

2015 Annual Report

First Unitarian Church



Albuquerque | East Mountains | Socorro | Carlsbad

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884-1801

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Part I—State of the Church

The Rev. Christine Robinson and the Rev. Angela Herrera

Christine

The state of the church this year is...busy and booming. If you come on to the campus just about any time between 9 in the morning and 9 at night, you'll see people attending programs, getting work done, making plans, serving the community. Wednesday noontime is especially busy, for instance: The program staff is getting ready for Sunday, the Food bank clients are starting to line up to get sacks of food, and the Afterschool tutors are assembling, getting ready to meet the school bus which stops in our lot on Monday and Wednesday afternoons. Other days there are support groups and covenant groups gathering, volunteers working on various projects, Memorial services being planned, money being processed, people in crisis being comforted, and plans being made. A lot of this is doing a little more of what we've always done: create a community conducive to spiritual growth for theological liberals...a huge piece of which is organizing our energies to make the world a better place. Some of it is specifically related to the strategic directions we voted on at this meeting last year.

Angela

By the time our strategic directions were compiled into a report, change was already underway in one of the major areas, Religious Education. We had already begun a mini-campaign to make the sanctuary more welcoming to families with young children, through our messaging in announcements, and including children's tables. We still hear feedback from young families who tell us how much this means to them. At the beginning of 2015, we hired Mia Noren as our new Director of Religious Education, and I have worked closely with her throughout the year.

Mia re-vamped RE communications strategies, improved teacher trainings and support including monthly teacher luncheons with a minister, and held successful community building events. The RE council is living into a new model as a high functioning leadership team, with Geri Knoebel at the helm as chair of the RE Council.

Mia has also overseen improvements to the RE building, including the creation of a children's chapel in the RE foyer, made possible through the gift of one generous family. The RE building now has a warm and cheerful vibe, and the chapel space conveys that children's spiritual lives are as valued as adults', with handmade meditation cushions, beautiful textured wood benches, and rich colors.

Christine

Another direction we wanted to put attention to is the creation and nurturing of social bonds among us. We want to know each other, support each other, and we want the kids to know that, besides the family they have at home, they have a supportive community at church. Even though this was the priority that looked like it could wait a year, we've still been asking the right questions, and there's been a bubbling up of parties, activities, and starting new groups both from volunteers and staff. We have been able to put a few more hours into the Membership Director job, and are currently hiring...check the website.

Angela

Social Justice is the third major strategic direction. With Nancy Kilpatrick as chair, the Social Justice Council kept our congregation's justice work visible through the Justice corner in the social hall, articles, pulpit editorials, forums, and the website. They continued sharing information and opportunities around the topic of homelessness, the council's focus issue from 2014.

In response to the strategic directions, the council explored models for developing congregation-wide justice projects, and decided to try out the Albuquerque Interfaith model of doing so, which begins with a series of "house conversations" (actually gatherings in Memorial Hall). That flopped. In fact, although the strategic directions report envisions a greater number of UUs involved in social justice, nothing seemed to stir up much excitement about it in the congregation. Our existing programs were doing fine, but the number of people involved in them seemed to stay about the same.

And then, just as the council was wondering what to do, one of the forums they hosted was about to turn into the kind of congregational project they'd been dreaming of.

It was the Council who scheduled the Family Promise Forum that ended up leading to new program of hosting homeless families overnight at the church for one week per quarter. Now, approximately 100 volunteers from the congregation are involved (!), many for the first time, or for the first time in a long time.

Christine

We had some foundational goals in the strategic plan, beginning with moving into the 21st century with our communication strategies...which we know we need to do while leaving no elder behind. So now we have a basic new website, ready to flesh out with information from our program leaders, and we're on our second iteration of a mobile device friendly messenger. This is actually pretty complicated stuff and we're lucky to have Jane Winkler on the case, with Steve Sutherlin and Rick Held (new website).

The second foundational goal was to get more sophisticated about recruiting, training, and rewarding volunteers. Angela and Mia are paying special attention to volunteers in RE as Angela just described, and this will be a part of the job of the membership director. And speaking of membership...our Director of Member Development, Kristin Satterlee, has been the friendly face at the connections table and on the phone to new members for so long now that she's our third longest standing employee! She's ready to resume her writing and editing career...but let's give her a big hand for all she has done. We'll soon hire a 15-hour a week Membership Director, to do the things that Kristin did, as well as help us develop our volunteer management. The job is posted on our website...have a look!

Another foundational area which we sort of took for granted was our buildings and grounds which house our bodies and feed our spirits with beauty and memories. Our buildings took some revenge on us last year, asking for more advanced management by both staff and volunteers, and we've got that in place. Starting next week, the solar panels will come off of our oldest buildings so a new roof can go on...thanks to a monumental bit of negotiation and organization by Steve Phillips, and our new Facility Technician, Mark Fickler, is, indeed, keeping the heat on for us. The solar panels should be back on line by the time the Albuquerque sun is high in the sky again, and I think you will soon see our buildings better kept and better managed.

Angela

When the Board formed the strategic planning task force in 2014, one piece of strategic planning had already been done. The Music Futures Task Force had formed after the retirement of Alan Stringer, and had already conducted town halls, surveys, and research to develop a vision for the future of our music program. Not only did they discover that our program was very small for our congregation's size, they also discovered a passion in our congregation for growing it.

In February, we conducted a short, targeted campaign to see whether it would be possible to raise enough money to launch a bigger program and feather it into the church budget over the next five years. The goal was \$195k. We ended up raising a little over \$200k in about four weeks.

With that we entered into a months-long search for the right person for the job, and we are thrilled to have found Susan Peck, a UU with a long and accomplished resume in music directing, not the least of which is her role as director of music for the UU General Assembly this year, and her role as the president elect of the UU Musician's Network, the national association of over 600 UU musicians.

Her job description includes community building through music, connecting music with social justice, and supporting music in the RE program, and we are already seeing these things begin to happen.

Christine

We've hired a new intern who will start September and be with us for 9 months, and of course we have an opportunity to ordain James and send him off into his first ministry. This church has a great reputation as a lively place to learn the craft of ministry. Our new intern, Dan Lillie, will need an intern committee...folks willing to help him learn and give him feedback. Let me know if you'd be interested in serving our faith in that way. And speaking of ministry, Angela got a promotion in the middle of last year, making us a more equal leadership team. It's great to have company as this church gets more complex.

Angela

Another major focus area for me in 2015 was our Stewardship model. For a long time we've had an ad hoc committee that formed from scratch each year and tried to quickly raise three quarters of a million dollars. Many of our usual volunteers were burned out, and we were missing opportunities to be more skillful about fundraising during the rest of the year, by improving the way we communicate about money, for example. This year I replaced the old model with a new, year round committee called the Radical Generosity Team. They are tasked not just with encouraging people in the congregation to be generous, but to encourage the church itself to embody a spirit of generosity. They ran a very successful fall campaign for the operating budget, and now are reviewing our practices of giving, receiving, thanking, and inspiring.

Conclusion: Christine

Our membership has held steady and nearly 800 people for about 5 years now, after two quick growth spurts between 2001 and 2008, in which we grew by 60%. It's no surprise...and frankly, it is something of a relief to have these years to catch up on neglected tasks, to fess up to the ways we need to be better organized, and to build up to meet our new needs. This building which we're now so comfortable in is the visible...and most fun...part of that work, but there's an iceberg underneath: Paul Browne and the finance folks have made fundamental changes in how we track and manage our finances...we just can't operate like a big household anymore! The Policy team and I have slogged away at new bylaws and policies to befit a church our size, and Angela has been hard at work helping us get our foundational programs; RE, Social Justice, and Music, on a solid organizational footing. We've moved from scrambling to keep up with all those who want to be with us to solidly serving liberal religion in Albuquerque. It has been very satisfying to be your minister in this era of our church's life and I look forward to several more years!

Conclusion: Angela

We've accomplished a lot. The year began with Christine on sabbatical, and ended with an expanded program staff and an exciting new congregational justice project (Family Promise). We were "in the black," and celebrate the congregation's generosity. I, too, am so glad to be your minister and so looking forward to the next few years!

Part II—Board and Staff Reports

President's Report

Martha Kettle

Thank you for taking time out of your Sunday afternoon to participate in the important business of the congregation.

Every year has its own character. 2015 was both a year of finishing what we started and moving forward with new direction.

The year got off to a positive start with the performance of a financial audit by a local CPA which gave us confidence in our accounting practices and more importantly gave the credit union confidence to finalize the mortgage on our new sanctuary. Signing the mortgage brought to a close years of planning and building to give us the space we need for a growing congregation. The Board and staff then turned our focus to the older facilities, refurbishing the RE wing and preparing to replace our leaking roofs. This later project has proved more complicated than we anticipated with delicate solar panels to be moved off and back on. Contracts are in place, now, and the first phase of reroofing will be done this winter.

Recognizing that the job of keeping up with ongoing maintenance exceeded the available time of our modest staff, the Board re-established the Building and Grounds Committee and began helping staff by inventorying deferred maintenance needs, prioritizing them and helping find the most efficient way to accomplish the work. As 2015 ended we also prepared to welcome a new Facilities Manager, Mark Fickler, who is taking the reins and helping us move forward.

A real high point last year was the dedicated work of the Music Futures Committee which resulted in expanding our music program and hiring Susan Peck as our Director of Music. We are grateful to Angela for her vision and creativity of establishing an Angel Fund which made it possible for us to move forward and expand our music program. And how fortunate we are that Susan wanted to be the person to lead that effort.

Last year at our annual meeting we shared a new Strategic Plan based on the work of a task force that sensed the congregation and developed five key directions you wanted us to move toward. You're going to hear more details of our progress in the State of the Church Report, but I'll remind us of the five directions. Three areas focused on Programs: Religious Education, Social Justice and Social Bonds— and two on foundational strengths: Communications Technology and Volunteer Development. Our ministers will share the progress made during the first year of focus on these strategic directions.

I'll mention just one element of the direction, Volunteer development. As most of us realize, our church is very dependent on volunteers to help keep important programs and committees going. Whatever your calling I'm sure there is a place for you. But, I want to draw attention to one area in particular where we need member volunteers and that is our Finance Committee. Janis Schubert has served as chair of the committee for the last 4 years and is stepping down along with Eric Hall another long term member of the committee. We are in immediate need of two church members with business or financial backgrounds to fill these key positions. If you are interested and willing to serve, please let our Treasurer, Linda Suydam, or Paul Brown Director of Finance and Operations, or one of the ministers know so we can tell you more about the opportunity.

Speaking of finances, we are doing well thanks to your generosity. The Board established a quarterly financial review process to help us track the bigger picture of finances over the year. We finished 2015 with a modest surplus of almost \$6,000 in our operating budget. In addition, the year-end request for contributions to the start-up costs for Family Promise and funds to support deferred maintenance projects resulted in gifts of \$10,000. The other important piece of our financial health is our designated funds which are contributions made over and above your pledges to support our operating budget. Last year a little more than \$100,000 was donated to carry out more than a dozen important programs of the church. To name a few of these, the food pantry gave away over 4,000 bags of groceries supported by \$12,000 in donations. Our sister church in Kenya received \$13,500 to support children's scholarships. You helped more than 50 children from our congregation attend kids camp last summer. We completed a project started in 2014—helping build an Interfaith Habitat for Humanity house. Our Change for the Future

program collected almost \$9,000 reaching out into our larger community to support the work of other nonprofit organizations.

And finally, I have a few updates on our ministers before giving them the floor. Christine enjoyed a well-deserved sabbatical during the first half of the year while Angela and James held the fort at home. Angela was able to join a team of two other UU ministers on a trip to do some institution building in the UU Church of Kenya. She returned to a new status at First Unitarian. You may not have noticed but we took the “Associate” off her title and renamed her “Minister.” Along with that we were able to provide a salary increase commensurate with her increasing responsibilities.

As we shared with you at last year’s Annual Meeting, Christine has been considering her future and plans for her retirement from full time ministry. The purpose of addressing you now is to let you know that the church Board is continuing to learn about the best practices for replacing a Senior Minister so that when Christine announces her retirement in the next year or two, we will be ready with a thorough and fair process.

For now, I’ll just mention 3 things about this topic:

- The Unitarian Universalist Association has guidelines and support systems for minister transitions, and we plan to use them. With their help, we will map out the timeline and steps for a good, transparent process.
- There will be opportunities for input from all of you in at least three parts of the process. First, we will ask for input when we are defining our needs for the position. Second, there will be a Search Committee to guide the process and the Congregation will vote for members of that team. Third, there will be a congregational vote on any Sr. Minister candidate recommended by the search committee.
- If Angela Herrera expresses interest in the position, she will be the first candidate considered. The UUA and UU Minister’s Association have an agreement that an internal candidate is evaluated first, and external applicants are sought only if the internal candidate withdraws or does not get the voting results for confirmation. If Angela becomes our senior minister, she will then form a team to help her search for an Assistant or Associate minister to work with her.

Our primary concern throughout the process will be what is best for the congregation.

If you have questions or thoughts on this topic as we move forward, please share them with Larry Alei or me. The church office has our contact information if you need it. Board membership partially changes every year, and the two of us will ensure that our plans and your inputs are passed forward to new board members.

Finally, this year we are saying goodbye to one of our Board members, Steve Phillips. Steve has served for two terms and has been a very valuable member. We will miss his contributions to the Board, but are grateful to him for his continuing service to the church. He is going to be devoting more of his volunteer time this year to helping with our facility maintenance program.

Today marks the end of my term as President of the congregation, but I will be continuing as a member of the Board for one more year. I want to thank you for the opportunity to serve you as a leader in the church. It has been a great learning experience and very rewarding to me personally. We are all blessed to be part of such a vibrant and compassionate church served by a dedicated staff, Board of Directors, ministers, and other leaders.

Director of Religious Education

Mia Noren

RE Building and Grounds

A generous gift early in 2015 allowed many improvements to be made to the RE Building. Chief among those was the creation of a Children's Chapel in the foyer of the building. The RE library was moved to the south foyer. RE Rooms 3 and 2 were completely re-furnished and painted. Bulletin boards were installed in all of the classrooms and outside every classroom. All of the hallways and bathrooms were also painted. Thanks to the anonymous donors whose gift made this work possible, our RE space is now bright and inviting, with more joyful surroundings and a children's chapel that conveys the sacredness of our time together.

The RE Playgrounds also experienced refreshing. All interior chain link fence, dead trees, and broken or worn-out furniture were removed. Flower beds were re-planted, and shade covers were made for the shade structures. Trees were trimmed and an enormous amount of overgrowth was removed. Finally, the RE Playground areas were placed under the oversight of the landscape committee. Many hours of volunteer effort helped to re-brand our playgrounds as a welcoming place for children and their parents.

Registration Numbers

During the academic year, from September 2014 through August 2015, there were 175 individual children registered in the program. An additional 43 children participated in an unregistered status, attending three or more classes during the academic year. Children who participated in less than three classes were not included in the count. The children were managed on Sundays by 77 adult volunteers, 11 paid child care workers, and three staff, plus James Galasinski working as our youth coordinator.

Attendance Numbers

Attendance numbers for the year for first service totaled 1,065, and for the second service total 2,270. OWL and Coming of Age individual attendance for the year equaled 225. Total instances of child attendance in an RE program equal 3,560 individual occurrences. The total instances of adult attendance in children's RE numbered 1,168 individual occurrences.

Staffing

Mia Noren became DRE in January. A new RE Aide, Brie-Anne Stout, was hired in January. Alana Rodriguez remained as RE Administrative Assistant. The year has proved that we three RE staff make a great working team. James Galasinski spent his time as Youth Coordinator revamping Youth Advisor training and programs. While there was some movement of child care staff, the pool remained at 11. First Aid training was provided for office and child care staff in April. An RE Start-Up Workshop held in June and attended by staff, volunteers, and parents helped to refine expectations for staff and volunteers.

Teachers

Summer classes were staffed with volunteers by free sign-up. Fall classes were staffed with Teacher Teams. Most classes had a full roster of teams, and other parents signed up as ‘floaters’ and ‘special events’ volunteers, filling in any gaps. Teacher Luncheons, a monthly gathering hosted by the DRE and one of the ministers, and meant to honor and support volunteer teachers and foster community and spirituality, began in June.

Director of Member Development

Kristen Satterlee

The job of Director of Member Development focuses on guiding new members and providing access to information about church activities.

Member Guidance

Sixty-four members joined or re-joined the church in 2015. All new members join through monthly Signing Ceremonies, which take place on the first Sunday of each month. I work with the Membership Committee to ensure that joining members have made an initial contribution to the church before signing the book. Signing Ceremonies consist of:

- chalice lighting
- introductions, which allow participants to meet and hear each other's stories
- responsive litany (including our Principles and Sources as well as a sampling of denominational history through some of our heroes)
- brief discussion of contributions, pledging, and church activities by a member of the Radical Generosity Team
- signing the Membership Book
- taking photos for the online church directory

I send each new member two welcome e-mails, an online activity interest survey, and an offer for a face-to-face or phone interview. The interview allows each new member to share the story of their path to First Unitarian, feel heard in a significant way by a representative of the church, and discuss what they want from the community and how they would like to give back.

Upon completion of the new member survey and/or interview, I share contact information between the new member and the leaders of the activities they expressed interest in, to facilitate involvement. For many members, this conversation continues in e-mail and at the Connections Table for months as they settle in and find activities and friends. Each member also receives a check-in e-mail after six months of membership and a first anniversary congratulations card.

All new members are now offered a face-to-face conversation with a member of the Welcoming Conversations Committee (led by Martha Ketelle), to strengthen our community bonds and the individual's connection within the church.

Access to Church Activity Information

The Connections Table allows visitors, new and established members, and church leaders to find and share information on church programs at an easily accessible point between the Sanctuary and Social Hall. A large collection of pamphlets—several of which I overhauled this year to make them more welcoming and useable—provides lots of information. The table host (usually me; Marian Schreyer substitutes monthly, and Dawn Lunt or Arne Gullerud on occasion) provides the rest. Many groups use the Connections Table to host signup sheets for upcoming events.

I also try to post to the church's Facebook page at least twice weekly with information about upcoming activities, and write occasional messages in *The Messenger* and Order of Service regarding church activities and guest welcoming.

In 2015, the Member Development role officially shifted away from leadership development, so the DMD no longer convenes the LEAD (Leadership Enrichment And Development) Team, which is itself on hiatus.

As many of you already know, I have chosen this year to end my time as Director of Member Development. I have loved the eight years I've spent doing this work, and am deeply grateful. I've made incredible connections to this wonderful community and the people who make it what it is, and learned a lot about myself doing so. Thanks to the staff, the ministers, the Board, and all the members for making my time as Director of Member Development so rewarding. But this is not goodbye! I look forward to being an active and committed member of First Unitarian for a long time to come.

Operations

Paul Browne, Director

Branch Coordinator–East Mountains

Branch Coordinator–Socorro

Branch Coordinator—Carlsbad
Anna Pitts, Steering Committee Chair

Desert Springs continues to hold its own. We grow a bit and then people leave and this is typical for us.

Recently, we enjoyed a service by First Presbyterian's Minister Steve, who shared with us that we will be collectively sharing worship space with First Christian Church of Carlsbad for the first six months of 2016. Like most area churches, both First Presbyterian and First Christian face dwindling congregations and increasing building expenses, so this is a "pre-determination" to see if it is feasible for First Christian to permanently share space with First Presbyterian and Desert Springs going forward, with an eye toward possibly selling First Christian's building. We at Desert Springs are excited about the prospect and look forward to meeting the congregants of First Christian. Desert Springs will continue to utilize First Presbyterian's chapel space.

Upon review of the 2016 budget, we request no alteration from the 2015 budget.

Worship Band—Spare Parts

Directed by Vance Bass

The congregation's worship band, "Spare Parts," plays music for the first service of each month and joins with the choir occasionally for special Sundays. Last year, we also presented a complete "This I Believe" service of songs that have touched us, with short homilies about their spiritual meaning, from different band members.

In addition, we represent the church to the wider community when we are invited to play for organizations such as Interfaith Power & Light or Interfaith Coalition for Immigration Justice. We were also invited to perform for the UNM Law School in December.

Currently there are seven "regular" members of the band, as well as many others who join us to add their voices or instruments on special pieces. We are proud that our members reflect the congregation with someone from every decade of ages from 20s to 70s! And, finally, we are a small community within the congregation, encouraging and supporting each other through good times and bad.

Part III—Standing or Elected Committees

Endowment Fund Committee

Nell Graham Sale, Chair

Steering Committee

Sandra McCardell

Margo Milleret

Dorothy Reynolds

The Endowment Fund Committee (EFC) for 2015 consisted of four members, Nell Graham Sale, chair, Dorothy Reynolds, Sandra McCardell and Margo Milleret. There was a vacancy for the fifth member. One of the Ministers met with the committee as often as possible. The mission of the EFC is to increase the value of the endowment of First Unitarian Church, which in turn supports the mission of the Church and makes the institution more sustainable in the future.

The Endowment Fund itself is managed by the UUA and is pooled with funds from other churches in the denomination. Management of the Endowment Fund was changed in mid-2015 to the UU Common Endowment Fund, LLC, which is an entity separate from the UUA, in order to protect the pooled funds from any possible liabilities incurred in the future by the UUA. The balance of the Endowment Fund at the end of 2014 was \$326,077.28. The Endowment Fund consists of three funds: Unrestricted, Banks-Curtis that supports youth activities, and Music.

In order to promote giving to the Endowment Fund, the EFC engages in activities to publicize the Endowment Fund, to deepen the congregation's understanding of the role of an endowment in the long term stability of our Church, to recognize donors and those who have committed to donations in the future, and to educate Church members about personal finances in general. In 2015, the EFC sponsored a forum on how the Social Security system works, published comments about charitable giving each month in *The Messenger*, and held a celebratory "Tea" honoring leaders of the Church in the 20th century. During the Tea, these leaders shared stories of challenges and triumphs the Church has undergone, as well as their hopes for the future of the Church – including targeted Endowment Funds to support leadership development in the Church.

Additionally, members of the EFC met with the Board to enhance its understanding of the Endowment and to develop policies for accepting gifts to the Church.

In 2015, the Endowment paid \$12,331 to the Church, which is 4% of the average balance of the prior 12 quarters of the Endowment Fund. Additionally, two Church members announced that they had purchased a \$100,000 charitable gift annuity naming the Church as the ultimate beneficiary. The EFC is very grateful for those other Church members who have informed the EFC of their future gifts to the Endowment allocated in their estate plans. Those who wish to be identified have become members of Keepers of the Flame.

Finance Committee and Treasurer's Report

Linda Suydam, Treasurer

Finance Committee Members

Janis Schubert, Chair

Eric Hall

Doug Loescher

Paul Browne (ex officio)

Summary of Revenue/Expenses

The actual income for the year was \$802,823, which is \$11,625 more than budgeted. Rental income was \$32,785, which was \$8785 over budget. The Endowment income for the year was \$11,223, which was \$723 over budget. Non-pledge gifts were \$57,806, which was under budget by \$7124.

Expenses for the year totaled \$800,303, which was \$9,110 more than budgeted. The year ended with a surplus of \$5,817. This surplus will be split between the Capital Reserve and the 2015 operating budget income. Pledge income was at 99% of pledges.

Financial Accomplishments in 2015

A special fund drive to hire a full-time music director was initiated and completed in 2015 (i.e., Music Angel Fund). This initiative raised pledges of \$200,114 and enabled the Church to hire Susan Peck as the full-time music director beginning January 1, 2016, and will pay for part of her salary for a number of years.

The mortgage for the Sanctuary was finalized in June 2015 and the first payment was made in July. Mortgage payments for the year totaled \$46,704, which included payments on the line of credit, the principal, and the interest. Congregational commitments were \$24,239. Capital Campaign contributions were \$9,629.

Summary

It was a very good year for the finances for First Unitarian.

Financial Review Committee

Members

Rod Groves
Angela Merkert
Bruce Newton

Assisting

Paul Browne, Director of Finance and Operations
Alan Clawson, CPA
Doug Loescher
Paul Browne (ex officio)

In the past this committee was called the Internal Audit Committee, and was mandated by the Church Board to perform an internal audit or audits. The last such activity was performed by a committee under the direction of Brian Frieder in 2011. For a variety of reasons, including the untimely death of Brian, the Committee was unable to fulfill its full mandate but it spent much time and effort in a valiant attempt. In its report it noted this fact and recommended (a) that undertaking an internal audit yearly was a poor use of church and staff time, and (b) that the church ought to invest in an external audit instead. Such an external audit was completed by the firm of Hinkle and Landers in 2015.

Perhaps reflecting this history, the committee was renamed this year the “Financial Review Committee.” Meeting early in the year, we decided to focus our attention on staff implementation of the major recommendations of the external audit and not to initiate an internal audit this year. The principle recommendation of the external audit was “that the Church begin tracking its property and equipment in a detailed manner,...that they determine the useful life of each asset, and calculate prior and current year’s accumulated depreciation and depreciation expense.” Additionally other deficiencies were noted in the wording of various financial procedures and policies and the staff concluded that a review and updating were warranted.

In subsequent meetings with the committee the Staff reported that the first task had been completed, demonstrating that they had made a nearly comprehensive inventory of church fixed assets and placed a value on the same using a methodology based on replacement value. In the case of assets valued at more than \$500 items were and will in the future be treated as

depreciable. With this inventory in hand the Staff was able to place a value on the fixed assets of the Church for the first time, a considerable achievement.

A valuation of the Church's real estate holdings has been carried on the books based on early appraisals and the construction cost of the new Sanctuary, but to date these assets have not been depreciated. Nusenda, the S&L that now holds the church mortgage, required a new appraisal of the entire property as part of the process of securing a mortgage. That appraisal came in slightly lower than the earlier valuation and will serve as the basis for an adjusted balance sheet valuation, thus establishing an externally validated level for future financing and planning purposes.

This valuation, and the comprehensive fixed asset inventory now become benchmarks that can be used by the Church for future financing, auditing and insurance purposes. Beginning in 2016, the accounting staff will institute a systematic process of depreciating real estate and other fixed assets, increasing the accuracy of the Church's financial statements. This is a very substantial step forward. The committee commends the Staff and others who worked on this project for the progress they have made. The fixed asset valuation can now be maintained and updated periodically in the future.

As regards the second area of audit follow-up, the Staff has informed the committee that it has completed a full overhaul of church financial policies and procedures and that they have been presented to the Board for approval.

Finally, it should be noted that while the Committee did not perform an internal audit this year, the Staff has been very helpful in formulating guidelines and points of inquiry that should facilitate future internal audit efforts.

Healthy Community Committee

Steve Phillips, Chair

Members

Randy Biggers
Heather Clark
Gilbert Gutierrez
The Rev. Christine Robinson

The Healthy Community Committee is charged by the Board with creating and overseeing safe congregation policies, ensuring healthy communication and conflict management practices, and providing educational resources and experiences on these topics for the congregation.

Congregational Outreach

The chair of the committee presented a pulpit editorial on September 6 titled “A Healthy Community” following up on Christine’s “Being Safe” sermon the previous month.

Conflict Resolution Activities

2015 has been a good year. There were no requests for the committee to become involved in facilitating the resolution of conflicts in the church.

Policy Activities

The committee continued to be involved in the drafting of safe congregation policies for the church. Several meetings involved presentations by experts and a detailed review of Safe Congregations resources of the Unitarian Universalist Association. A Disruptive Behavior policy has been completed and will be presented to the Board for discussion in the near future. Policies dealing with professional misconduct, electronic communications and others will be worked on during the next year.

Leadership Succession Committee

Gerri Knoebel, Chair

Members

Heather Clark
Jon Eldredge
Sally New
Andie Rigler
Joseph Sadek
Benita Terrell

The seven-member Leadership Succession Committee (LSC) is a Standing Committee of the Congregation. The LSC identifies potential leaders within our Church and is responsible for preparing a slate of candidates for elections that are held at our Congregation's Annual Meeting in January.

The LSC makes recommendations for nominees to fill vacancies on the Board of Directors, Endowment, Finance Review, and Leadership Succession Committees. There are 26 positions on these committees. For the 2016-2018 elections, the LSC has developed a slate of 10 nominees. Five are nominees for a second term and five are new nominees for committee vacancies.

The Strategic Planning Task Force has identified volunteer development including leadership as an area of focus, which is a direction that is strongly supported by the LSC.

2015 Activities

The LSC is not well known in the Congregation and had been taking steps to increase its visibility. The LSC had a presence on Connections Sundays. Handouts were provided and announcements were made in the eBroadsheet about leadership opportunities in the Church.

The *LSC Resource Book* provides information about the Committee's operations and procedures and includes provisions from the by-laws that affect its roles and responsibilities. The *Resource Book* also provides continuity in the Committee's operations and expectations from year to year.

Letters were sent to each nominee to confirm his or her commitment to be a candidate for a leadership position, to inform each of the annual meeting date, and to request a biography for inclusion in the Messenger. This has been established as a regular practice. Next year, the LSC will ask for photos so that members can more easily identify the nominated candidates.

Challenges

The main LSC challenge is to identify potential leaders without having access to a resource to gain information about member skills and interests such as a database indicating member involvement in Church activities or a leadership development program. The need for such a repository and/or program has been recognized in the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan.

The by-laws state that Board and committee members can serve two consecutive terms before they have to rotate off for at least one year. However, there is no established mechanism for recording members' terms in office, which complicates LSC's work (and perhaps the work of other committees).

Senior Minister Search Committee

The LSC is also responsible for nominating persons to the Senior Minister Search Committee. The Board is currently working on the issues of ministerial succession and the LSC assumes that the Board would develop the charge for this Committee, which would include a timeline for the LSC to conduct its nominations.

Membership Committee

Linda Skye, Chair

Members

Alice Demi

Betty Higbie

Lee Higbie

Ann King

Jerry Kiuttu (term ends in Feb. 2016)

Dawn Leach

This is my first year as the Chair of the committee (I served on the committee the prior two years). Prior to January, I met with several individuals and groups to discuss the role of the committee within the context of our Strategic planning goals regarding Social Bonds. I met with Kristin Satterlee, Membership Coordinator, James Galinsinski, Ministerial Resident, Martha Kettle, Congregation President, Angela Herrera, Associate Minister, and others. It was determined that the Board's charge to the committee needed revisions and we finalized those revisions in 2015.

Currently, the committee consists of seven members (see list above). In March, Rick Held stepped down to join the Board. In September, Ann King joined the committee. In October, Lee and Betty Higbie joined the committee. In November, Dawn Leach agreed to serve another term. In December, we thanked Janelle Campbell and Andrea Lee for their long service on this committee. Janelle had served 2012 through 2015 and Andrea served 2014 and 2015. They both stepped down at the end of 2015. In February 2016, Jerry Kiuttu will step down.

In 2015, the committee began a schedule of monthly meetings in order to identify and work on new projects that have emerged from the committee's new charge. Projects included (date completed in parentheses):

- Recruited new committee members (goal was 10 total) in order to complete the work of the proposed committee charge
- Improvements to the Membership Information table (March)

- Change location to lobby corner
- Add bulletin board with info and photos (October)
- Change name to Membership Corner (October)
- Split each Sunday Membership Corner team so that one works at the corner and one serves as a “greeter” during the social hour
- Developed a Membership page on the new church webpage (July)
- Reviewed and revised membership corner materials (May, August, December)
 - Re-designed old “Path to Membership” form
 - Created new Demographic form to collect info for new members and those on the Path in a single form
 - Created new “Ready to Join” take-away card
- Developed and improved “Path to Membership” process (August)
 - Created new Path brochure
 - Training (see below)
- Training
 - “How to talk about the initial contribution” (May)
 - “What is Membership?” discussion led by James Galisinski (September)
 - “Connecting with people on the Path” discussion led by Jerry Kiuttu (October)
 - How old should a new member be? Discussion led by James Galisinski (Nov)
- Explore available membership statistics (ongoing)

The committee hosted two New Member Recognition Ceremonies and Dinners (June and October). Each dinner was attended by a total of 42-58 guests, including new members, their families and guests, committee members, Membership Coordinator, ministers, church staff and invited church leaders.

Plans for 2016

- With the hiring of a new Membership Director in 2016, review current tasks related to membership development and retention to explore and implement best practices.
- Improve Membership Corner display board contents.
- Review and consolidate “Exploring Membership” packet materials.

- Train with Stewardship on how to discuss initial contributions and pledges.
- Review “Path” participation and make recommendations, as indicated.

Personnel Committee

Policy Governance Task Force

Geri Knoebel, Chair

Members

Pat Diem
Gwen Sawyer
The Rev. Christine Robinson

The Board charged the Policy Governance Task Force with the responsibility to recommend policies to implement a shared policy governance structure and to replace the current *Compendium of Policies* with a new *Congregation and Board Policy Manual*. The Task Force has been developing the new Manual by making recommendations to update, replace, and retire policies as well as to create new policies for approval by the Board.

In 2015, the Board approved the two main chapters of the *Policy Manual*:

1.0 Governance (August 2015)—Seven policies establish roles and responsibilities for the Board, ministers, staff, and lay leaders as well as lines of authority among them.

2.0 Finance (December 2015)—Eleven policies establish the framework for managing the financial resources of the Church. The Congregation entrusts the financial management of its affairs to the Board, the Senior Minister, as Head of Staff, and the Endowment and Financial Review Committees. The approval of the annual operating budget, the purchase/construction/sale of property and incurrence of debt are reserved to the Congregation.

The *Policy Manual* is organized into categories providing the framework for its organization. Individual policies are sections within a category. Each category has an “owner,” the entity which has the authority to make changes and create new policies. Policies are hierarchal in nature, as follows:

- a. The Congregation may change any Church policy (By-laws must be changed in accord with the by-laws themselves).
- b. The Board may change policies related to staff, team, and committees, except Standing Committees (Board, Endowment, Leadership Succession, and Financial Review Committees). These policies establish lines of authority as well as roles and responsibilities for the Board, ministers, staff, and lay leaders.
- c. Committees and Teams may create and change policies that help them carry out their work.
- d. The staff may change and create policies within in their areas of authority.

As the Board approves policies in each category, they will be included in the *Policy Manual* and posted on the Church website.

The Task Force has developed draft policies in five other policy categories: Affiliations, Programs, Staff, Safety and Security, and Communications. These categories will be presented to the Board for review and approval during 2016.

Radical Generosity Team

Dimitri Kapelianis, Chair

Members

Linda Hudson
John Kwait
Chris Mayo
Michael McDonald

In 2015, what used to be the Stewardship Committee was renamed the Radical Generosity Team to reflect the new, broader charge that it received from the board. Specifically:

The Radical Generosity Team is an ongoing committee of the board, tasked with overseeing the pledge drive and fundraising for the annual operating budget, and helping First Unitarian refine its stewardship practices and develop a culture of generosity.

Consistent with this new broader charge, the Radical Generosity Team started its work by reviewing the current practices regarding fundraising and generosity at First Unitarian, following which the team developed short-term and long-term goals.

An immediate priority was to meet with new members at the signing ceremony and share with them our culture of generosity. In addition, with its “Caught in the Act” series, the team regularly spotlights the generosity of our congregation.

Finally, the Fall pledge drive received the bulk of the team’s energy. We are proud to report that we received 462 pledges, averaging nearly \$1,500 per pledge, for a total amount pledged of \$692,082.

Part IV—Committees and Programs

Animal Advocates

Promoting Respect and Dignity for All Beings

Leadership

Linda Bairstow
Sacha Bush
Sharon Hall
Margaret Keller

Active Members: Martha Anderson, Marion Ammerman, Mikki Aronoff, Linda Bairstow, Laura Bartolucci, Sacha Bush, Randy Diner, Linda Doherty, David Gick, Lou Graham, Sharon Hall, Margaret Keller, Marcia Petta, Rose Provan, Bev Roddy, Danny Ruppert, Izabella Silva, and Janet Strong. Animal Advocates also has an e-news list, a Facebook page, a monthly newsletter, and works in collaboration with many organizations throughout the city.

Animal Advocates responded to our goals of political advocacy, humane education and assistance to local animal welfare and rescue organization via many projects and events. Animal Advocates staffed an information and artist table in the Courtyard or Social Hall on designated Sundays before and after services. This included our talented Artists for the Animals, who generously donated a portion of their sales to benefit animals. We supported local animal organizations with monetary contributions on a monthly basis. Some of the those organization who received contributions from Animal Advocates this year were several Four Corners reservation rescues, Street Cat Hub, Sunflower Sanctuary, Walk in Circles, NM Dog, Fabulous Felines, Fur and Feather, Extraordinary Dogs, and Spay & Neuter Coalition of NM.

Animal Advocates hosted and members volunteered at numerous events including co-hosting the Dr. Will Tuttle World Peace Diet forum. We hosted the second annual Animal Advocates Yard Sale (all proceeds designated to support local animal organizations), participated in Animal Blessing Sunday, and volunteered at several events around the city for Friends of Lucky Paws as well as Animal Humane NM. We hosted a Sunday used jewelry sale to support wild horse rescue

in Placitas and participated in the Social Justice Council's auction event. Additionally, Animal Advocates helped facilitate finding forever homes for many animals and/or provided emergency care for animals in need. We continue to help supply pet food to the First Unitarian Food Pantry.

In 2014-2015 we were awarded a generous grant from the Social Justice Council to support our Pets of the Homeless Project. Pets of The Homeless has since delivered more than 6,500 pounds of pet food annually as well as collars, leashes, beds and other supplies to our partner St. Martin's Hospitality Center. The City Animal Welfare Volunteers included our project in the annual citywide Holiday Pet Food Drive. We continued our partnership with St. Martin's Hospitality Center and ABQ PetCare, and expanded partnerships with VCA-Wyoming, VCA Referral Center, Aztec Animal Clinic, The Rock at Noon Day, and Animal Humane NM. Subsequently, Animal Advocates and our partners offered one large Wellness Clinic, plus monthly shot clinics sponsored by VCA-Wyoming and The Rock at Noon Day, providing city required vaccinations, check-ups, grooming and medications to over 125 pets.

Under the direction of founder Linda Bairstow, the Critter Club flourished in 2015 and continued "celebrating and respecting the awesomeness of life" for children ages six years to young adult. The Critter Club has evolved from an educational, fun, and empathetic club into a children's social justice organization. In the past we've celebrated more than 100 different animals, one per week. Now the children vote for one animal per month that could use our help. For Cat Month, we made several visits to the Fabulous Feline safe house to let kitties know they are loved, and crafted cat toys that were distributed to city shelters. For Wolves, we visited wolves and wolf dogs of Wanagi Wolf Sanctuary, and made "Wolf Spirit Sticks" as a fundraiser for them. For "People" Month in December we collected art supplies so children at New Day Youth and Family Services could make holiday gifts for one another.

Arts & Aesthetics Committee

Jane Baldwin, Chair, and Jim Middleton, Assistant Chair

Members

Bobby Jones
Bruce Little
Audrey McDonald
Neal McDonald
Jana Murphy
Sally New
Elizabeth Runyon
Eliza Schmidt
Susanne Visor
Ann Walton
Bob Wood

The Arts and Aesthetics Committee (A&A) selects and installs art exhibitions in the Social Hall for the enjoyment of members and friends. A&A also acts as a consultant regarding other aesthetics questions on campus. Key accomplishments for 2015 are:

- Staged eight exhibitions
- Juried artworks and scheduled exhibitions for 2016
- Oversaw installation of LED lights in February for the gallery space. These lights were made possible by an anonymous donation in 2014.
- Selected winner of the Eleanor Bailey Memorial Prize to one artist from the All Members Show, and one from the other 2015 exhibitions.

When possible, and desired by the exhibitor, a Mercado is held to give both members and others time to view the show, and purchase smaller items from the exhibiting artists. Most art works in the exhibition are for sale, and 30% of the sale price goes to the church's general fund. For the year 2015, the total of all sales amounted to \$7,945, with \$2,050 going to the church.

Visitors and potentially new committee members are always welcome. We meet the fourth Sunday of most months immediately following the second service. We welcome people with an

interest in art selection, or practicing artists who will devote time to hanging exhibitions, attending regular meetings, and contributing to the business of the committee.

Coffee Crew
Chris Feil

Coyote Willow Covenant of UU Pagans

Raven Wood

Coyote Willow Covenant of UU Pagans (CWCUUPS) allows UUs, Neo-Pagans and those following earth-centered spiritual paths the opportunity to pursue their individual journeys with the benefits and resources available in a church-type affiliation. We are “non-denominational” and welcome all paths and traditions.

CWCUUPS had a busy 2015. We met monthly for socializing, networking, and the planning of events. Additionally, we held eight public pagan celebrations. We also had an outreach booth at the local annual Pagan Pride Day event.

Our side project for the year was to get involved in the Habitat For Humanity Unity House build. So far, we have raised more than our pledged \$500, and will be following through with help for the actual build in 2016.

Earth Web

Earth Web can divide its activities into four areas: education, outreach, activism, and hands-on work.

Education

In January we finished up a Northwest Educational Institute (NWEI) course entitled “Seeing Systems: Peace, Justice and Sustainability,” which led us into deep discussions of how these issues are connected and how we can change our lives in meaningful ways. As a follow-up, we devoted time over the next three months to assist with Transition Albuquerque, a two-day conference held at First Unitarian, aimed at creating a more sustainable Albuquerque. We have placed a tv monitor in the hallway between the Sanctuary and Social Hall which details solar energy data from the Church solar panels.

Outreach

Our annual Earth Day Patio Fair provided offerings from garden plants, solar and water conservation information, to everything you ever wanted to know about worms (vermiculture) as a way to improve soil. In the fall, we revised the purpose of Earth Web so that it might take a more spiritual direction in line with the Seventh UU principal. As a follow-up we created a display to provide people with the opportunity to express their spiritual connection with our planet earth with words or pictures.

Activism

Members of Earth Web went to the Santa Fe rally at the Public Regulatory Commission in January and participated in the Climate March in April.

Hands-on Work

Earth Web member Virginia Burris continues to maintain and lead tours of our lovely wildlife habitat. We joined with the East Mountain Unitarian folks in the spring and fall to maintain a two-mile stretch along Highway 14. There are now two recycle bins in the Social Hall which we provided and we deliver contents to a recycling facility twice monthly.

Food Pantry

Rebecca Gracey, Chair

The Food Pantry packs 80 sacks of food each week to hand out on Wednesday afternoons. More sacks are prepared if needed since no one is turned away without getting a sack of food.

Judy McDowell is in charge of the 10 people who pack these sacks, each performing the task once per month. Each sack contains a pound of both rice and beans; a canned vegetable and a canned fruit; a snack of cookies or crackers; a box of cereal or granola bars; two “extras” such as mac and cheese, canned beans, tomatoes, or soup, tuna, or other food donated by church members; a package of bread; and a 12- or 16-ounce package of meat.

Pam Bliss coordinates the 17 people who hand out the sacks of food each Wednesday afternoon. Each person performs this job once per month.

Seven different church members donate 40 pounds of dog food and/or 30 pounds of cat food one week each month. That food is handed out to people who come for food and who have pets.

Rebecca Gracey is the Roadrunner Food Bank contact with Tom Stafford serving as her backup. She places the food order online and picks up the food on Tuesday mornings. There are four church members who assist her with the food pick-up, Tom Stafford, George Bakula, Doug Thiesen, and Don Massey.

Erika Johnson-Jimenez and her family purchase the pinto beans and rice from Costco if they aren't available at Roadrunner, repackage the beans and rice into one-pound bags, and deliver it to the church.

A total of 4,122 sacks of food were given away in 2015 with an average of 79.2 sacks per week. The average cost of a sack of food was \$3.18.

BEGINNING BALANCE: \$10,328.82

TOTAL INCOME: \$12,879.69 (from members' donations, Growers' Market, Pagan Pride, Kroger, Social Justice Council transfer from a church budget donation and Yoga Class)

TOTAL EXPENSES FOR FOOD: \$13,097.85

YEAR-END BALANCE: \$9,387.41

Forum Committee

David Colton, Chair

The Sunday Forums series was established to contribute to church members' knowledge of issues in the public and personal spheres, and to encourage actions that are aligned with our church's guiding principles. Selection and scheduling of the Forums has been handled by a Forum Committee composed of church volunteers. Members in 2015 were co-chairs Dave Colton and Jay Johnson, Jim Baten, Dorothy Reynolds, and Roy Moody.

The Committee supported 20 Forums in 2015. Topics included the New Mexico legislature, personal financial planning, and social justice topics such sanctuary, reproductive rights, transgender, and denominational affairs. Based on priorities established at the congregation's Annual Meeting, the Social Justice Council co-sponsored several Forums on homelessness as well as Forums offered by Change for the Future recipients.

In September the Forum Committee disbanded. Low attendance at several Forums, coupled with insufficient membership on the Forum Committee, indicated that the time had come to develop alternate formats for engaging congregation members' concerns about public square and personal development issues.

Video Team

The task of the First Unitarian video team is to record each Sunday first sermon and upload it or duplicate it for use by the three First Unitarian branches in Carlsbad, the East Mountains, and Socorro, for online viewing, and for use by subscribers to the church's sermons. In addition, the video of each Sunday service is transmitted live to the Sanctuary foyer and the church's Family Room.

The all-volunteer team managed to record and send all of the sermons for the year to the branches in the East Mountains, Carlsbad, and Socorro. In addition, we provided live video of the total service to the Sanctuary foyer and Family Room. As the year comes to a close, the team has submitted bids for purchase of updated video equipment with the funds that were set aside during the new Sanctuary construction. Installation of the new equipment should be accomplished early in the new year. The new equipment should provide a much higher resolution picture to all of our viewers and be much more reliable than the old equipment, some of which is more than eight years old. Also, we hope to greatly simplify the recording and uploading process to make it easier for the video volunteers. The team has recruited several new members including two youth from La Amikoj. We hope in the coming year to add more volunteers to the team so we can provide total video coverage during both Sunday services and provide more scheduling flexibility to the volunteers.

RE Council

Carolyn Riggs, Chair

Members

Carol Cowan (August 2017)
Geri Knoebel (August 2017; President starting January 2016)
Nicia Rae (August 2017)
Desiree Spielman (August 2017)
Benita Terrell (August 2017)

Ex-Officio Members

James Galasinski, Youth Coordinator and Ministerial Resident
The Rev. Angela Herrera
Mia Noren, DRE

Outgoing Members

Kim Boutillier (resigned December 2015)
Micah Boutillier (resigned December 2015)
Heather Clark (term completed August 2015)
Erika Johnson-Jimenez (resigned November 2015)
Carolyn Riggs (term completed December 2015)
Brian Tankersley (resigned June 2015)

The Religious Education Council (REC) had numerous member changes and multiple opportunities to reflect and transform in 2015. We continued using action teams to support specific RE tasks and programs for the first half of the year. Then through workshop and mini-retreat opportunities adopted a portfolio model with specific portfolio jobs such as President, Secretary, Curriculum Team Lead, and Program Evaluation Team Lead. This new model and members taking these jobs has continued to change and adjust over the second half of the year. The REC intends to see all portfolio jobs filled and functioning in 2016. The REC plans to have a full retreat in 2016. The REC has grown in its understanding and knowledge of our RE program, our church, and our denomination's RE history, training, and resources through written and verbal reports from the DRE, Youth Program Coordinator, and Minister. Their commitment and involvement with the REC has been vital to our growth, direction, and accomplishments.

The REC supported and assisted RE staff with many projects and programs this year including the children's choir, youth choir, OWL (7-8th grade class) held in Spring 2015, teacher recruitment and training materials, UU Kids camp, RE volunteer appreciation events, and an extensive curriculum report and materials. We also continued to monitor and collaborate on RE policies and decisions including curriculum choices, classroom age divisions, RE calendar, playground rules, Youth Advisor policy and training, and La Amikoj Scholarship policy.

SipNSup

Pat Diem & Torre Near, 2015 Coordinators

SipNSup is a social program that arranges monthly dinners in member homes for the purpose of getting to know each better in a small group social culinary setting. Dinners are normally eight people and are arranged for the first Saturday evening during the months of October through June. Members are assigned a menu item to share at the dinner.

SipNSup currently has 76 members made up of both couples and singles who are invited by email monthly to dinners in member homes on the first Saturday of the month. Members share responsibilities for food preparation and hosting. In total for 2015, SipNSuppers hosted nine dinners attended by approximately 270 members with an average of 24-30 people attending each dinner. Efforts are made to schedule dinners so that people meet new people throughout the year.

During the year there are new SNS members each month that asked to be added to the member list.

Social Justice Council

Members

George Bakula
Nancy Carrillo
Jon Ellig
Lisa Goldman
Cristy Holden
Nancy Kilpatrick
Dorothy Reynolds
Sara Stevens-Miles
Jane Ronca-Washburn
Peggy Whitmore

The mission of the social justice council has been to promote and support social justice causes within the church and congregation. This year the council has concentrated on communicating with the congregation about the activities within the church (ESL tutoring, food pantry, etc) and in June we ended a two-year campaign to bring to the attention of church members the issues facing the homeless in Albuquerque.

Since the summer we have teamed with the Albuquerque Interfaith initiative to receive training in conducting one-on-one conversations and house meetings. We used this format to enter into dialogue with the congregation through Taking Action Forums, concerning justice issues which are personally impacting our lives. Our goal was to use this process and information to support the Albuquerque Interfaith group and the First UU Strategic Planning process to make a selection of a church/city focus for right action. Response to the forums was limited (14 participants over five sessions), so using this process may not be the best way to engage the congregation in making this kind of decision.

The Change for the Future program continues to be a strong component of giving in our congregation and John Ellig is to be thanked for keeping this program viable over many years. He is stepping down from the council and the task is being handed over to a new team.

Our newest initiative is Family Promise, a program which would have us housing homeless families in our church for four weeks a year (one week every three months). A dedicated team researched the project pros and cons and made a favorable recommendation to the congregation in early December. Look for more on this program in 2016.

With support from many congregation volunteers we hosted a very successful fundraiser (\$10,000+) and have been able, once again, to support youth from the church in participating in UUSC College of Social Justice retreats.

In the past few months we have faced challenges in keeping our membership at the desired nine, and have spent some considerable time pondering if the current configuration is the most appropriate one. Church members gladly give time and money to a specific project, but there seems to be less interest in global oversight and administrative duties associated with the current structure of the SJC. We are open to your suggestions and ideas– and new members! We have five open positions as of January 2016.

Adult English as a Second Language

Connie Molecke, Program Director

Instructors

Beverly and Hal Jackson
Barbara Adkins
Marion Ammerman
Ursula Biggers (sub)
Odile de La Beaujardiere (sub)
Bonnie Chavez (sub)
Greg Gardner
Kate Harrington
Amanda Hurford
Cathy Intemann
Christies McAuley (sub)
Beatrice Mitchell (sub)
Connie Molecke

Child Minders

Lora Green
Emma Kochenderfer
Stephanie Reich
Tashara Stout

The Adult ESL program began fall term 2009 with five students under the helm of Ursula Biggers. In the fall of 2014 and spring of 2015, it was directed by Sandra Bruce. In the fall of 2015, Connie Molecke started as director.

Our program has grown each year with adult students from the neighborhoods that populate NE Albuquerque. Our classes meet on Monday evenings from 6:30–8:00 pm for 13 weeks in the spring and the fall. Each instructor prepares a lesson plan to develop skills in reading, writing, listening, and speaking comprehension. We also have had a class as needed to assist students with the US Citizenship Test. With only two exceptions, all of our students come from Mexico and Central America. We consistently had 15 students spring and fall terms in 2015, with an average of eight children per week in our child care. Volunteers attend meetings and training sessions to improve and share teaching ESL experience.

While our ESL instructors work solely on a volunteer basis, our child minders are hourly employees, have been fully vetted with background checks, and are certified in first aid. While our child minders remain our largest program expense, we have learned over the years that our child care services are instrumental in allowing parents to attend Adult ESL, and we could not draw in the students that we do if we did not have this service.

Our most successful improvement this year has been implementing an attendance policy whereby students sign a contract at the beginning of the term stating that they will miss no more than three classes per term. If the student attends four classes in a row, they receive a \$5 Wal-Mart gift card. This policy has helped curb episodic attendees, making each class more consistent for both the students and the instructors.

2015 brought challenges and innovations. We would like to implement the use of internet technology through tablets that have been funded through a church RFP. We have had some problems with getting consistent internet connections in the RE building. We hope that we can improve the use of tablets to expose our students to multiple modes of learning, different aspects of English language life (including accents, lifestyles, cultures, and values), and reach out to a younger demographic that is tech-savvy and eager to use technology in their language acquisition. For example, accessing social media sites (Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Wiki, etc.) will encourage students to use their language skills in an immediate, real-world context.

We continue to receive funding from the Sunday collection plate, personal donations, and sales from church functions. We are extremely grateful to everyone that supports our program in time, money, energy, and ideas, and we look forward to continuing this valuable program for many years to come.

After School Tutoring Program

Carol Oslund, Chair

The After School Tutoring Program continues its mission of providing one-to-one tutoring, PE, and art and enrichment activities to at-risk children who live in the neighborhood of the Church. The second through fifth grade students come from Montezuma School and are referred by their classroom teachers. All are in the Bilingual program. Tutoring is offered Mondays and Wednesdays from mid-September through April.

This year we have increased our enrollment from 18 to 20 children, 12 of whom were previously enrolled. We welcomed six new second grade students, one new third grader and one new fourth grader. We have started a Wednesday program for four first-grade students who are siblings of the regular students. With these students the focus is on learning English and beginning reading in English.

Students are using the new iPads purchased with grant money from the Social Justice Council. Two volunteers help students and their tutors learn to use the technology and to create special projects of interest to the individual students.

We continue to celebrate at the Christmas holiday and at the end of the tutoring year by holding potluck dinners in the Social Hall for tutors, students and their families, and teachers from Montezuma.

At both of these events, each child receives a book which is at his or her reading level. A field trip to Explora was taken in April.

The ASTP is guided by a Steering Committee of six and powered by the love and devotion of 34 amazing volunteers.

Expenses for 2015 amounted to \$2,052.00

Covenant Groups

Martha Beyerlein, Chair

Steering Committee

Lea Ann Boone
Nancy Cushman
Alicia Hawkins
Bethe Orrell

Covenant groups provide a place of spiritual intimacy where deep connections can develop with other UU members. This year the program has six groups with 60 members.

Groups of up to 10 members meet 14 times (October–April) to discuss topics of faith and spirituality. Members share their life stories, bonding at deep levels. They also explore and share thoughts, feelings, and questions about life issues and the spiritual journey. Some of the topics this year: Authenticity, Parenting, Vulnerability, Expectations, and Books and Reading.

We are grateful for our talented facilitators: Nancy Cushman, Lea Ann Boone, Alicia Hawkins, Virginia Rawlojohn, Bethe Orrell, Kathi Foy, Martha Beyerlein, Heather Clark, Shirley Williams, Kelly Cole, and Torre Near.

Bethe Orrell, Lea Ann Boone, and Alicia Hawkins led the writers group that created materials for each topic. Writers included: Kelly Cole, Jenn Gable, Mary Morell, Mary Schwartz, Lucy Silva, Nina Stephenson, Claudia Struempel, and Jane Winkler.

Economic Reform Advocacy Group (ERAG)
Bob Riley, Chair

Landscape Committee

Nancy Cushman, Chair

Steering Committee

Virginia Burris
Hans-Peter Dumm
Martha Kettle
Scott Lake
Angela Merkert
Kurt Robertson
Jerry Shelton
Steve Phillips
Ed Wallhagen
Barbara Winter

The church's landscaped grounds are an important part of congregational life, providing beauty and shade and places for conversation, play, ritual, and rest; serving as an expression of our congregation's values and mission; and offering a pleasant haven for the general public passing through. The landscape committee is charged to work as a team, considering the campus as one whole, with the understanding that the campus is made up of distinct areas that serve different functions.

All areas of campus should reflect the congregation's environmentalist values (as represented in the UUA's seventh principle) as much as possible. The committee will ensure that all areas are tended in one way or another, and alert staff members and/or the church board as needed when issues arise. The Landscape Committee also maintains the irrigation systems on the campus to the best of their abilities.

This year was one of maintenance and working to identify existing problems that are beyond the committee's budget to fix. Work needs to be done to repair the cement in the Memorial Garden and to level the patio in the Habitat. We hope to create a meditation circle in the area to the south of the playground. We added two benches to the Habitat and plants to the meadows.

We added two new members to our committee; we need one more person ensure that all areas are under the auspices of one of our members.

Worship Team