Robert Harper, Alternate #2 - Megan Munroe, Alternate #3 - Skylar Salerno, Youth Alternate - Matthew Hawkins**

The Committee nominated the following member for the position of Clerk (to be approved at the May 21, 2017 annual meeting of the congregation): **Bruce Wilde**

The Committee nominated the following members for the Board of Trustees (to be approved at the May 21, 2017 annual meeting of the congregation): **Dale Ho, Laurel Lesio, Dawn Elaine Reed, Waciuma Wanjohi** (replaces Jim Goward who is stepping down)

The Committee nominated the following members for the Leadership Development Committee (to be approved at the May 21, 2017 annual meeting of the congregation): **David Garvoille, Edwin Lord, Mary Most, Kurt Steele, Nancy Witherell**

The Committee appreciates the generosity of Reverend Ana Levy-Lyons, Megan Henry, Lee Pardee and Garnett Losak who either attended meetings or offered constructive advice to guide us in our work, selection of candidates and decisions. We give them our thanks.

Respectfully Submitted,
Beth Evans, David Garvoille (chair), Arthur Hall, Sam McKelvie, Nancy Witherell

Membership Council

The membership council has been hard at work welcoming the many newcomers that walk through our doors each Sunday as well as building community for all of our members. Judy Boals is volunteering for a second year to coordinate ushers and greeters this year. She makes sure there are smiling faces to greet you every Sunday morning. After the service, Marty Bernstein and his team of volunteers head up the welcome table, answering people's questions and connecting them to other members of the congregation. Megan Munroe joined our team this year. She has focused on providing photos and bios of all our new members. We have a new table during coffee hour dedicated just for newcomers. Someone from the membership council is always there to welcome people. The membership Council, along with some other volunteers, hosted a Phoenix Rising dinner in April. By June we will have hosted four new member breakfasts, welcoming over 59 new members to our congregation since June of last

year. During the Service of the Living Tradition we will honor several members for their years of dedication to our congregation.

In addition to our work described above the Membership Council has continued to work towards a strategy from our Forward First Plan. We are focusing on helping new members develop lasting ties and relationships to our community. We began the year piloting a new member mentorship program. Each new member was assigned a mentor in the congregation to help them navigate their first year as a member. We are also planning a more extensive path to membership class to begin next church year. This will be a two-session new member class. Hopefully this class will help new members learn more about faith and life here at First U.

Thank you to everyone who has participated in or helped with our programs. A big thank you to the Membership Council and Garnett Losak, our Director of Congregational Life. We could not have done this work without her.

Respectfully Submitted, Rachel Michael (Chair)

Phoenix Rising

Over the past eighteen weeks members of First U have partnered with residents of Housing + Solutions, a Brooklyn-based permanent supportive housing provider, in an innovative and life affirming program known as Phoenix Rising. Thanks to the kindness and love shown by those congregants who served as mentors, Phoenix Rising has provided countless opportunities for their partners, residing at Housing + Solutions, to experience personal growth and self-actualization.

In turn, the formerly homeless women who took part in Phoenix Rising showed their mentors what it means to live out their faith through loving friendship, mutual respect, and living Unitarian Universalist's second principle calling for "justice, equity and compassion in human relations."

A big thank you then to the following individuals who served as mentors, who have given of their time, experience and love over the past 18 weeks. Beth Evans Beverly Gould, Eric Hooks, Sam McKelvie, Rachel Michael, Jessica Sasko, Natalie Soud, Megan Sullivan, Nancy Witherell

I would also like all of those people who gave up one, two, or three of their Sunday afternoons and Monday evenings to grocery shop, cook and host the Phoenix Rising meetings, each week. They ably represented the best of our Congregation. Special thanks too to Rosemarie Stupel, who did a wonderful job of recruitment, coordination, and weekly oversight of each week's hosting crew.

Maria Sara Alcott, Kathie Ivans, Waciuma Wanjohi, Michael Alcott, Kevin Jagoe, Rachel Warner, Katy Anna Johnson, Denise Wharton, Marty Bernstein, Lodz Joseph, Nancy Welles, Anne Brewer, Samira Kawash, Bruce Wilde, James Bemis, Liz Komar, Catie Wilkinson, Jai Berg, Laurel Lesio, Naarah Williams, Catalina Bertani, Lindsey Lee, Nancy Witherell, Judy Boals, Edwin Lord, Nancy Wolfe, Hannah Carl, Garnett Losak, Emma Yorra, Jillian Chaiken, Diana Lu, Luke Yu, Tom Check, Marci Lucia, Ellen Correia Golay, Maria Maida, Kay Corkett, Koren Manning, Anna D'Avanzo, Laura Manos-Hey, Karen Diarra, Mitch Major, Liz Davis, Sam McKelvie, Tyrone Davis, Rachel Michael, Luke Elliott-Negri, Sarah Morgan, Carolyn Ellis, Mary Most, Emily Fisher, Nancy Provost, Rachel Netski, Gloria Furman, Lee Pardee, Sean Fischer, Rita Pearl, Mary Foutz, Esmey Perales, Sandy Foutz, Maria Petulla, James Goward, Toby Posel, Joe Gabriel, Kayla Reiman, Joy Gabriel,

Steven Richetts, David Garvoille, Barbara Santiago, Alexandra Gecker, Chelsea Saunders, Daniela Gioseffi, Gregg Schaufeld, Declan Gunn, Steven Schwartzman, Annie Haden, Judith Sedaitis, Cara Haft, Jocelyn Smith, Arthur Hall, Caroline Sharman, Robert Harper, Rachel Stark, Julianne Hausler, Kurt Steele, Clare Robinson-Henrie, Pat Steele, Matt Robinson-Henrie, Rosemarie Stupel, Jacques Hoffman, Bryn Sumner, Becky Huffman, Christie Thompson, Crystal Huyett, Catherine Trosello

Thanks too to Derek Pearl and Judy Gorman for their interesting and inspiring speeches.

Most importantly, I want to thank Enza Itri. Over the past year Enza has done a stellar job of making Phoenix Rising a reality. She has worked closely with the professional staffs of both Housing + Solutions and the Beck Institute at Fordham University to translate a concept into reality, a reality that resulted in all of the Program's participants experiencing a positive and transformative 18 weeks.

Please plan to join the Participants, the Mentors, and professional staff, on Monday, May 22nd, at six o'clock in the evening, in a celebration of all their accomplishments.

David Provost
Coordinator, Phoenix Rising

Queer Caucus

Queer Caucus has at present 59 members as part of our open forum and led Facebook group, which consists of self-identified LGBTQAI members and friends of FUUB. Our recently developed mission statement was a result of a group effort of about 10 members and it states:

"Queer Caucus is a community of LGBTQIA members and friends at the First Unitarian Universalist Congregational Society in Brooklyn. For its members, QC provides fellowship, fun, and a queer space for spiritual exploration; for the larger congregation, QC offers educational opportunities on queer issues; and for the wider world, QC fights for justice."

In the past program year the group was formed and has been in the process of welcoming and growing members, creating a sense of community and beginning to organize our efforts. We have had seasonal meetings, gatherings for fellowship and fun as well as responded to various concerns facing the LGBTQAI community. These various efforts include:

- Active and quick response to the Orlando shooting with fundraising efforts
- Hosting a Phoenix Rising Dinner
- Fundraising efforts for Rainbow Railroad in response to increasing international violence and death camps in Chechnya (\$360 raised)
- Larger congregational work through educational efforts i.e. Lingo Bingo Night
- 2017 Pride

Rachel Warner, Coordinator, Queer Caucus

Religious Education Council

This year we saw a large increase in our attendance and registration. We now have over 100 children registered, and we have classes of 10-12 students in some age groups! We've also had a mini baby boom- so there will be even more children attending Sunday School in a few years!

Children's Chapel

This year the Children's Chapels mirrored the sermon series theme of the Six Sources of UU Faith. Each month the children explored a different source through music, story and art. There are so many children attending on Sunday mornings that we may create two chapels next year- one for younger children and another for older youth.

Coming of Age (C.O.A.)

Our Coming of Age group this year was small but wonderful. Three young people took this intensive year-long class, led by our Seminarian Shari Halliday-Quan. Following a wilderness retreat the youth led a service and shared their faith statements with the congregation. Next year these three young people will hopefully be active members of our Youth Group!

Justice Sundays

This year on holiday weekends the K-6th graders came together to learn about a variety of justice projects. They did bystander training in the Fall. In the Spring the children learned about poverty and the fight to end world hunger from an expert at Heifer International. We also held a special lunch cooked by our youth with the Food Justice Ministry team. Vegan pizza was enjoyed by many families!

Our Whole Lives (O.W.L.)

This year both our K-1 and 4-5 grade classes were taught the OWL curriculum. We had large classes for both, and our expert volunteer teachers did a beautiful job of educating our children in family creation, diversity and human sexuality. They also helped parents navigate those tricky conversations!

Seasonal Celebrations

Each year we have four amazing family holiday celebrations - Halloween, the Winter Festival (and Party), Easter/Spring Celebration and Everybody's Birthday Party! in June. These parties could not happen without the support of volunteer decorators, bakers and clean-up crew! Thank you to everyone who helped make these holidays extra special for our children and youth.

Summer RE

This year will be our 3rd! year of offering summer programming for children. This summer our wonderful full time Toddler and Pre-K teachers will be co-teaching. They will use the curriculum "World of Wonder" from the UUA Tapestry series. We will also have nursery staff available for our youngest visitors this summer.

Youth Group

After last summer's amazing trip to Romania our youth group has been a very cohesive and strong team. Ably led by our wonderful Youth Ministry Coordinator Shari Halliday-Quan our teens have spent

the year supporting each other and growing up together. Several of our youth are graduating this June, and will be heading off to college!

The REC council this year welcomed some new members. Chris Singh, Joy Gabriel, Justin Parkinson and Denise Wharton joined the team with June Wohlhorn, MariaSara Alcott and KatyAnna Johnson. Most of our meetings happened online via the “Zoom” app. We look forward to another year of supporting children, youth and families at First Unitarian!

Thank you, Becky Huffman, REC Chair

Share the Plate

First Unitarian continues to share a portion of its collections with non-profit organizations working for justice, equity, and peace in our local community and throughout the world. Since our Share the Plate program was established in 2008, we have given away more than \$10,000 annually, and this year, we are happy to announce that we have contributed \$17,176 to deserving organizations.

The Share the Plate Committee is charged with soliciting nominations from the congregation and selecting, from those nominations, qualified organizations to receive a portion of the collection each month. Now in its third year, the Committee consists of a new set of members. Joe Gabriel, Gloria Howard, Takako Kono, James Mills, and Hillary Scott convened for the first time in March and have set up an online form, open to the community, for submitting recommendations. It is available on the Share the Plate page of our congregation website: www.fuub.org/home/justice-2/share-the-plate-2/

While there has already been some participation from the congregation, the Share the Plate Committee is thinking of more ways in which to solicit feedback and recommendations. This is an area of continued focus for the Committee, and the Committee welcomes all suggestions.

Gifts since the 2016 Annual Report

May 2016	International Rescue Committee	\$1400
June 2016	Unitárius Templom Sepsiszentgyörgyön	\$923
Summer 2016	Ali Forney Center	\$945
September 2016	Minister’s Discretionary Fund	\$1225
October 2016	Phoenix Rebirth Renewal Program	\$1576
November 2016	Creative Art Works	\$1945
December 2016	Planned Parenthood/ Poverty Law Center	\$1507
January 2017	GreenFaith	\$1921
February 2017	International Refugee Assistance Project	\$1801
March 2017	CHIPS (Park Slope Christian Help Inc.)	\$1608
April 2017	Unitarian Universalist Service Comm.	\$2325

Stewardship

The theme for the 2017-18 year was "All Of Us." We made a video to inspire the members with the mission and vision of our congregation which screened at small group meetings for six consecutive weeks after service. The video was well received and featured on the UUA home page. Garnett developed a power point presentation to educate the congregation about where their money goes and the basics of pledging.

All members and friends of the congregation were invited to attend one meeting following worship. While the program was slow to get started, ultimately, we felt that the opportunity to educate our member about the importance of stewardship and financial support of the congregation was valuable.

We are pleased to report that as of this writing we have received \$12,000 more in pledges than at this time last year.

Members: Marty Bernstein, Lee Pardee, Koren Manning, Sarah Morgan, Bruce Wilde, Marie Johnson, Peter Norling, Joy Gabriel

Summer Worship

We continued our lay-led worship program, with 11 weeks of unique and varied experiences led by members of our congregation.

Reverend Ana and I held a Worship Leadership Workshop in April 2016 for anyone interested in participating. It was well received, and three first-time worship leaders in attendance signed up to lead a service.

Our lay worship leaders put a lot of thought and effort into crafting personal and relatable homilies and services that conveyed important messages for us to learn and grow from: Nancy Witherell; Michael Richardson; Katie Trossello; Daniela Gioseffi; Joy Gabriel; Robert Brackbill; a group led by Dawn Brekke (which included Mariarosaria Alcott, Alexa Devin, Diana Lu, and June Wohlhorn); Erik Hooks; and Megan Munroe. Meagan Henry led a service with a baby naming, and our ministerial intern, Kevin Jago, first introduced himself to our congregation with a service he led in August.

This year's worship assistants were Dawn Elane Reed, Bruce Wilde, Nancy Welles, Lee Pardee, Brad Young, and Cara Haft. Our professional accompanists were Farrah Dupoux and Beatriz de Mello. Each week, childcare for little ones and arts activities for older children were provided by Elizabeth Deterville and Brandi Martin. Chris Johnson stepped right into his new job as our facilities director to provide set-up and support; Rod MacFarlane continued his tradition of making punch for the refreshments; and Garnett Losak made sure everything ran smoothly.

We began the summer in the sanctuary and then inaugurated the McKinney Chapel's beautiful new floor and rebuilt stage on July 17th. Our weekly attendance ranged from 95-25, but every single Sunday brought us new attendees and visitors who were warmly welcomed into our community and invited to get to know First Unitarian.

Cara Haft - cara.haft@gmail.com

Weaving the Fabric of Diversity

The Weaving the Fabric of Diversity (WFD) Committee works on living our principles in action by looking inward and outward to work for justice and equality within our congregation and in the wider. We form relationships outside our congregational walls, create informational forums, and take part in actions of witness. This year we co-sponsored many events with several other groups within the congregation: The Women's Alliance, the Food Justice Ministry, the Green Faith Team, and the Queer Caucus.

DINNERS

Children of Abraham / Muslim Dinner (Saturday, 11/12/16): These dinners began in 2001 as a response to the violence shown against the Muslim community after the September 11th attacks. These dinners are more important than ever based on recent world and national events.

Haiti A Celebration – Dinner with Entertainment (Saturday, 3/18/17): Our relationship with Haitian grassroots 501(c)3 organization FEDADSE (Federation des Associations pour le Developpment du Sud Est) continues to grow in warmth and scope. This is a jointly organized event with WFD and FEDADSE each supplying an emcee, food, and entertainment for the dinner. Funds raised will be used for all-volunteer reforestation projects in Haiti.

Juneteenth Service and Lunch (Sunday, 6/18/17): This annual event kicks off the summer worship service program. It is followed by a picnic on Monroe Place. 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. This year's service will look at civil disobedience in the struggle for equality and humanity. Lunch is pot-luck but starter foods are provided.

FORUMS and DISCUSSIONS:

Forum on “The Roots of Zionism” (Wednesday, 9/28/16). This event was co-sponsored by JVP (Jewish Voice for Peace)

Discussion on “Black Lives Matter” and how we relate to the movement as UU's. (Sunday 10/2/16).

Forum on “Black Lives Matter” (Saturday, 12/17/16) This event was held at the Flatbush YMCA and marked the first forum we have presented not on First U premises. Moderator: Dr. Dr. Robert Waterman (Black Male Initiative, Medgar Evers College), Meagan Henry (First U Director of Education Ministries.), Devante Tate (NYC BLM Coalition), Joshua Davis (Medgar Evers Alumnus), Helena Stevens (NYC Educator, Anti-Racist Activist)

Discussion on Xenophobia, (Sunday 2/12/17) An anti-oppression discussion with Muslim guests Dr. Debbie and Naji Almontaser – community activists and bridge builders.

Forum on “Black Lives Matter” (Thursday 3/30/17). This forum was held at Brown Memorial Baptist Church – a large, predominantly African American congregation. It was moderated by their Pastor, Rev. Clinton Miller. Panelists Devante Tate (NYC BLM Coalition), Randy Sidberry (Community Organizer), Joshua Davis (Medgar Evers Grad.), Meagan Henry (First U Director of Education Ministries.), Candace Simpson (M. Div. Union theol. Seminary, Member Concord Baptist Church of Christ Bklyn). Closing by Rev. Rashad Moore (Assoc. Minister, Abyssinian Baptist)

Forum on “Immigration” (Saturday 4/1/17). Another important topic in the current period. This forum was moderated by Patrick Young, Esq. Panelists were: Francis Madi (NY Immigration Coalition), Roger Leduc (Host on WBAI), Dr. Debbie Almontaser (Pres. Muslim Community Network) and the Outreach Dir., Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs.

Forum on The Sale of Public Assets (Saturday 4/8/17). The struggle continues and deepens after the sale of the Cadman Plaza Library to developers. Speakers: Lynn Ellsworth (New Yorkers For a Human Scale), Alicia Boyd (Movement to Protect the People), Tom Angotti, Prof. of Urban Affairs Hunter College and CCNY Graduate Center.

Discussion on Mental Health “How to Handle Stress for Overall Health” (Sunday 4/30/17). Co-Sponsored with the Women’s Alliance. Led by Matt Dobbs, MA (Outreach and Program Coordinator, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI).

ADDITIONAL EVENTS:

Film Showing “Profiled” (Sunday 1/15/17). This film focuses on the killings by police in minority communities as seen mostly through the campaign for justice in the death of Shantel Davis.

Training on Language of Gender – “Lingo Bingo” (Saturday 5/6/17). Co-sponsored with the Queer Caucus.

Training Workshop on “Civil Disobedience” (Sunday 6/11/17)

SUSTAINABILITY FAIR: Sunday 3/19/17. This event was open to the public and was jointly sponsored by WFD and the Green Faith Team. Speakers and tabling on sustainable eating, recycling, farmers’ markets, renewable energy, and ecology of the seashore.

PHOENIX RISING PROJECT: This year, First Unitarian carried out a program to mentor formerly homeless women veterans, helping them to have a more stable life through the Life Skills Empowerment Program developed by Fordham University’s Beck Institute on Religion and Poverty. Nearly the entire congregation has participated in meal preparation and mentoring over the 18 weeks of the project. Graduation for the participants takes place on Monday May 25th. An evaluation of the effectiveness of this project will be carried out by the Beck Institute.

ACTIONS OF IMMEDIATE WITNESS

Kyam Livingston Events: Monthly on the 21st. Since August 2013 we have helped organize and taken 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 had been arrested on a minor matter and was never charged with a crime.

Brooklyn Gay Pride Parade (Saturday 6/10/17). We will march as a church contingent again this year. We are working with the Queer Caucus on this event.

YEARLY RETREAT – Saturday 6/3/17, 9:30-3:00 on the Terrace at First U. We extend an open invitation to First Unitarian members and friends to join us and lend ideas to help continue this social justice work in the coming church year.

FUNDING – Our funding this past year was \$1800 from the congregational program budget. We wish to thank the Board for this additional funding which should more than cover our yearly costs (mostly for dinners) and thank you for your support of this important work.

THANKS - We would like to thank those in the congregation who attended our monthly meetings and worked with us in the kitchen during the dinners. We would like to thank Bob Bero for musical expertise for the Juneteenth Service, and Mariasara Alcott for hosting the Haitian dinner. We also want to thank all those who took part in the Phoenix Rising Project; we hope you enjoyed your participation and found the project useful and fulfilling.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rita Pearl

Young Adult Ministry

This year the young adults strengthened their role in the congregation, partnering with other groups and pitching in to make congregational events a success, while continuing to meet independently for spiritual and social sustenance.

Young adult ministries continued to program favorite monthly events while innovating to provide new opportunities. For the fourth year, we maintained our successful Reflections with Rev. Ana monthly event, during which we have a spiritual discussion facilitated by a young adult over a vegan potluck meal. This year, we reflected on UU big thinkers to deepen our understanding and appreciation of our faith tradition. We also enjoyed monthly brunch and enjoyed karaoke evenings. As has become our tradition, we will have a picnic brunch in June where we will honor young adults who have been nominated for personal achievement awards.

We particularly enjoyed working with and within other groups in the congregation to lead events and programs, and organize political action. We were particularly excited to co-host Stand Up, Speak Out with the Women's Leadership Alliance to foster confidence in personal, political, and professional realms. It was a very empowering event, with a packed room of women aged 4-90! We also hosted a great night of stand-up comedians, an "escape the room" adventure, and raised more money than ever for the RE Our Whole Lives program by baking and selling genderbread cookies with the youth

group. While our members participate widely in leadership positions throughout the congregation, we are having trouble building new leaders to take the reins from long-term facilitators.

We have become a leader in building young adult community within our denomination. Julie Bero and Katie Trossello were chosen to lead a program at General Assembly on fostering multi-generational community. The panel will guide young adults through the process of building community and help congregations assess whether they are engaging in radical hospitality that encourages intergenerational friendships and ongoing young adult attendance. They will preview their presentation at First Unitarian on June 7th at 12:30 in the Chapel.

Julie Bero



Thank you to the following families who have generously pledged a financial gift to First Unitarian in support of our mission. To date we have received commitments equaling \$288,000.

Dale Addington

Derek Adler & Noreen Weiss

Michael & Mariasara Alcoff*

David Andrew**

Rachel Arnold

Michele Ascione*

Debbie Barbieri & Robert DePorto

Kermit Beauchamp & Cyndi Kerr*

Pat & Marty Bernstein

Robin & Ricardo Birnbaum**

Catalina Bertani*

Julie Bero & Rishi Chatrath

Al Blanco*

Robert Brackbill*

John & Dawn Brekke

Judy Boals*

Andrew Bongiorno & Becky Huffman*

Rich Bruner

Vonda Brunsting

Berta Bustamante*

Larry Calia

Paige Carlson**

Gillian Chaiken

Tom Check & Nancy Witherell

Kay Corkett

Barbara Cutney

Anna D'Avanzo**

Tyrone Davis**

Liz Davis

Wendy & Lenny Derevensky

Jewel Diljohn & Tim Barger*

Marquetta Drakes

Alexa Devin

Lydia Downing & Adrian Gonzalez**

Doug Eads

Cindy Eisemann*

Bert Eisenstadt & Laurel Lesio

Christine & Luke Elliott-Negri*

Elizabeth Ellis**

Beth Evans & Ted Hechtman*

Sara Faison

Sean Fischer

Elly Fong-Jones & Liz Frost

Sandy Foutz

Chris Franklin**

Eliza Frecon & Matt Castle*
Gloria Furman*
Joe & Joy Gabriel*
David Garvoille*
Ellen & Geddes Golay*
Daniela Gioseffi*
Beverly Gould**
James Goward & Jackie Frost*
Patrick Gunn & Laura Kriska
Cara Haft*
Arthur Hall & Wanda Lucibello*
Robert Harper & Chelsea Saunders*
Lorna & Marc Hollander
Lee Ilan & Peter Engel
Wanda Lucibello & Arthur Hall*
Sean Fischer
Elly Fong-Jones*
Chris Franklin**
Gloria Furman*
Joe & Joy Gabriel*
David Garvoille
Ellen & Geddes Golay*
Jennifer Goldin
Sarah Ladner & Dan Gomez**
Cara Haft*
Helen Harris**
Robert Harper & Chelsea Saunders*

Julianne Hausler**
Meagan Henry**
Dale Ho & Caroline Sharman*
Langdon Holloway
Ari Hoogenboom & Jaye Nelia
Gloria Howard*
Crystal Huyett*
Vincenza Itri*
Kathy Ivans & Bob Bero
Christopher Johnson**
Katyanna Johnson
Marie Johnson & Alex Caputo
Liz Jones & David Kausch
Samira Kawash & Roger Cooper
Sharon & Tom Kennedy
Larry Kenny
Liz Komar*
Takako Kono*
Tara Kreider & Danny Yoder*
Laura Kriska & Patrick Gunn
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Skylar Salerno**
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Joanie & Bill Schaffer
Greg Schaufeld
Steve Schwartzman*

Anita Shepherd**

Daniel & Diana Silverman*

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Chris Singh & Danny DiGiacomo

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Rosemarie Stupel

Megan Sullivan & Luke Yu*

Bryn Sumner

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Bill Wasik & Monica Murphy**

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