



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST  
COMMUNITY CHURCH  
*of Santa Monica*



**REPORT ON PROGRAMS**

**Fiscal Year**

**July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014**

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# REPORT ON PROGRAMS

# 2013-14

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## LEADERSHIP

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### 2013-2014

President .....	Cynthia Cottam
Vice President.....	Barbara Gibbs
Secretary.....	Rob Briner
Treasurer.....	Kit Shaw
Past President .....	Bronwen Jones
Member at Large .....	Pat Gomez
Member at Large .....	Rebecca Crawford
Member at Large .....	Bruno Lacombe/Emily Hero
Member at Large .....	Vilma Ortiz

#### 2014-2015

President .....	Patricia Wright
Vice President.....	Barbara Gibbs
Secretary.....	Leonard Cachola
Treasurer.....	Kit Shaw
Past President .....	Cynthia Cottam
Member at Large .....	Pat Gomez
Member at Large .....	Rebecca Crawford
Member at Large .....	Emily Hero
Member at Large .....	Beth Brownlie

### STAFF

Minister .....	Rev. Rebecca Benefiel Bijur
Minister Emeritus .....	Rev. Ernie Pipes
Director of Religious Exploration .....	Catherine Farmer Loya
Church Administrator .....	Nurit Gordon
Admin & Finance Assistant .....	Nancy Thompson
Ministry and Office Assistant .....	Robin Wohlman (temp)
Director of Music .....	DeReau Farrar
Church Accompanist .....	Daniel Gledhill
Weekday Sexton.....	Kevin Roller
Sunday and Rental Sexton.....	Thomas Ahern
Preschool Teacher .....	Roxanne Coleman-Bell
Sunday Nursery Teacher.....	ZaNyaa Lee

### NOMINATING COMMITTEE

#### 2013-2014

Jerry Gates
Teri Bond
Phyllis Kory
Stephen Young
Katie Malich
Gretchen Goetz

#### 2014-2015

Jerry Gates
Teri Bond
Stephen Young
Gretchen Goetz
Wendi Gladstone
Beth Rendeiro

## MEMBERSHIP

*To become a member of the Church a person shall:*

- Sign a statement of intent to participate as a member in the community life of the Church.
- Reside within the Pacific Southwest District (PSWD) of the Unitarian Universalist Association.
- Be at least 16 years of age or have successfully completed the Church's Coming of Age Program.
- Make a financial contribution of record, or a pledge to do so, to the Church.

Anyone who has been a member of the Church for 40 days is eligible to vote at church business meetings.

Written resignation, failure to make a financial contribution, or moving away from the PSWD area, causes membership to be discontinued.

A "Friend" plays an active role in our community, supports the Church financially, but has chosen not to assume official church membership.

## UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION (UUA)

This church is a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association, a voluntary association of autonomous, self-governing local churches and fellowships, and of the Pacific Southwest District of that association. Information and contact with UUA offices and resources can be obtained at [www.uua.org](http://www.uua.org).



## REPORT ON MINISTRY UU COMMUNITY CHURCH OF SANTA MONICA

Rev. Rebecca Benefiel Bijur

*Break not the circle of enabling love  
where people grow, forgiven and forgiving,  
break not that circle, make it wider still,  
till it includes, embraces all the living.*

— #323 Break Not the Circle, Singing the Living Tradition

With joy, I officiated for the commitment ceremony for Carol-Jean Teuffel and Sam Carr Polk, who invited a barbershop quartet to serenade us during the service. With sadness, we mourned the death of Marc Willet, son of Felicity Nussbaum and John Agnew, gone much too soon.

This year we opened the sanctuary as a space for reflection and comfort in response to the Boston Marathon bombings, gun violence in our city in which five people were killed, and to remember Judy Federick on the first anniversary of her death. During our fall “Care-a-thon,” the Committee on Ministry and CareNet reached out to reconnect with about 50 less active members in our community, to complement the church’s many other outreach efforts. We added a new family-friendly Christmas Eve service and were selected by the Unitarian Universalist Association to receive \$7,500 in grant funding to become a Teaching Congregation. Thanks to this funding, as well as the leadership commitment of our Board of Directors and newly convened Intern Committee, we will welcome an Intern Minister, Nica Eaton-Guinn, in August 2014.

In December, eleven leaders from our congregation joined me to tour OPCC (Ocean Park Community Center), a leading provider of social services for homeless and vulnerable people in Santa Monica. From July 1 to March 30, we sent over \$10,750 -- 50% of our non-pledge offering for every Sunday this year, and 100% of

our Christmas Eve offering for three services-- to the following organizations:

Step Up On Second, Camp De Benneville Pines, Clergy And Laity United For Economic Justice (CLUE-LA), Para los Niños, Incarcerated Students Textbook Fund (Coastline Community College), The Trevor Project, Our House Grief Support Center, Westside Food Bank, UU Service Committee, Unitarian Universalist Association-UU Service Committee Philippines Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda Relief Fund, Simms-Mann/Ucla Oncology Center, OPCC (Ocean Park Community Center), Turning Point, Homeboy Industries, LA GOAL: Providing Services To Adults With Developmental Disabilities, And The Chalice Oak Foundation.

I am so proud of these gifts, and of our congregation’s leadership in choosing to give away more and more of our Sunday offering to organizations doing work we could not do on our own.

This year, we welcomed Catherine Farmer Loya back from her family leave, bid farewell to Dr. Irene Gregorio-Stoup, and added Daniel Gledhill to our worship and music team as our Church Accompanist. Thank you to Rima Snyder for her years of assistance in the office; as of this writing we are still interviewing for a new staff member in this position.

A focus of leadership over the past year has been sharing our dreams and hopes for our church home through our visioning process, as well as continuing to develop our campus with much-needed office renovation and facility development projects. It is with deep admiration that I particularly thank our outgoing President, Cynthia Cottam, for her partnership and faith in these projects and in our shared ministry.

## PRESIDENT’S REPORT

Cynthia Cottam

The Board started out the year with a retreat in July, facilitated by Rev. Jim Grant. We reviewed our goals from the previous year: 1) promote good relationships, and create a congregational covenant 2) assist the congregation in creating a program of leadership development 3) assist the congregation in supporting lay ministry. We agreed that we are still committed to these goals, but have made only partial strides in achieving them. We then embarked on a day of exercises, reflections and discussions to help us understand our vision for the church, since we were about to embark on a visioning process for the congregation. At the end, forced to come up with one phrase or sentence that expressed our vision, we agreed on: Welcoming Community. Uplifting Worship.

In the fall, the Board led a visioning process for the entire congregation. We held nine meetings at church and in members’ homes, involving about 85 people, including church staff. We created questions based on the work of the Long Range Planning Committee. They involved Depth (the inner dimension—an individual’s personal spiritual depth), Breadth (caring for others—reaching outward to others within our community) and Height (reaching beyond our community). We also asked how people see themselves in the church in 3, 10 and 30 years. Many interesting ideas came out of these meetings. No single compelling issue was identified. A Report on Visioning was created in December, and a Town Hall meeting was held to discuss the report on February 23, 2014 with attendance by approximately 65 people. At the

meeting several causes were championed: support for the UU Justice Ministry; an elevator for Forbes Hall; the establishment of an endowment; an increase in the minister's equity sharing fund to facilitate the minister's ability to purchase a home; support for Interweave activities; the creation of a Committee on Money to research and consider the best use of our bequests and determine long range financial policies.

Several leadership development issues confronted leadership during the fall and winter, and they all had happy outcomes. A new Hospitality Committee was created, chaired by Debbie Menzies and Sheila Cummins. Rev. Bijur recruited a FUNdraising (pledge/stewardship) committee in the fall, which embraced its task with enthusiasm and came very close to meeting its \$410,000 goal, in addition to introducing us to the joys of Spa Day. Although our past Dining for Dollars chair was not able to serve again this year, several new members stepped forward to join the Committee in January. We pushed the date back one month, and this committee struggled on through injuries, computer glitches and other organizing nightmares to a successful conclusion. It was heartwarming for your president to witness these extraordinary efforts.

We made significant progress finalizing the receipt of the large bequests from Andrew Still and Judy Federick. Receiving money is more difficult work than you might imagine. The Andrew Still bequest is now final. Thank you to Joe Engleman for serving as the administrator for this estate. He put in many hours of work, some of which was emotionally challenging. Drew Still's gift to the church totaled about \$615,000. The negotiations for Judy Federick's estate are also nearing a close. Thank you to Valeo Schultz for providing a complicated professional appraisal and to Robert Kory, who has been managing the legal negotiations for the past year and a half. We are all indebted to these people, and to Drew and Judy, who graced our lives when they were among us, and who have given us incredible possibilities.

We supervised two building projects, which are nearing completion. We have remodeled the offices, rebuilt the outer office wall, improved the structural integrity of the inner office/south sanctuary wall, and replaced the perimeter ivy wall with a new pergola wall, which will enclose our memorial garden. We have replaced the windows in the sanctuary and offices, and remodeled the foyer and minister's bathrooms. We have replaced office electrical wiring and lighting. We also have provided Wi-Fi to all of Forbes Hall. These projects will be discussed in detail at the Annual Meeting. See also the report of the Facilities Development Committee, which provided the oversight for these building projects.

As your president, I have worked closely with our staff to facilitate the day to day functioning of the church. I have found them all to be good natured, hard working, helpful, committed and generally nice people to be around. We are very fortunate to have them on our team.

This present Board stayed intact for almost two years, which is unusual, and allowed us to develop a comfortable way of working together. I am very proud of what we have been able to accomplish together. In January, Bruno Lacombe resigned to devote his energies to caring for his own family. Emily Hero was appointed by the nominating committee to replace him. Bruno was always able to remind us of our loving, spiritual mission. Emily has been a joy, providing a cheerful, interested outlook and a youthful perspective. Kit Shaw's daughter experienced a serious accident in February

and she has been out of town much of the time since then. In spite of this, she is tending to her responsibilities as treasurer and plans to continue on next year. Alan Brunell has generously served as acting treasurer to provide continuity and support during the busy and stressful budgeting season. Rob Briner, our faithful secretary, has retired from his job and moved to Anaheim Hills to be with his elderly father. He plans to still be among us for weekly services. Vilma Ortiz has completed her four years and will be stepping down. Vilma has contributed greatly to the success of the building program. She is a passionate and thoughtful defender of her ideas and has served her church with integrity. Bronwen Jones finally gets to retire. She has served the Board for many years, served as President and now as past president for two years. During the first year she also functioned as secretary. During her second year, she has written the Splinters from the Board column for the newsletter. She has been remarkably faithful and gracious throughout, despite her increasing obligations at work. In addition, she sometimes makes beautiful music for us. And what about the dedicated people who are staying on? Rebecca Crawford's participation is informed by rich knowledge of church history, including church financial history and years of involvement with the music program. Pat Gomez put in an incredible number of hours working on Dining for Dollars as well as on the Board, and has had to do it all on crutches. Barbara Gibbs has been my Vice President. She also wears many other hats and helps me out with all sorts of arrangements; most of all, I really appreciate the support she has given me throughout the past two years.

I am grateful to all these people. It has been a pleasure to work with them.



## VISIONING REPORT SUMMARY

*Cynthia Cottam*

Last fall, your Board of Directors asked you to come and share your ideas for that big picture future, based on questions developed with the help of the Long Range Planning Committee. About 85 of you were able to come and talk at 9 meetings that were held at church, in members' homes and with the church staff.

The first visioning question was about the inner dimension, the depth of our relationship with ourselves and what we most long for.

Most of us talked about Sunday morning when considering this question, saying that the reason we come to church is to be here on Sundays—to experience, in one way or another, everything that happens here at that time, from worship to music, to RE, to art, to fellowship, to committee meetings. Although we do not agree on all the details, most of us find sustenance in the Sunday service.

The second visioning question was about breadth: reaching out to others within our community. To answer this question, we spoke about how much we enjoy our many community groups, including Second Sunday Supper and Small Group Ministry. We also believe we would enjoy having more groups. In fact, this question stimulated a lot of constructive criticism, including the following concerns:

- We believe this organization should do more to involve people more deeply and should reach out especially to newer people.
- We want to do a better job of caring for one another, especially our seniors and young adults.
- Criticism and a rush to judgment are sometimes a problem within our community, and we want to move towards a more intentional way of dealing with conflict.

The meetings also raised many ideas for addressing these concerns, such as technology and staffing. Since the meetings, we have hired a new web developer to make our website more snappy and fix the calendar. We have also installed the wiring to make the internet available throughout Forbes Hall.

Another solution mentioned repeatedly is to hire another staff person: a coordinator of congregational life perhaps, a volunteer organizer, or a person to help organize social justice work and to encourage more of us to be involved. Your Board and Minister found this suggestion particularly compelling.

The third visioning question was about height, reaching upward beyond our community.

In general, we are happy about this outreach, especially Faith in Action. We are proud to give away 50% of our Sunday collection, and many of us would like to give more. We appreciate the UUA and the Pacific Southwest District. Many people mentioned the desire to move the congregational dues we pay to the UUA and the District closer to what they consider our fair share. Both of these ideas are reflected in the draft of the budget we are now working on.

We would like to increase the inclusivity and diversity of our congregation. We would like to have more of an outreach to campus ministry, such as the UCLA group we started last year. We want more people to know who we are in the community, and we want more people to get involved in our church.

The fourth visioning question was about what that church will be like in five, ten and thirty years. Most of us connected this to a need to talk about bequests, planned giving, and memorial opportunities, so that we can be remembered when we are gone.

Generally speaking, however, when we look into the future, we see a healthy and growing congregation, which is practicing effective ministry to all ages.

As you can see, in the visioning meetings we talked about the vibrant, vital community we are. No single compelling issue and no clear path to our big picture future came out of these meetings. This is actually a good sign, in that it means that there is no critical area that demands our immediate attention.

Nonetheless, in order to move forward, we now need to hone in on a few good ideas for shaping our future. We can't do everything, but that shouldn't stop us from doing at least a few of the most compelling and inspirational things we want to do together.

## FINANCE COMMITTEE

*Kit Shaw*

Discussion of Current Financial Results (as of March 2014) and Next Fiscal Year Budget (July 2014-June 2015)

At the last annual meeting, the congregation approved a deficit budget of -\$25,407 for the July 2013-June 2014 fiscal year. Expenses for the current fiscal year have remained largely as budgeted. However, projected income is approximately \$26,000 short, predominantly due to 2013 pledges that have not been fulfilled. As of this writing (accounting ending March 2014), the actual deficit stands at -\$9746. It is anticipated that we will see the deficit increase to the projected -\$25,000, as pledge income tends to be lower in May and June (the last 2 months remaining in the current fiscal year).

The Fundraising Committee, co-chaired by Teri Bond and Lucy Hahn, continue to work hard to meet their 2014 pledge goal of \$410,000. The work of the Fundraising Committee is essential for the finances of the church, since the operating budget is built around pledge income, which in past years has accounted for 77-80% of total income.

For the upcoming fiscal year (2014-2015), the Finance Committee presented to the board a large deficit budget that is anticipated to be -\$70,000. The Finance Committee took into consideration recommendations from Personnel, Religious Exploration, and Facilities and Development Committees and the Music Director in the budget development process. The committee felt that all requests were reasonable to maintain the current quality of programs, and given the current financial stability of the church, it was difficult not to approve the requests. However, approving all requests has resulted in a very large deficit budget for the 2014-2015 fiscal year. The Finance Committee emphasizes to the congregation that because pledges represent a majority of church income, future pledges need to increase significantly in order to support and sustain the current quality of programs. To continue with large deficit budgets will not be sustainable year after year. Expense increases in the 2014-2015 budget are due to the following: merit and cost-of-living increases for the minister and staff (salaries and compensation continue to represent the majority of the church's operating budget), additional funds to the Generous Congregation program (moving from 50% to 60% of non-pledged contributions at Sunday services), an increase in the church's dues to Congregational affairs (UUA and PSWD) to move towards "fair share" guidelines, increased funds for development and maintenance of the church's

website, support for an internship minister, and more frequent cleaning of church facilities due to increase in rentals of church space.

The church, overall, remains on good financial standing due to large bequests that have recently been received. Over \$600,000 was received from Andrew Still's estate from 2013-2014. An initial \$210,000 sum was designated for building projects, of which \$200,000 was approved by the congregation at last year's annual meeting for renovation of the office space and upgrade of the electrical and lighting system in the sanctuary. (An update of building projects will be given in a separate presentation at the annual meeting.) Another \$134,000 was received from Judy Federick's Estate in 2013; additionally, the church owns 17% of property that was passed to Judy through Jim Weinberg's estate. The selling of the church's interest in this property is currently under negotiations. Because of this largess (and year after year budget deficits), the Finance Committee recommended to the board that a Committee on Money should be established, who would research and recommend how to deal with future budget deficits, what percentage of unrestricted reserves can prudently be used each year for operations, and consider other uses of the reserves, including consideration of the establishment of an endowment fund. The Finance Committee also recommended to the board, consideration of establishing a Facility Upgrade Fund, which would contain designated funds for building updates, and thus move the facility maintenance line item out of the operating budget.

## THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

*Denise Helton*

The Personnel Committee met on a regular basis throughout the past year to address the personnel issues and challenges that arose. On the administrative front, it was a stable year with only one open position. Rima Snyder left her assistant position in January 2014 and a part-time temporary employee has been providing administrative support since then; we are currently finalizing the recruitment for the position. Also, we recently finalized the successful hiring of Danny Gledhill as our permanent Accompanist. Danny has served in an interim capacity since October 2013 when Dr. Irene Gregorio-Stoup left her position as Associate Director of Music.

The Church sought consultation with an employment attorney in late 2013 to gain clarification about some long standing employment practices and to ensure that the personnel policies we had in place were up to date and legal. A few recommendations came out of the consultation: 1) some changes to our Personnel Policy Manual (PPM) and 2) changing the employment status of several employees from exempt (salaried) to non-exempt (hourly). We are currently in the process of reviewing the recommended edits to the PPM and implementing the recommendations for changes regarding the exempt vs. non-exempt employment status of some employees.

Throughout, we have worked closely with Reverend Bijur on all employment-related issues as they arose, with a commitment to fairness, clarity and standardization regarding policies and procedures. As the year comes to a close, our committee

comprises the following members: Garland Alan, Barbara Kernochan, and Denise Helton, who serves as Chair. Rob Briner, who was an active participant on our committee for several years, ended his work with us in March 2014.

## DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION (DRE)

*Catherine Farmer Loya*

What a year we have had, with many new beginnings and opportunities to grow. In the 2013-14 program year, we've experimented with a multiage Children's Chapel program while waiting to reclaim classroom space upon completion of the office renovation, engaged in our monthly ministry themes, offered our first-ever Valentine's Day intergenerational service, put our principles into action with social justice projects serving our own church community, those in need in our wider Santa Monica community, and the earth we share with all living things, are experimenting with a new format for Coming of Age Sunday, are preparing to send our high school youth on their first-ever international service trip to build homes in Mexico this June, and much more. I am grateful to the more than 40 members of our UCCSM community who volunteer their time and passion to make our programs possible, particularly in this year of transition in my own life with the arrival of my son last spring. The Lifespan RE Committee and I are also very excited about our plans we're working on for next year's program: for the first time next year, all of the Sunday morning RE programs we offer from kindergarten through high school will be developed right here at UCCSM. Our K-2nd class will be exploring sacred stories from many faiths with lessons developed by Sabina Mayo-Smith and myself. We are excited to announce the return of the science-based UUniverse Story curriculum developed by Ian Dodd and Margot Page for 3rd-5th graders. We will also be launching the successor to the Neighboring Faiths curriculum, called Interfaith Quest, for 6th-7th graders, developed by Nalani Santiago-Kalmanson, Sabina Mayo-Smith and myself. And we will continue offering our highly successful UCCSM Coming of Age and YRUU programs for youth.

My role in Sunday morning worship this year included collaboration with Rev. Bijur on Intergenerational services for Ingathering, Day of the Dead, the Winter Pageant and Valentine's Day, a new family-focused Christmas Eve service as well as our traditional 6pm service, and offering an adult worship service in April while Rebecca visited RE classes. I have enjoyed the opportunity to spend some time in worship with the full congregation, and look forward to more opportunities to do so in future years. In June we'll celebrate LRE Sunday with participation from all children and youth classes, reflections from participants in our adult programs, and a recognition of all of the volunteers who make our lifespan RE programs possible.

This year, 124 children and youth enrolled in our Sunday morning RE programs, led by 26 teachers/advisors, 2 staff members (nursery and preschool) and many additional volunteer assistants and helpers. For more details about Sunday morning RE classes for children and youth as well as our adult programs offered, see the Lifespan RE Committee report.

Our Whole Lives is a very important element of our educational



ministry, and I am very proud that we are a congregation that offers five levels of the O.W.L. lifespan sexuality education program! This is thanks to the long-term dedication and organization of O.W.L. coordinator Beth Rendeiro. This year, we offered 5th-6th Grade O.W.L., Kindergarten-1st Grade O.W.L., and Adult O.W.L. These classes call for a special commitment of time from teachers, participants and their families. Next year, we will offer the 8th-9th (Jr. High) and 10th-12th (Sr. High) O.W.L. classes.

I am so grateful to many UCCSM members who provide support for our lifespan RE programs. It is a gift to serve as the Director of Religious Education in a congregation that is so vibrant, and so willing to try new things. I look forward to many more years of celebrating “being you and being UU” together.

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE

*Members: Jerry Gates, Chair, Teri Bond, Gretchen Goetz, Phyllis Kory, Katie Malich, and Stephen Young*

**Role:** The Nominating Committee shall nominate one or more candidates for each position to be filled by election at the next Annual Meeting. This includes the Officers, two members-at-large of the Board, and two members of the Nominating Committee, plus any elective positions in which a vacancy occurred during the previous year. The Committee shall submit its list of nominees to the Board at a Board meeting held at least thirty-one days before the Annual Meeting.

The final ballot shall include nominations by petition of ten or more voting members, submitted to the Board and validated by the First Vice-President.

The final ballot shall include a list of all offices for which elections are to be held, and an alphabetical list of all candidates for each office. The ballot shall provide an opportunity to cast an explicit ‘nay’ vote against any candidate running unopposed.

Meetings: July and November, 2013; January and March, 2014

### BOARD NOMINATIONS

Officers:

President	Patricia Wright	First term
Vice President	Barbara Gibbs	Third term
Secretary	Leonard Cachola	First term
Treasurer	Kit Shaw	Third term
Past President:	Cynthia Cottam	No vote required

### MEMBER-AT-LARGE:

Pat Gomez	2nd year of second term	No vote required
Emily Hero	Appointed to fill a vacated position.	One year term expiring in 2015
Rebecca Crawford	Second term	
Beth Brownlie-Oakes	First term	

### NOMINATING COMMITTEE NOMINATIONS

Wendi Gladstone	Three year term	
Beth Rendeiro	Three year term	
Teri Bond	Continuing (2nd year)	No vote required
Gretchen Goetz	Continuing (2nd year)	No vote required
Jerry Gates	Continuing (3rd & last year)	No vote required
Steve Young	Continuing (3rd & last year)	No vote required

## FAITH IN ACTION COMMISSION (FIA)

*Rick Rhoads and James Witker, Co-chairs*

My 3-year term as chair of FIA ended in 2013 and I’m pleased to report that James Witker and I are now co-chairs for the next three years. FIA is an umbrella that covers the Peace & Social Justice Committee (PSJ), the Hunger Task Force, Green Living, and Interweave—so please read their reports.

In addition to what the committees do on their own, FIA

- Coordinates the annual FIA Art Wall in Forbes Hall, which in 2014 was in April. A worker from the Santa Monica DoubleTree Hotel (see the PSJ report) spoke at the closing reception (“de-ception?”).
- Keeps the congregation informed of our activities through articles in the church newsletter identified by the FIA logo.
- Staffs the FIA table in Forbes Hall after almost all services, to provide a focal point for informing and involving people in our activities.
- Sponsors or co-sponsors activities that make our church a community center in the struggle for social justice. For example, in January 2013, 160 people crowded into Forbes Hall to see The House I Live In, about the failure of the drug war in the US and the mass incarceration it has abetted. This was co-sponsored with our PSJ and the Church in Ocean Park’s Committee for Racial Justice.
- Brings awareness of social justice activities, and opportunities to be involved, to youth in our YRUU program, .
- Allocates the funds we raise and receive. We are grateful to have been granted some funds from the church’s general budget for Fiscal 2013 and 2014.



## ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Nurit Gordon, Church Administrator

This past year, the office was functioning from its temporary location at the cottage. We moved ourselves and our belongings into the NE and SE rooms in the cottage, Rebecca moved to Forbes 3 and what we initially thought would be two months work, turned out to be ten months of labor due to unanticipated changes that had to be done once the wall was prepared for the windows installation and we discovered damage and rot. We managed things so that office work and church activities were not interrupted and we juggled around the rental groups to accommodate everybody.

We moved back into the beautifully renovated offices in March 2014. The credit for this amazing work all goes to the Facility and Design Committee, especially to Beth Brownlie-Oakes who dedicated days and hours of her time to make it all happen.

The past FY ended with a higher net-income than anticipated due to lower expenses and increased rental income.

Our rentals to groups and private events increased significantly this year. We currently accommodate 24 rental groups per week, mostly 12-step groups.

Our rental income has increased in the past three years from \$20,251 in in 2011-12, \$33,780 in 2012-13 and is currently at \$40,871 in 2013-14. We try to accommodate as many groups as possible as long as there are no conflicts with church activities

This year we opened an account with Self Help Credit Union Bank, where we keep some of our CD's. This Credit Union's mission is to create and protect ownership and economic opportunity for all, especially people of color, women, rural residents and low wealth families and communities.

We have received the total of \$615,434 from the Andrew Still estate. Joe Engleman was the estate's executor. We also received many books and CD's from Drew's estate, some of which were kept in our library and the others sold, with the proceeds being deposited in the Book Fund.

The Financial review this year was conducted by Melanie Sharp, Karen Patch, Carol Ring and Joyce Holmen. The Committee went through all the financial documents; accounts payables, receivables, financial reports, personnel information and all other finance related items to ensure that everything was in order.

This year we had a few changes in personnel. Dr. Irene Gregorio-Stoup, our past Associate DOM and Catherine, our DRE were both on maternity leave at the beginning of the fiscal year. Emmalinda MacLean was the interim DRE while Catherine was away and we had different substitutes for Irene.

Dr. Irene Gregorio-Stoup, Associate DOM and Rima Snyder, our Ministry and Office Assistant both resigned this year. Daniel Gledhill was hired to replace Irene and he is our new Church Accompanist. As I write this report, we are in the process of hiring a Communications and Volunteers Coordinator, which is the position to replace the Ministry and Office Assistant and which will concentrate on improving and enhancing our communications through the announcements and other media. We currently have a temporary employee filling this position.

We hired the services of a labor law lawyer who has been helping us to clarify positions status and review our Employee Manual. I participated in a couple of conference calls with the lawyer and Rebecca has been in touch with him via email as well.

Our lease with Ricoh expired this year and we signed a new lease for a new and more efficient copier at a reduced rate.

The Website Committee interviewed numerous candidates for the position of Website Developer and Peggy O'Connor was hired after numerous interviews and review of her work. Peggy will finish the Drupal upgrade and will be maintaining the website.

We had to purchase two new computers this year, due to the crashing of two old ones.

As for pledges this year, at the end of 2013, we have mailed reminders to 56 members who did not fulfill their pledges. We were able to collect some of the contributions but not all which resulted in lower pledge collection than anticipated.

Five members who did not contribute at all towards their 2013 pledge commitments were resigned from the church after receiving two letters reminding them of their pledges. Current membership, as I write this report, is 376.

I attended the Finance Committee meetings, board meetings and FDC meeting this year. I also attended a couple of Personnel Committee meetings. I meet with the minister and the president on a regular basis.

This year I had the opportunity to participate in a couple of webinars, Finance and Personnel. It is always good to find out we are doing everything right!

Christmas services were well attended. This year we added a Family Service at 3pm. We collected \$1400 for OPCC on that day.

I want to thank Carol Ring who has been a great help with producing the Annual Reports on Programs. While I gathered the reports, she was the one who put them all together so they could be published.

## HUNGER TASK FORCE

Rhonda Peacock

### STEP UP ON 2ND

Each month volunteers serve an afternoon meal to the clients at Step Up on 2nd. Step Up on Second involves individuals with severe and persistent mental illness in developing opportunities to reintegrate into the community. Step Up on Second is dedicated to long-term support of people in recovery and their families, offering quality housing, educational, social and work experience.

With an average of 65 people per month, we've served 780 meals this year. A core group of dedicated volunteers have participated each month. The meals consist of a main dish, a starch, a fresh vegetable, salad, rolls, and dessert. The menu alternates with about every other month serving lasagna, meatballs, a fresh vegetable, salad, rolls and dessert; other months feature chicken and rice, ham and macaroni & cheese, pork loin and au gratin potatoes. Step Up clients are happy to see us each month, always thanking us for coming and telling us they look forward to our coming each month. For some, our meal is the favorite meal of the month.

The budget is kept as close to \$200/month as possible, with the lasagna months being around \$225 and the non-lasagna months being around \$175. Volunteers have also contributed food items which has allowed us to serve fresh green beans (a welcome break from broccoli!). This puts each meal to just over \$3 a person. We

are very happy to be able to participate at Step Up; it is unknown exactly when our church began helping at Step Up, but it is somewhere around 20 years now.

### **LUNCHES FOR BUNCHES - P.A.T.H.**

In April 2013 the Hunger Task Force began a new program: Lunches for Bunches. Eighty sack lunches have been created by volunteers each month and delivered to the clients of P.A.T.H. (People Assisting the Homeless) at their North Madison headquarters in downtown L.A. Lunches consist of a turkey & cheese sandwich, a bag of chips, a granola bar, a piece of fresh fruit, a packet of fresh baby carrots, mustard & mayonnaise condiments, and a small piece of candy. For the year, 960 lunches were assembled by a “whoever is free and willing” group of volunteers. After a few months we had our assembly technique in order thanks to the suggestions of the volunteers. The monetary goal is to keep as close to \$150/month as possible, the average being \$160 as the need for baggies, napkins and condiments fluctuate. This puts the cost of each lunch at approximately \$2/person.

Beginning April 2014, the sack lunches will be going to OPCC/ Turning Point.

Monies for the meals at Step Up and Lunches for Bunches are funded by the Hunger Fund. This fund is not part of the annual church budget and exists from donations earmarked to the fund. In the 2012/2013 year there were several large donations to the fund. After receiving encouragement from the Finance Committee to spend the funds, Lunches for Bunches was started. As of December 2013, the Hunger Fund was extremely low, but after placing a notice in the church bulletin and the announcements that the fund was needing attention, the Hunger Fund has received sufficient donations to continue each month at both Step Up and Lunches for Bunches. Requests will be posted in the church bulletin and announcements as needed to keep the hunger ministry active.

### **PEACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE**

*Roberta Frye and Cathie Gentile, Co-chairs*

#### **ONGOING CAMPAIGNS**

- Support of carwash workers, including distributing fliers urging boycotts of Santa Monica and Millennium Car Washes, which among other things have fired workers whom management believes to be pro-union.
- Support for Santa Monica DoubleTree Hotel workers who are fighting against violations of California and Federal labor laws, including picketing with the workers every Friday from 7 a.m. to 8 a.m.
- Visiting immigrants awaiting deportation hearings in detention centers.
- The carwash and hotel workers support campaigns are in conjunction with Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice (CLUE). Visiting immigrant detainees is part of a program sponsored by Communities Initiatives for Visiting Immigrants in Confinement (CIVIC) and Friends of Orange County Detainees. We thank the dozens of members and friends of our congregation who sent Valentine’s Day cards to detainees.

#### **JUNE 2013 - MAY 2014:**

- June: textbook fund for incarcerated students taking community college courses raised over \$2,000 and sent to the Coastline Community College’s Foundation who administers the funds.
- Talk by human rights activist. FIA and AAHS sponsored a presentation by Nigerian human rights activist Leo Igwe, who has been combating superstition in Africa, including accusations of witchcraft against children which can sometimes result in their death.
- Roberta, Cathie, and Brig Johnson reported on the conference, Mass Incarceration and Immigrant Detention: Two Sides of the Same Coin, at Holman United Methodist Church. The event was co-sponsored by the coalition Justice Not Jails and Faith Community Strategy
- July: documentary: “Central Park Five” co-hosted with the Committee for Racial Justice about the racist arrest and prosecution of five black youth for a brutal rape in New York City.
- August: documentary: “Without A Home” with filmmaker, Rachel Fleischer regarding several homeless individuals and families in Los Angeles
- September: documentary: “Unlikely Friends” with director/producer Leslie Neale, about several victims’ abilities to forgive and befriend perpetrators of crimes against them or their family members.
- October: PBS Frontline documentary, “Syria Behind the Lines” and discussion afterward.
- Documentary with ACLU: “Two Americas” with filmmaker (income/wealth inequality).
- November: Roberta Frye and Cathie Gentile attended the “Walking the Walk” UU Justice Ministry retreat in deBenneville Pines.
- December: Angie Jimenez from CLUE spoke on the Affordable Healthcare Act.
- January: Hosted UU Justice Ministry LA/Valley Cluster meeting to discuss priorities for systemic change via economic justice this coming year.
- Staffed table at Santa Monica celebration of MLK day.
- Rhonda Peacock, Roberta Frye and Cathie Gentile attended “A Day of Service” at Hillcrest Elementary school in Los Angeles to help spruce up the campus.
- Celebration of Hotel Victories in Santa Monica: Unite Here won agreements with OTO, a developer opening two new hotels in Santa Monica to hold card check elections for workers to obtain union membership.
- February: UC Merced Professor Tanya Galosh-Boza spoke on “Deportations and Racism” to YRUU and to congregants in general.
- Valentine cards signed by church members sent to immigrant detainees in detention centers in Orange County.
- April: Susan Burton, Executive Director, A New Way of Life Re-Entry Project, spoke to the congregation. A New Way of Life supports women recently released from incarceration. 50% of the April Generous Congregation donation went to A New Life.
- Ziad Abu/Rish, a Ph.D. student from UCLA’s History Department spoke on “Making Sense of the Syrian Tragedy.”

## SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

*Rev. Rebecca Benefiel Bijur*

In spring 2012, the Small Group Ministry Planning Team began meeting to plan for the rekindling of this ministry in our congregation. We recruited facilitators, researched Small Group Ministry models, developed a program model for our congregation, and created a plan for program roll-out. In August 2012, the Small Group Ministry Facilitators began meeting monthly with the Minister to practice deep listening, and to share our lives, while strengthening our skills and confidence as facilitators.

In February 2013, our facilitators began convening monthly Small Group Ministry circles, where group members share their lives and practice deep listening. From an original program enrollment of 102 in eleven groups, 70 participants in nine groups went on to complete the full year together, including a final session and closing celebration in January 2014. In February 2014, we launched the second year of the program with about 70 participants in eight groups. About 1/3 are returning participants and 2/3 are new to the program. We also welcomed new facilitators and shared our appreciation for those who decided to step down in 2014.

In our time together in 2013, participants in Small Group Ministry offered deep listening and shared our lives around themes such as: Calling, Transformation, Gratitude, Covenant, Fathers, Vision, Surrender, Friendship, Balance, and Grace. Participants recommended bringing back Gratitude, Friendship, and Grace as themes for another year. Our most polarizing theme was Covenant: half of survey respondents thought it evoked rich sharing, and half thought it did not.

Nearly all participants reported that they are better listeners and feel closer to others as a result of Small Group Ministry. Survey respondents also noted that Small Group Ministry reminded them that everyone has struggles, and that we have “similar experiences of pain, loss, and love” that can ground our connections to one another. One respondent wrote, Small Groups has widened my ability to listen with respect to people very different than myself, without trying to change anybody. Just listen and see how another feels without trying to fix things. This is challenging to me, but I’m learning.

One of the key challenges faced by our facilitators and groups has been in creating and supporting a strong container for deep listening. This has included offering education for group members around cross-talk – what it is, how to interrupt it, and how it gets in the way of deep listening; and modeling commitment to the Small Group Ministry covenant. Another challenge has been attendance and irregular participation.

At our Board retreat last summer, our President reported to the Board that Small Group Ministry was the most significant improvement in pastoral care in our congregation in recent years. I was reminded of this recently when one of our facilitators reached out with great compassion and grace to a group member who was mourning the loss of an important person in her life. I have also witnessed it many times in our facilitator’s group.

Working with the Small Group Ministry facilitators and Planning Team over the past two and a half years has been one of the most rewarding aspects of my ministry to date in Santa Monica. This ministry nurtures my soul, is a balm for my spirit, and reminds me of the power of our faith to be a true force for healing, strength,

and courage in this world. Thank you for your commitment to this ministry and to our groups.

Thank you to our Small Group Ministry facilitators and Planning Team in 2013 and 2014: Bettye Barclay (Planning Team), Rev. Rebecca Benefiel Bijur (Planning Team), Phil Bonacich, Wendi Gladstone (2013), Pat Gomez, Janet Goodwin (2013), Carrie Lauer (2014), Laura Matthews (2014), Amelia Monteiro, Geno Monteiro (2014), Margot Page, Dan Patterson (2013), Rhonda Peacock (Planning Team), and Amy Thiel. Thank you to Emmy Cresciman for being a champion of the program, and to Nancy Thompson for administrative support.

## FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (FDC)

*Bryan Oakes and Beth Brownlie, co-chairs*

- The FDC strives to continue the efforts of the New Building Committee which was responsible for the renovation of Forbes Hall in 2009/2010.

- Active Members include: Rev. Rebecca Benefiel Bijur, Cynthia Cottam, Nurit Gordon, Karl Lisovsky, and Beth Brownlie and Bryan Oakes.

- We continue to add details and features and make the new Forbes Hall completely functional and safe for all community members and staff.

- We provide expert opinions on measures to be taken to complete small building projects.

- We advise the church community and staff on sustainable on building/repairs on the facilities.

- We research and then propose sustainability goals for the church community and help staff, members and the community as a whole attain those goals.

- We meet twice monthly.

This Year:

- We completed the complete renovation/replacement of the office area on the south end of the Sanctuary. The South wall of the Sanctuary including the offices were structurally upgraded to current California Seismic Code.

- The lighting in the offices were replaced with smart technology and LED lighting to reduce our consumption of energy.

- The building envelope of the office was upgraded to be well insulated and reduce emissions in the offices.

- The sanctuary bathrooms and the minister’s bathroom were renovated and equipped with low flow toilets and faucets, further reducing our water usage campus-wide.

- We added Wi-Fi and direct access to the internet in all classrooms of Forbes Hall.

- We added the pergola wall at the south side of the Sanctuary, opening our campus to the community.



## FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

*Teri Bond, Lucy Hahn, Leon and Nicole Henderson-MacLennan, Jila Tayfehnowrooz*

**PROCESS:** The Fundraising Committee, previously known as Stewardship, got busy after forming in September 2013. Members met with Rebecca and agreed on our pledge fundraising goal of \$410,000, 75% of our operating budget. The gauntlet was thrown down and we mobilized. The letter inviting members to support the church through their annual pledge was finalized. Feedback that it should have been personalized was heard. We attempted an ambitious face-to-face distribution of pledging packets at a Crêpes and Commitment Campaign Kick-Off Celebration October 20th. We learned a lot through post-event evaluations such as the need for clearer signage to help the community understand what's going on, why all the fuss. Also we realized need to improve the briefing of volunteers, and to explain expectations. In November, we delivered, or recruited others to share, pulpit messages and encouraged a 5% or more increase of annual pledges (this was also in the letter). The Board made thank you calls. In January, we thanked the congregation for all their support with the first ever "Spa Day," where a dozen massage therapists provided TLC to members, visitors, whoever needed relief. Planning for this event was head-over-heels better than the planning of the Oct. event. A "save the date" postcard was delivered shortly after the holidays, plus a story appeared in the January newsletter and several mentions ran in the Order of Service. Plenty of signage posted on event day boldly thanked congregants for their support. The team submitted a budget request for 2014 fundraising efforts of \$8,000.

**RESULTS:** By January 2014, we were \$8K shy of our goal of \$410K. In February, the gap narrowed to \$6K. We made calls, we asked people to increase by a small amount or make a one-time donation. Several community members responded. The team presented "Spa Day: The Sequel" on April 28. It was a hit with all who received the TLC from the therapists and a harpist played beautiful music to help members drift away to a peaceful zone. By the end of April, we have come oh-so-very-close to our goal with \$408K. We've agreed to close the campaign and begin our process, with valuable help from the super office staff, of generating personalized thank you notes to all who pledged. We'll write a special handwritten note on the letter to those who stepped up and expanded their pledge or made an additional donation to help us close the gap. It was a wild ride but worth every drop of blood, sweat and tears. Teri, Lucy and Jila are enthusiastically back on board for the 2014 pledge campaign and we look forward to your support. Questions, please call Teri at 310-738-2077.

## LIFESPAN RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION COMMITTEE

Religious exploration is a lifelong learning process, and the Lifespan Religious Exploration Committee oversees program offerings designed to appeal to UUSM members and visitors of all ages. Members of the LRE Committee belong to one of three subcommittees (Children, Youth, and Adult). Under the direction and guidance of Catherine Farmer Loya, our Director of Religious Education, we meet once a month to brainstorm, plan, and organize programs.

We maintain an informational bulletin board with the latest program offerings. We also staff an information table each week in Forbes Hall after Sunday morning services, where people can sign up for programs, ask questions about program offerings, and make suggestions and give feedback about religious exploration in our church.

Please continue reading for more details about the Children, Youth, and Adult Subcommittees.

"Celebrating Me & My World" with staff preschool teacher Roxanne Coleman-Bell. In the first half of the year we offered an elementary-wide multiage Children's Chapel program for 1st-5th grade, led by DRE Catherine Farmer Loya with assistance from a large team of dedicated volunteer teachers. That program was successful in many ways, but we found that the depth of content we'd like to offer our older children was not possible in a group with such a wide age range, so in February, even though the office renovation was not yet complete, we went forward with splitting classes back out into K-2nd and 3rd-5th. For the remainder of the year, Kindergarten-2nd graders took part in a curriculum written by UUCSM member Sabina Mayo-Smith, which focused on the 7 UU principles as well as our monthly all-church ministry themes, helping children make meaning of their lives, grow a strong UU identity, and create a spiritual community together that honors multiple learning styles and celebrates beauty in diversity. And the 3rd-5th grade class engaged in a curriculum called "Sing to the Power," helping participants explore kinds of power that can be used to create positive change, enrich Unitarian Universalist identity with stories of people who used their power for the sake of "justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love," develop participants' sense of themselves as leaders, promote exercising one's own powers to create positive change, and build community, with an emphasis on the power of religious community to change the world for the better.

We also offered six Faith in Action Sundays this year, engaging children and youth in acts of service to the larger community. Offsite trips included visits to the Turning Point transitional housing shelter to prepare sack lunches for the residents as well as a beach cleanup trip, and we also compiled nearly 100 hygiene kits for donation to OPCC's Shwashlock facility, which provides showers, washers and lockers for those in our Santa Monica community who are homeless.

## LIFESPAN RE: CHILDREN'S SUBCOMMITTEE

*Nicole Henderson-MacLennan, Sabina Mayo-Smith, JoAn Peters and Kim Santiago-Kalmanson*

We've had a great experimental year in the RE program for children in 2013-14, adapting our class structure and curricula in response to reductions in classroom space during the office renovation project. The program is made possible by more than 40 UUCSM members who volunteer their time as teachers, assistants, event helpers, committee members and more.

Our nursery continues to provide extremely high-quality care for infants, toddlers and young children up to age 3, thanks to the continued leadership of nursery supervisor ZaNyaa Lee. Preschoolers, joined by Kindergarteners in the first half of the year, took part in "Celebrating Me & My World" with staff preschool teacher Roxanne Coleman-Bell. In the first half of the year we offered an elementary-wide multiage Children's Chapel program for 1st-5th grade, led by DRE Catherine Farmer Loya with assistance from a large team of dedicated volunteer teachers. That program was successful in many ways, but we found that the depth of content we'd like to offer our older children was not possible in a group with such a wide age range, so in February, even though the office renovation was not yet complete, we went forward with splitting classes back out into K-2nd and 3rd-5th. For the remainder of the year, Kindergarten-2nd graders took part in a curriculum written by UUCSM member Sabina Mayo-Smith, which focused on the 7 UU principles as well as our monthly all-church ministry themes, helping children make meaning of their lives, grow a strong UU identity, and create a spiritual community together that honors multiple learning styles and celebrates beauty in diversity. And the 3rd-5th grade class engaged in a curriculum called "Sing to the Power," helping participants explore kinds of power that can be used to create positive change, enrich Unitarian Universalist identity with stories of people who used their power for the sake of "justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love," develop participants' sense of themselves as leaders, promote exercising one's own powers to create positive change, and build community, with an emphasis on the power of religious community to change the world for the better.

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We were very proud, this past year to show the work of the Zimbabwe Artists Collective as well as the offerings from LA GOAL. Carol Ring, our own church member, delighted everyone with her unique photographic work on metal. Charles Haskell mounted the photos taken by his apprentices at the YMCA and the entire congregation was enriched by their interpretation of Santa Monica.

We look forward to another exciting, stimulating and thought provoking year. Come join us for the fun and thanks for your support.

## LIFESPAN RE: YOUTH SUBCOMMITTEE

*Nalani Santiago-Kalmanson, Liza Cranis, Vicky Foxworth and YRUU Representative, Jake Brunell*

The Children's and Youth programs were redistributed amongst the subcommittees this year to better even out the support load, which means that the 6th and 7th graders have been moved to Youth Subcommittee.

On Sunday mornings this year, our 6th & 7th graders embarked on a journey called, "You the Creator." Creativity is not the exclusive province of artists. It is part of each and every one of us – that's the message of the program, gaining a new experience of spirituality and new understanding of the creative forces in all of us. Four E's inform the program: Exploring, Experiencing, Expanding, and Expressing. And ten themes run through it: Religion and Creativity, Religion and Creative Arts, Arts and Creativity, Creativity and Self, Practical Creativity, Universal Creative Force, Creative Spirituality, Creating Community, Yes You Can, and Creativity for All.

The Coming of Age program for 8th graders provided opportunities for youth to learn who they are and where they are on their spiritual journey, celebrate their gifts, learn about the church and how it works, and articulate their own personal beliefs within the context of our UU faith. The program culminates on Coming of Age Sunday, May 18, with the presentation of the youth's credo statements to the congregation and a special Coming of Age ceremony in a worship service of their own design.

The YRUU (Young Religious Unitarian Universalists) group for 9th-12th graders engaged teens in exploring what it means to be young and UU, how our UU principles inform how we live our lives, and what power young UU's have to change the world. YRUU also took part in social justice projects, social gatherings, and led a Sunday worship service for the congregation in March. YRUU youth are busy preparing and raising funds for their home-building service trip to Mexico in June with Esperanza International.

## LRE ADULT SUBCOMMITTEE

*Emmy Cresciman, Karen Hsu Patterson, James Witker, Natalie Kahn, Leon Henderson-MacLennan*

It's been a busy year for our LRE Adult Programs Subcommittee. We've been privileged to present a variety of events.

Book discussions have been popular. James Witker facilitated a three-session discussion series of John Buehrens' book "Understanding the Bible", as well as a separate discussion of "The Jefferson Bible".

Film screenings and subsequent discussion have also been well-attended. Natalie Kahn facilitated a monthly presentation of Bill Moyers and Joseph Campbell's PBS series, "The Power of Myth". We also presented a monthly screening of Ron Cordes' "Long Strange Trip", a film series detailing the history of Unitarian and Universalist thought from the beginning of the Christian era to what we know today as Unitarian Universalism.

We had several popular workshop series. Kerry Thorne facilitated Positive Parenting. Leon Henderson-MacLennan facilitated Lessons of Loss, as well as BYOT (Building Your Own Theology) Ethics. Amelia McNamara and Eric Huang took on leadership roles in the UCLA campus ministry group and led BYOT

sessions on the UCLA campus.

Ongoing programs include monthly themed Patio Chats led by Leon Henderson-MacLennan, twice-monthly Wednesday Night Writers, as well a monthly Fiction Reading Group.

We continue to develop collaborative relationships with other groups and committees at UUSM, joining together to present guest speakers and lectures with AAHS. We co-hosted an evening talk by Michael Dowd, returning author of 'Thank God for Evolution.' We hope to continue to strengthen the bonds of community within our congregation with these kinds of partnerships moving forward.

We look to the congregation for suggestions for future workshops, activities and events. Stop by the LRE Table in Forbes Hall on any Sunday, or contact one of our committee members listed above.

## MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

*Beth Rendeiro and Barbara Gibbs, Co-chairs*

Committee Members: Carol Ring, Rhonda Peacock, Leonard Cachola, Kris Langabeer, Linda Van Ligten, Amy Brunell. Margot Page and Wendi Gladstone were associate members.

Our goal the last twelve months has been to both build connections between newcomers, visitors, new members and the UUCSM community as well as create an atmosphere and vehicle that welcomes visitors and encourages/provides a path to membership.

The Committee meets monthly to refine its goals, discuss related issues and to plan and organize staffing for events. One of our main discussion topics this year was HOW we welcome and encourage membership. Current membership stands at 376. We welcomed 36 new members into our congregation between April 2013 and April 2014, including two former members who were reinstated.

Below are the programs initiated and provided by the Membership Committee:

- Sunday morning pre-service Greeters Program, chaired by Barbara Gibbs. This 20 member team rotated on a once-a-month basis (1-3 at each service). Visitors were asked to sign a visitor's page, which was then turned into the office. From this page visitors were added to both the newsletter and Thursday announcement email lists. Individual guest bags for child visitors were available at this table

- Sunday morning Welcome Center Table for meeting/greeting/informing visitors during the post-service coffee hours (in Forbes Hall or adjacent lower patio). This table is staffed by committee members. Informative Welcome Bags, designed and assembled by committee, were provided for inquiring visitors.

- Second Sunday Suppers, coordinated by Beth Rendeiro, is presently the purview of Membership. We implemented a goal of name tags for all attendees as well as specifically inviting, welcoming and integrating newcomers and newer members into the monthly suppers.

- Newcomer Orientation, chaired by Kris Langabeer, and hosted by a committee member, following the second service on the first Sunday of each month, included both the minister and religious education director. Member Linda Van Ligten provided and prepared the light lunch each month. Child care was provided.

- New Member Application Packet was updated and the

membership process streamlined and implemented by the committee, the office administrator and included the minister who met with each person as part of the application process.

- New Member Recognition Service and reception (to be held on May 4th) was coordinated and will be implemented by committee and minister. The service as currently held is in the process of review and realignment. Likewise the UU101/UU & YOU program, originally designed to better familiarize visitors/non-members with UUSM programs, is also in the process of review and realignment, as it had come to resemble too closely the monthly Newcomer Orientations.

- New Member Patio Supper was hosted by the committee and held at a committee member's home for the third consecutive summer. The goal was to bring new members together with the committee, the minister and other invited guests in order to build connection.

- Name Tag Initiative was seen as a way to better facilitate connection and communication between community members. We will continue to encourage increased wearing of name tags as often as possible. We are hopeful that this will become contagious as all wear name tags and ask others to do so as well.

- Sunday Morning Coffee Hour, chaired by Nancy Howell, falls loosely under the Membership umbrella, and as such we supported the important services provided by Nancy and her service team.

With our goal to increase membership by actively welcoming and engaging all visitors, newcomers and members we appreciate any suggestions on how to improve our work and thus our liberal, religious community. As well we welcome onto the committee any who wish to join us in this important work.

The Membership Committee greatly appreciated the ongoing support of Reverend Rebecca Bijur, Catherine Farmer Loya, DRE administrator, Nurit Gordon and her staff, sextons Tom Ahern and Kevin Roller, all who facilitated the effectiveness with which the Membership Committee works to achieve its goals.

## BOOK STORE

*Nancy Babbitt*

The book store consists of donated books on many different topics, arranged in broad categories on the Forbes Hall book shelves. People can either buy a book for as little as a dollar or borrow a book, indicating their name and phone number in our Sign-up Book. Our purpose is to give everyone an opportunity to enjoy as many books as possible.

Even though the trend is digital these days with reading and purchasing books online, some of us still enjoy browsing books during the coffee hour as well as chatting with friends.

As many people in the congregation contribute to the success of the book store, either through their direct book donations or book purchase, we are able to make a yearly contribution to the UU Building Fund.

## MUSIC COMMITTEE

*DeReau Farrar*

From late August to early June, the focus of our music ministry is on preparing and offering excellent and uplifting music at our 9am and 11am worship services. We kicked this year off with a first annual choir retreat, held at San Dieguito UU Fellowship in Solana Beach, CA, with guest conductor, Zanaida Robles. Highlights of our program this year included welcoming 4 new volunteer members and generous gifts from Diane Fletcher-Hoppe, Rebecca Crawford, and other supporters of the music ministry allowed us to introduce a fourth section leader, Jyvonne Haskin. In addition, we were also happy to welcome James Hayden, Erika Olsen, and Daniel Gledhill to our music staff. For Ingathering, Day of the Dead, and Easter Sunday, our adult choir sang at both morning services, swelling to up to 22 members with special music for these occasions. Our choir now offers a choral postlude resonant with the month's ministry theme. Selections this year included Moses Hogan's "Hear My Prayer" for PRAYER, Ludovico Tommaso de Vittoria's "Ah, thou joy of loving hearts" for JOY, and Frank Ticheli's "The Falling Star" from Constellation for CHANGE. To honor Women's History Month this March, all music for the entire month, including hymns, was by women. Musical guests this year included Lawrence Ingalls, a trio of french horns, and emma's revolution.

On Christmas Eve, our musicians and singers offered a "Family Friendly" singalong with volunteer singers/guitarists Leslie Beauvais and Ross Brooks at 3pm, "Global Christmas" with our choir for the Christmas Eve service at 6pm, and "Bach Christmas" with our section leaders at 8pm. And, we joined with seven other choirs at the 2nd Annual Greater LA UU Martin Luther King Choir Festival, singing with and to a standing room only crowd at Throop Memorial Church in Pasadena. We will see many of our choir friends again when we host the Pacific Southwest District Choir Festival here on May 18th. In addition, we offered four HymnSings last summer to become better acquainted with our hymnals. This was a time for singers of all abilities and backgrounds to come together and sing new and unfamiliar hymns, and we plan to offer a few more summer sings this year.

## MEN'S GROUP

*Phillip Bonacich*

Our group has four complementary missions: to be a discussion group, a social group, a service group, and a support group. Most of our semimonthly meetings are taken up with a pre-decided discussion topic relevant to the members. Occasionally we have social events (a Super Bowl party, for instance). We intend also to be of use to the church and the wider community through volunteer activities. Finally, we support each other in times of stress.

## COFFEE HOUR COMMITTEE

*Nancy Howell*

The coffee committee volunteers have continued to enjoy serving coffee, tea and cookies to the congregation after each church service. We also provide coffee service for special events. We are proud to continue being more aware of our environment. We serve coffee and tea in ceramic cups. Coffee grounds are put into the compost bin. We serve sugar from a container rather than individually wrapped packages. We serve only fair traded coffee. We use cloth tablecloths rather than paper. Our napkins are made of recycled paper.

As coordinator, I would like express my appreciation for a great group of dedicated people on this committee. They are as follows:

Robert and Phyllis Kory, Sheila Bjornlie, Leah Moore, Kit Shaw, Alicia Van Ooyen, Karen Canady, Jennifer Westbay, Linda van Ligten, Karen Hsu Patterson, Jennifer Westbay, Patrick Meighan, Pam Teplitz, Peggy Rhoads, Sanna Egan, Resa Foreman, Sylvia Young, Kirk Attebury, Sheila Cummins, Jila Tayefehnowrooz, Joan Verdon, Katie Malich, and Linda Marten.

Our committee appreciates the numerous people who have donated cookies this past year. Particularly those who have purchased Girl Scout cookies and have donated them to us.

Our goal for the next year is to remain flexible and continue the great coffee service

We would invite anyone interested to join our volunteer group. It is an enjoyable way to meet and greet the people in our church.

## HIKING GROUP

*Steve Young and Phil Bonacich, co-leaders*

Between five and fifteen church members and friends gather at church at 9 am on the second Saturday of each month. Over the last year, we have hiked numerous trails in the Santa Monica Mountains and we have hiked along the beach in Santa Monica and at Pt. Dume. We expect most of our hikes will provide enough of a challenge that we say, "You should be able to climb five flights of stairs." Hikes have been between 3 and 8 miles long. We also schedule some hikes that are less strenuous or wheelchair accessible. To encourage the social aspect of hikes we now make sure at least five people are planning to hike. Participants need to contact Steve Young by phone or email by late on the Thursday before the hike to make sure enough people are planning to attend. Steady rain or too few participants can lead to the cancellation of a hike.

We try to end most hikes so that participants can be back at church between noon and 1 pm. Unusual hikes have included the Rustic Canyon Loop in Will Rogers State Park, Malibu Creek to the M\*A\*S\*H filming site, The Venice Canals area, and Cold Creek Preserve. We are looking for more urban hikes locations. We have picnicked together after one hike, and will do so again. Some have suggested hikes in the San Gabriel Mountains above Pasadena, or off Angeles Crest Highway. These would need to take most of a Saturday. We welcome new participants and new suggestions of places to go.



## ART WALL

*Beverly Alison*

The Art Wall has been exciting, stimulating and varied this year. May features the always innovative children of our church. June will feature Pola Lopez, a Jicarilla Apache artist, whose work is bright and profoundly moving. Planned for September is a show focussed on the degradation of imprisonment and its effect on those incarcerated. October will feature the work of Maya Beeton and her creative exploration of form and color.

We were very proud, this past year to show the work of the Zimbabwe Artists Collective as well as the offerings from LA GOAL. Carol Ring, our own church member, delighted everyone with her unique photographic work on metal. Charles Haskell mounted the photos taken by his apprentices at the YMCA and the entire congregation was enriched by their interpretation of Santa Monica.

We look forward to another exciting, stimulating and thought provoking year. Come join us for the fun and thanks for your support.

Committee Members: Beverly Alison, Carol Ring, Bob Dietz

## INTERWEAVE

*Janet Goodwin*

In one of its signature events, Interweave brought close to 70 marchers to the LA Pride Parade last June. In July, we co-sponsored the Annual Interweave & Women's Alliance All-Church Picnic and donated the proceeds to Common Ground. The Coming Out Day service in October featured Kate Harlan (a Neighborhood UU member) and Ian Lawrence, who spoke eloquently about the topic of bisexuality. Interweave member Geoff Lee has been co-hosting a monthly chat group for bisexual adults and allies (amBi). As a current goal, Interweave is strongly in favor of placing a sign or banner at the front of the church acknowledging that UUCCSM is a Welcoming Congregation.



## fUUSION

*Karen Hsu Patterson*

fUUsion is a welcoming way to introduce new young adults (and potential members!) aged 18-35+ to UUSM. Our email listserv has approximately 140 members, and our Facebook page has over 100 "likes" and supporters. New this year, fUUsion has a Meetup page, aimed at reaching out to young adults who may not yet be familiar with Unitarian Unitarianism.

fUUsion hosts and sponsor social events, spiritual events, and service projects. While most events are aimed at younger adults at UUSM, several have been open to the wider UUSM community as well.

Social activities included group lunches after Sunday services, movie nights, potlucks, picnics, and more. For service to our wider community, we prepared and served dinner and sack lunches at Turning Point for the MLK Day of Service (January 2014). fUUsion also continued its tradition of walking as a fundraising team in AIDS Walk Los Angeles in support of healthcare and social services and programs for people affected by HIV/AIDS in Los Angeles (October 2013).

fUUsion staffs the Welcome Table and greets visitors for the 11:00am service in months with a 5th Sunday. fUUsion members continue to support and serve UUSM through committee work, and are a vibrant part of the UUSM community.

In addition, fUUsion is active in the Pacific Southwest District (PSWD). fUUsion members attended and helped to staff the annual PSWD Young Adult weekend at Camp de Benneville Pines (September 2013). New this past year, fUUsion collaborated with other UU young adult groups in the greater Los Angeles area to offer Game Night, Potluck Picnic, and Open Mic Night, open to all young adults in the greater LA region.

Future plans include connecting with and supporting campus ministry at UCLA, a Soulful Sundown evening worship series, continued shared community with other UU young adults in the greater Los Angeles region, and continued outreach efforts through coffee hour, flyers, staffing at the Welcome Table, Facebook, Meetup, and our listserv.

fUUsion continues to be a vital community for growing and nurturing connection and friendship among the UU young adult community, and beyond.

## GREEN LIVING COMMITTEE

*Beth Brownlie and Alison Kendall, co-chairs*

- The Green Living Committee strives to continue the focus of UUCCSM on being green and sustainable.
- We will research and then propose sustainability goals for the church community and help staff, members and the community as a whole attain those goals.
- The Green Committee continues to advise the Facilities Committee on sustainable and green measures to be employed during upgrades to the facilities including the following: Sanctuary upgrade of lighting including LED lighting. We also advise on water and resource conservation and historical preservation goals for the church community.
- We meet as needed.
- We prepared, planted and maintained a vegetable, herb garden with the help of RE and YRUU in 2013 and will continue this annual tradition this year.
- We continue to have a sustainable food event, Second Sunday Supper, focusing on vegetarian cooking and local cooking and ethical eating. This year we had Alison Kendall provide a presentation on the members in the congregation who have participated in the Energy Upgrade program and Green Point Rating system. Leslie Reuter was a presenter on her Green Point Rated Remodel, as well.
- We continue to support the Energy Upgrade program (Alison Kendall) promoting members to improve their homes to be more energy efficient. Donations from the state are given to the church when a member does the upgrade. 7 UUCCSM families have participated in this program.
- We continue our efforts to support local earth centered charities with our generous non-pledge offering during the month April (Earth Month). This year is UU Ministry for Earth.

## CARENET

*Karl Lisovsky*

CareNet has recruited several new volunteers, and has continued to quietly help congregation members in need. This year we have given rides for doctor visits and other such needs, food and groceries to people who might be wanting, and written thoughtful cards to the sick. We have reached out on several occasions with phone calls to members whom we have not heard from in recent months or years, and we generally coordinate with the minister to keep track of members in transition.

## NEWSLETTER

*Charles Haskell*

Editor-in-chief : Charles Haskell, (present term: July 2013 to June 2015); Editors: Laura Eklund, Liz Fuller, Joyce Holmen, Rima Snyder, Jennifer Westbay; Calendar: Laura Eklund; Art Directors: Charles Haskell, Wendell Pascual, Carol Ring, Pam Teplitz; Photographers: Charles Haskell, Carol Ring; Distribution: Elizabeth Fuller (electronic edition) and Peggy Kharraz (paper edition); Staff changes in 2013-2014: Geralyn Lambson and Carol-Jean Teuffel retired from the committee after many years of service. We will miss them both. Wendell Pascual has joined the team as a graphic designer. He is a highly creative professional from UCLA. We welcome him warmly to our newsletter team.

Charge: The primary function of the newsletter is to inform the congregation and visitors of church issues, programs, and activities. The Newsletter Team is responsible for production of the newsletter, including making reasonable discretionary decisions relating to content and design. The team chooses its own editor-in-chief for a two-year term, subject to approval by the Board of Directors. Space and emphasis in the newsletter is allocated according to priorities that are available on request. All newsletter items should be emailed to [newsletter@uusm.org](mailto:newsletter@uusm.org) by noon on the 15th of the month. Articles received by this deadline are published, provided they are considered appropriate material for the newsletter. Articles received after the deadline may or may not be published, depending on available space and whether the material can be added to the issue without disrupting our publication schedule. The editor-in-chief may edit material for length, style, grammar, etc., and refuse material that is not appropriate. Any questions or problems concerning the newsletter should be addressed to the editor-in-chief. All material published is copyrighted and is the property of the church.





