



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST  
COMMUNITY CHURCH  
*of Santa Monica*



## REPORT ON PROGRAMS

Fiscal Year

July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018

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# REPORT ON PROGRAMS

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# LEADERSHIP

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### 2017-2018

President ..... Ron Crane  
 Vice President..... Jacki Weber  
 Secretary..... Beth Brownlie  
 Treasurer ..... Kimberly Miller  
 Past President ..... Patricia Wright  
 Member at Large..... Jerry Gates  
 Member at Large..... Emily Hero  
 Member at Large..... Kikanza Nuri-Robins  
 Member at Large..... Norm Richey

### 2018-2019 NOMINEES

President ..... Jacki Weber  
 Vice President..... Beth Brownlie  
 Secretary..... Norm Richey  
 Treasurer ..... Kim Andres  
 Past President ..... Ron Crane  
 Member at Large..... Nina Emerson  
 Member at Large..... Eileen McCormack  
 Member at Large..... Ed Brand  
 Member at Large..... Margot Page

## STAFF

Minister..... Rev. Greg Ward  
 Minister Emerita ..... Rev. Judith E. Meyer  
 Minister Emeritus..... Rev. Ernest D. Pipes  
 Director of Religious  
 Exploration..... Kathleen R. Hogue  
 Religious Exploration Staff ..... Teri Lucas, Lizbeth Rivera  
 Director of Music..... Dr. Zanaida Robles  
 Accompanist..... Ryan Humphrey  
 Choir Section Leaders..... Colleen Keene, Jyvonne  
 Haskin, Gabriel Paredes, James Hayden  
 Church Administrator ..... Nurit Gordon  
 Administrative and Financial  
 Assistant ..... Nancy Thompson  
 Communications & Volunteers  
 Coordinator ..... Jackie Schwab  
 Sextons ..... Kevin Roller, Thomas Ahern

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE

### 2017-2018

Bob Dietz, Chair  
 Linda Van Ligten,  
 Co-Chair  
 Liza Cranis  
 Barbara Gibbs  
 Nalani Santiago  
 Kalmanson  
 James Witker

### 2018-2019

Liza Cranis  
 Barbara Gibbs  
 Pat Gomez.....To be elected May 20  
 Kikanza Nuri-Robins  
 .....To be elected May 20  
 Nalani Santiago-Kalmanson  
 Linda van Ligten



## 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).

# UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST COMMUNITY CHURCH OF SANTA MONICA

## Annual Report on Programs 2017-2018



### PRESIDENT RON CRANE

This past year has been a year of movement and change. We celebrated the ministry and mourned the departure in June of the Rev. Rebecca Benefiel Bijur.

We established in September the Rev. Greg Ward as our three-year Developmental Minister.

In conjunction with educating ourselves about Right Relationship, we have been asked to reach and discover in and through our hearts and souls how we might manifest our Principles in our UU community, the larger community, and the Universe in its totality.

Rev. Greg has educated, supported, and challenged us to build that to which we aspire and to rebuild what we have neglected.

New growth is sprouting on our mature tree. Such growth needs both the support at the roots of our heritage and the nourishment and passion of new growth. We too often see these as conflictual elements. In the nature of the Universe, they are each essential to our existence.

With appreciation, care, concern, and love, let us all continue and grow.

### DEVELOPMENTAL MINISTER REV. GREG WARD

It is with an earnest love and appreciation that I provide this Developmental Minister's summary report of UUSM's shared ministry during the 2017-18 church year.

After 130 one-on-one meetings with members, friends, leaders, neighboring ministers, and staff, I am aware of the torn and tender feelings in the hearts of people who love this church and the unswerving aim to reclaim and repurpose the power of this community for Love and Justice. To face and embrace a transition of this type is not for the faint of heart. You are to be commended. And I am glad to report that from out of the expected consternation and confusion, I am seeing very clear signs of energy, health, commitment, and a sustainable vision for the future.

It's important to note that I am, technically, the second of the transition specialists who've come to work with you. I've had numerous chances to confer and collaborate with consultant Nancy Edmundson and will say that her work with the Right Relations process is among the finest consulting work I've seen in

a UU congregation. You not only chose well, but you have parlayed her insights into good, sustainable, structure and momentum.

My role here is two-fold: to carry out the core elements of ministry (worship, rites of passage, pastoral care, staff oversight, administrative and infrastructural support) as well as work with the board to explore five key goals:

- Restore energy and trust lost in conflict and improve communication among leaders;

- Clarify the meaning and commitment of membership;

- Work toward sustainable fiscal stewardship and management;

- Clarify process, roles, and responsibilities so energy raised is not lost in confusion;

- Develop a shared ministry by increasing cooperation with leaders in and beyond the church.

You should be very proud of your Board of Directors who've worked extremely hard on both these goals and their own process. Through a Board Retreat, monthly meetings, and countless communications, they are learning new tools, technologies, process, and configurations to increase safety, optimize day-to-day operations, support staff, serve programs, maintain an old (and beautiful) building, and carry UUSM into a sustainable future.

The Board began work, this year, on developing a comprehensive Safety Program designed to ensure the well-being of all members – especially those most vulnerable (children and aging members), to reduce accidental injuries, decrease liability by optimizing safety precautions and preparing for emergency procedures.

They are also beginning work to create greater operational clarity and transparency in our current governance structure through establishing committee charters. This will help examine how we can integrate best practices, increase accountability, and optimize communications between committees. The Communications Team, Right Relations Team, Worship Associates, and the Pastoral Care Program are all helping lead this effort.

Three brand new programs came into existence and are already making a big difference by providing strong leadership and program support. The Worship Associates have not only stepped forward with impressive skills in worship, they have learned a great deal about designing, producing and presenting worship. They have also stepped up to organize and prepare nine new Worship Services for the summer programming, and they've done so significantly faster and more professionally than any first-year program I've seen. The Pastoral Associates and the Care Ring Team have also emerged and are extending the care and compassionate response of the community beyond the limited reach of one minister. These three bodies – Minister(s); Pastoral Associates, and Care Ring Team – coordinate to vet and respond to the needs of the membership in ways that more readily convey to each person and family that they are important and worthy of the community's loving response in times of need.

To help in the intentional expansion of leadership at UUSM, I am very excited about welcoming Robin Stillwater as our 2018-19 Ministerial Intern. Robin was selected out of 10 applications and three final interviews. She is a graduate of Union School of Theology in NYC and has a background in pastoral care and preaching. Her joining the staff team will allow me to continue to focus on infrastructural and leadership and Board development, program support, and financial sustainability. It is hoped that she can also help with some outreach and young adult support.

This being the ninth church I've worked with, it's a joy to report that the staff at UUSM is far stronger, more skilled and equipped to support the church than what a transition minister would often expect to find upon arrival. We have tightened up staff process and coordination with weekly meetings that focus on calendar and

communication prep and regular study of church systems. During this year we have greatly clarified roles and responsibilities, supervised volunteers, managed day-to-day operations, and worked on key issues like process and boundaries.

We were sad to see Accompanist Danny Gledhill move Australia (to be with his fiancé). We were well served for three months by interim Travis Reynolds until the arrival of Ryan Humphrey, who is fantastic. Teri Lucas arrived in January and is doing amazing work as our LRE Assistant. At the end of the fiscal year we will be shifting some hours: I will be working with the Membership Program for Orientation and New Member services (instead of the Communications and Volunteer Coordinator), and our Preschool / Multi-age classroom will be covered by our LRE Assistant and volunteers. This was, in part, as a response to our budget constraints and to right-size our program after the addition of the LRE Assistant.

This year we said goodbye to Lloyd Drum, Bill Anderson, and Ray Goodman. Bill will long be remembered for the courtyard that bears his name. We will remember Ray every time we ring the bell (that he and Betty bought) on Sunday mornings and each time we step into the garden of eternity he helped make a reality. Their memorial services are all upcoming.

We were also sad to say goodbye to those who've moved: Faith In Action volunteers Rick and Peggy Rhoads; and prominent Membership and Heart to Heart leader Rhonda Peacock.

An extraordinary amount of focus and attention, this year, went toward looking at fiscal responsibility and what is needed to raise our level of commitment to the level of our ideas. Specifically, what is needed to move us to a sustainable place where the church operates without going into deficit budgeting and while paying fair share for both our staff and our denominational support. To be a vital and viable congregation that attracts the attention of the best Ministers in a search cycle, that is what will be needed.

Through conversations with some visionary committed supporters, we raised nearly \$45,000 for a Sustainability Fund which will focus on incentivizing giving levels to be in line with other congregations our size. We did this in response to a projected deficit of \$90,000, and the congregation responded in amazing ways. Over 75 people increased their pledges by an aggregate of over \$30,000. This was matched by funds from our Sustainability Fund to cover two-thirds of the deficit and avoid staff layoffs.

And you did all this while contributing over \$6,340 to our partner agencies in the Generous Congregation Sunday collection program. This year, the congregation supported the fire relief – both up north and in our own backyard. You supported disaster relief for hurricanes, help with refugees, the homeless, the hungry, those in poverty and seeking educational or mental health services. You stepped up and were partners and difference makers when people needed to know there was a community looking out for them.

This response was really impressive. It will certainly catch the attention of Ministers in search. Yet, this is only the first step in what is likely to be a four-year financial turn-around. Still, you should be proud. Because it looks as though you are discovering – or re-discovering – that you have something to be proud about.

There is hard work in front of us. Some of what still lies ahead is learning to lean in and look closer at some of the dynamics that led to this time of conflict and transition. There are important truths there that will contribute to understanding, learning, and growth. After studying the dynamics extensively, it is clear that there is both a lot of fear and a lot of power trapped within unexplored patterns. You may feel trepidation to come back and mine that experience for the gold it contains. But without the mining, you

will not release the fear or recapture the trust and unity that have the capacity to make you great.

I know you, as a congregation, love this community deeply and feel tremendous pride in what you have been. But I want to lift up this truth: your best times are ahead of you, not behind you. If vitality, vision, service, learning and growth are what you commit yourselves to, there is a lot of excitement ahead. I look forward to exploring these opportunities for shared ministry together next year.



## TREASURER'S REPORT AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

*Kim Miller, Treasurer*

### OVERVIEW

We experienced variations in our financial situation in the past year. Overall, on the Church's "balance sheet" we are doing well, as we established the Committee On Money (Com. On \$) Reserves in 2016, to hold certain funds aside for specific purposes such as capital building improvements, or emergencies. We also set up the first-ever endowment fund for our Church which, at present, is invested in a combination of Mutual Funds, through the UUA and certificates of deposit. Our reserves are managed by the Investment Committee; please see their separate report. This Treasurer's Report includes the efforts of the Finance Committee and Stewardship Team.

However, the transitions in the past 18 months may have partially caused financial uneasiness in our community and lower pledge commitments and pledge receipts. Historically, we have "lived beyond our means" and relied on generous congregants to supplement our annual shortfall, or on bequests and gifts to do so. Because the congregation voted to approve the 2016 Com. On \$ resolutions, we now have five separate "RESERVES," and when the Church receives unrestricted gifts or bequests, that money is distributed into these five funds on a predetermined basis. The monies cannot be moved from one fund to another without a vote of the congregation.

### 1. TWO MEMBERS BEQUEATHED MONEY TO OUR COMMUNITY IN THE PAST YEAR.

This year our community was fortunate to be remembered in the wills of two of our long-time members. Ralph Meyer designated five non-profits in his trust, and our Church is one of them. In addition, Ray Goodman's estate made a directed donation to our Church to be used specifically for Ministers' ongoing development and education. We have expressed our gratitude to the families of these two members for these generous gifts.

### 2. BRIEF REVIEW OF PLEDGE INCOME AND EXPENSE INCREASE FOR 2018/19.

For the 2017/18 fiscal year, we originally budgeted a pledge commitment from the community in the amount of \$390,000, and we assumed that we would collect approximately \$370,000. Unfortunately, in January 2018 (halfway through our fiscal year)

pledge income was lagging behind that projection.

Further, when the new pledge campaign was done in the fall of 2017 (for the 2018/19 fiscal year), the total amount of the pledges made, at one point, dipped to approximately \$355,000, which was almost \$40,000 less than budgeted for 2017/18.

In addition to these lower pledge receipts, our expenses are higher for the coming year (2018/19), including compensating our very experienced Developmental Minister at the level consistent with UUA guidelines plus welcoming a Ministerial Intern to join us for 10 months starting in September 2018. While we received a partial grant, our Church has to pay for approximately \$16,000 of this increase in costs. This serious shortfall was brought to the Board's attention in February 2018.

### 3. SUSTAINABILITY FUND CREATED WITH A MATCHING COMPONENT.

The Board, with the lead of Rev. Greg, began a "Sustainability Fund" to support our community in increasing our pledges for 2018/19 – and over the next four years – by using it to provide matching funds for certain increases of members' pledges. Due to an increase in generosity sparked by the Sustainability Fund, a supplemental pledge drive was accomplished in March/April 2018, when we significantly, as a community, "closed the gap" on what could have been a deficit in excess of \$70,000. If nothing had been done, we would have had to look at severe and deep staff reductions and/or reductions in programs.

### 4. OUR COMMUNITY STILL FACES A DEFICIT FOR THE 2018/19 FISCAL BUDGET YEAR.

The new Sustainability Fund plus our congregation-wide increases in pledges and donations, closed the potential gap. With the additional pledge income, the Finance Committee worked with the Board, the Minister, the staff, and all of us to provide a budget to the community that keeps the staffing and program levels as they are without making significant cuts. We did have to make some small, across-the-board cuts, and there was virtually no extra money to fund various requests for additional monies. (Note: Although we could not fund new programs or increase requests for the coming year, we acknowledge that all the requests seem worthy and meritorious – but we didn't have the funds to increase almost all budget allocations.)

After the new pledge and matching increases were calculated, and after small cuts and economy measures were taken, we still have approximately a \$22,500 deficit for 2018/19, and we have no further "deficit reserve" to offset this amount. When the Com. On S reserves were established, we did have a deficit reserve fund which was originally to sunset in two years; we managed to extend it for three years, but it will be depleted as of June 2018.

In order to present a balanced budget for our next operating year (starting July 1, 2018), the Board is recommending that we continue the deficit reserve fund. The Board, after consideration, approved the continuance of the Deficit Reserve in the amount of \$21,500 to be funded as follows: Contingency Fund \$5,500; Catastrophe Reserve \$9,000; Capital Reserve Fund \$5,000; Lighting Fund (leftover) \$2,000.

As to the transfer of the funds from the Capital Building Fund and the Catastrophe Fund, doing so requires a vote by the congregation at our Annual Meeting on May 20, 2018, to approve the transfer of these moneys into the Deficit Reserve. You will see the Resolution with the above presented for your vote in the packet.

### 5. IN PRESENTING THE NEW BUDGET WE ASSUME – VERY CAUTIOUSLY – THAT WE WILL RECEIVE ALL OF THE AMOUNTS PLEDGED FOR 2018/19.

This year, in a gesture of support and optimism, the Board, in

approving the 2018/19 budget, agreed to assume that we would collect 100% of our pledges made. Our Church has a history of not completely fulfilling all the amounts pledged. In the past 3 years, the Finance Committee, the Board, and I assumed we would only actually receive approximately 85% of the pledges made. While we are still very cautious about assuming a 100% collection of pledges, we decided as a good-faith effort to reset our pattern, to assume that this year we as a congregation are going to change our pattern and pay our pledges fully – or even more.

I would strongly recommend that the next Treasurer, in collaboration with the Stewardship team, the Finance team, and the Board, prepare in January 2019 (or more often) a detailed and realistic analysis of pledge income – and present the numbers to the congregation at a town hall. The proposed budget this year will only work if we all meet our pledge commitments.

As always if you have any questions, comments or concerns, please contact me at [Kmillierlaw@aol.com](mailto:Kmillierlaw@aol.com) or 310-403-8826.

### THANK YOU AND GRATITUDE.

This is the end of my third and final permissible term as your Treasurer, and it has been an honor to be called to service for our community in this capacity. Thank you to our community for your work and progress in dealing with, at times, difficult and challenging financial issues. We have made progress as to how to put our financial house in order for the future. More work remains to be done, and I look forward to supporting the next Treasurer. I also thank and express appreciation for the following people: Nurit Gordon, Nancy Thompson, Rev. Greg Ward, Ron Crane, Jacki Weber, Vilma Ortiz, Steven DePaul, Kim Andres, Alice Koga, Steve White, and the entire Stewardship Team – Kit Shaw, Gretchen Goetz, Patricia Wright, Katie Malich, and Cindy Kelly.



## AAHS (AGNOSTICS, ATHEISTS, HUMANISTS, SECULARISTS AND SKEPTICS)

*Submitted by James Witker*

AAHS (Agnostics, Atheists, Humanists, Secularists and Skeptics) continues in its seventh year to be an active group within UUSM that provides a welcoming space for non-theists (within the past decade, we know that around half of our congregation or more have identified as Humanist, which is not unusual for UU institutions) along with intellectual stimulation and discussion. James has increased in AAHS a particular interest in exploring the Humanist legacy within Unitarian Universalism's living tradition and history.

Our regular monthly meetings are on the fourth Sundays of the month and are open to all. We primarily focus on issues of interest to Humanism, atheism, freethought and associated topics, and our discussions tend to be lively. But we emphasize that a diversity of opinions is welcome and respected and insist that all discussion be civil and respectful. We also plan occasional meetings, guest speakers, or film screenings, sometimes in concert with other



committees. Starting in January 2018, we have started to call our monthly meeting a “Freethinker Forum,” which better describes the spirit inquiry and discussion which we encourage.

Meetings regularly draw 15 to 30 people; most come from within UUSM and find out about our topics from the congregational weekly announcements and OOS. Additionally, we maintain a dedicated AAHS mailing list of approximately 200 which gets a blast once a month; Mark has been responsible for this up until now. We also have a Meetup.com group started and maintained by James with over 650 members, which usually draws a few people every month. This online presence serves to open our meeting to a wider local audience of people than may be otherwise connected to UUSM, and it provides outreach for UUSM activities. Our “closed” Facebook group for AAHS participants offers event news and online discussion of related topics. (The group is closed because many people want a relatively private space to discuss sensitive matters related to religion and politics without broadcasting them to all of Facebook, as public groups tend to do.)

Mark Warkentin and James Witker have been the organizers of AAHS for the last year. At the end of 2017 Mark had to step back, and James is now the sole organizer. Mark had been staffing the AAHS table during coffee hour for the last several years, and Len Harris has been filling in but is seeking his own replacement. We encourage more people to get involved with group leadership. In April 2017, AAHS enjoyed hosting its Dining for Dollars event, the Fourth Annual Flying Spaghetti Monster Pirate Feast; we decided not to do so this coming year without a larger leadership team in place.

#### **TOPICS FROM THE LAST YEAR INCLUDED:**

**MAY 2017:** Free Will or Fate? An exploration of free will vs. determinism. Led by Mark.

**JUNE:** Discussion/reaction to guest speaker and USC Humanist Chaplain Bart Campolo’s guest sermon on practical approaches to forgiveness. Led by James.

**JULY:** Can Social Media Create Social Justice? Led by Mark.

**AUGUST:** The World Needs a Secular Community Revolution. Discussion of a Psychology Today article arguing that religious communities in modern society meet human needs because they are analogs of tribal intergenerational hunter-gatherer societies, and that more quasi- or post-religious communities are needed for the well-being of the large swaths of people leaving traditional religion behind. Led by James.

**SEPTEMBER:** Freethinker Community Check in. What issues are on your mind, as we start a new congregational year. Or otherwise? Wide-ranging discussion led by James.

**OCTOBER:** Roundtable discussion plus consideration of the “Dawkins” scale that measures where one is on the spectrum from theism to atheism. Led by James.

**NOVEMBER:** Fantasyland: America’s Long Fixation with Delusions and Fake News. An introduction to the new book by Kurt Andersen and accompanying Atlantic article arguing that fantasy

and the right to believe whatever tall tales we want have been a feature of American culture possibly since the Colonial era. We watched a video of a recent in-depth interview with Andersen. We also took time to honor founding AAHS member and long-time UU Lloyd Drum, who passed away in October. As a tribute to Lloyd’s passionate appreciation of and desire to spread the ideas of Alan Watts, we viewed a short Watts video about the Self as part of the larger Universe.

**JANUARY 2018:** Freethinker Forum! Spirituality for Skeptics Redux. A further exploration of what “spirit” and “spirituality” can mean for non-supernaturalists. Material presented included quotations from the likes of Carl Sagan, Richard Dawkins, and others. Led by James.

**FEBRUARY:** Is the World Really Getting Better? Viewing on the big screen in the sanctuary of a recent multimedia presentation given by Steven Pinker, based on his new book, “Enlightenment Now: The Case for Reason, Science, Humanism, and Progress.”

**MARCH:** Interdependence, the Individual, and When to Love Your Neighbor. Presentation of a recent sermon on Individuality vs. Interdependence given by the Rev. David Breeden of First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis, the birthplace of Religious Humanism. Discussion of Humanist ethics applied to the gun debate. We read a short essay Doug Muder entitled, “Love Your Neighbor First, Not Second,” which cleverly argues that the core idea of Humanism is inverting the order of Christianity’s traditional two most important commandments.

Also: James cross-promoted to AAHS his Adult RE study and discussion group on the 2017 Skinner House volume, “Humanist Voices in Unitarian Universalism.” The book is highly recommended for anyone who wants to understand Unitarian Universalism better. This concise but rich collection of writing from a diverse range of authors brought together 20 to 25 people in 2 sections of the class for a total of 10 meetings. The quality of discussion, engagement, and sharing in the group was exceptional, making it one of Adult RE’s most successful programs in recent years. (You’ll see more about this in the Adult RE report.) The book presents humanism as a diverse and vital philosophical tradition born largely within UUism, a commitment to love and justice that is not nearly about negation of the supernatural as much as it is about “a love affair with life” (Michael Werner), the best of human thought, and a commitment to the well-being of humankind and the planet upon which we depend.

#### **LOOKING AHEAD:**

We are looking to expand the topics of some of our Freethinker Forums to encompass even more political and cultural issues, in order to widen our reach, relevance, and base of participation. Upcoming topics may include: current work to protect reproductive rights in the US; why people of all ages benefit from comprehensive lifespan sexuality education, the state of First Amendment battles (Establishment Clause and other issues); what a Humanist chaplain does.

We have considered changing our name to simplified AHA – Atheists, Humanists, and Agnostics. We are also seriously considering becoming an affiliate group of the American Humanist Association, which would put us in their online directory and help promote AAHS and UUSM. AAHS is already an affiliate of the UU Humanist Association, which has some overlap. Many other UU Humanist groups within congregations are also affiliated with the American Humanist Association. This is on James’s to-do list.

The Humanist banner for the sanctuary initially proposed by Mark, James, and former AAHS member Ian Dodd, and approved unanimously by the board, is moving closer to reality. An update on this appeared in the March UUSM newsletter.



## ART WALL

*Submitted by Beverly Alison*

The Art Wall has once again provided a wide spectrum of art to the congregation: creative storytelling Quilts, toys constructed with hidden political messages, inspiring watercolors, and, currently, oils depicting local scenes. Cheech Marin has purchased two pieces from our current Margaret Garcia show for his new Riverside Museum featuring Latino art. We are expecting an introduction to the galaxy/ionosphere by the August artists, and the fine artists from Zimbabwe will visit us again in September.

Our committee goal is to challenge, inspire, and give pleasure through our presentations. We hope to broaden perspectives and inspire thought. Be excited about next year -- we are.

Art Wall team: Beverly Alison, Bob Dietz, Carol Ring, Jackie Schwab, and Pam Teplitz.



## BOOKSTORE

*Sarah Mae Harper*

Since last April, the bookstore in Forbes Hall has continued to be free. Please, enjoy these books! In the next year I will solicit volunteers to help reorganize the books along the lines of the seven UU principles. After the reorganization, I will accept new donations and start selling the books again.

## CAMP DE BENNEVILLE PINES WEEKEND

*Respectfully submitted, Jacki Weber*

Purpose of committee: Our Camp Organizing Team is geared to promoting and providing life-affirming programming affiliated with our shared spiritual home in the mountains, Camp de Benneville Pines, and raising scholarship support so that congregants can attend retreats regardless of their ability to pay.

Camp de Benneville Pines is a full-service, year-round retreat center owned collectively by the 50+ UU congregations located in the Pacific Southwest District of the UUA (Southern California, Southern Nevada, and Arizona). Year-round youth, family, and adult camps foster multi-generational community, spiritual and personal growth, environmental stewardship, leadership development, and social justice education and action. While UU retreat centers dot the east coast, Camp de Benneville Pines is the only landed UU camp in the western United States. Our camp is located in the mountains 100 miles east of our church's front doors.

In 2017, we Santa Monica UUs attended, and in some cases served as volunteer leaders for, the Women's Weekend (May), Social Justice Camp (August), Art Camp (August), Yoga Camp (September), Daughters of Diana (October), Music in the Mountains (November), Summer and Thanksgiving Family Camps, and youth

camp for Elementary, Middle, and High School Youth, as well as Young Adults. Check out what's coming up in 2018 and beyond by visiting [uucamp.org](http://uucamp.org).

A new Camp Organizing Team was formed in Fall 2017 as Jacki Weber and Patrick Meighan stepped down from overseeing our Santa Monica de Benneville Pines weekend, after nearly a decade in service.

Roles and Committee members include: Spring Planning for Activities at UUSM to promote camp - Joyce Holmen, Karl Lisovsky, Chela Metzger, Haygo Salibian, and John Zinner; Dean - Amy Brunell; Registrars - Karl Lisovsky, Chela Metzger; Promotion - Jen Chen, Bill Blake, Amy Brunell; Programming/Activities - Abby Arnold, Kirk Attenbury, Bill Blake, Karlton Bontrager, Beth Brownlie, Amy Brunell, Peter Capone-Newton, Ellé Long, Kathleen Hogue, Joyce Holmen, Lois Hutchinson, Chela Metzger, Lorenzo Pelayo, Haygo Saliban, Jennifer Styzens, Rick Teplitz, and Jacki Weber.

In 2017, we sought to bring 100 Santa Monica UUs to camp for our September family weekend to deepen community and strengthen family and collegial relationships. We achieved over 80! At this, our special Santa Monica congregation camp, we hiked, tie-dyed, played, meditated, sang, danced, wrote, recreated, and worshipped in the woods. We celebrated our eldest camper, Len Harris, and programmed activities from go-cart building to wine tasting.

It's our place in the nearby San Bernardino mountains to go, time after time, to smell the pine forest, to gaze at a huge sky full of stars, to explore a trail or a stream or a thought, to swim or hike or write or paint, to listen and laugh and cry, to reach out and reach in -- and then to return to our church and our homes refreshed.

THIS YEAR'S SANTA MONICA WEEKEND WILL TAKE PLACE SEPTEMBER 14-16, 2018. We are excited to welcome Rev. Greg and more of our community for a wonderful weekend of community building and fortifying spirits. Registration is open. Email Karl Lisovsky at [lisovsky@ucla.edu](mailto:lisovsky@ucla.edu) for a registration form.

## CAREGIVERS' SUPPORT GROUP

*Joyce Holmen and Helen Brown*

The Caregivers' Support Group held its last session in September. When we began meeting 17 years ago, the term "family caregiver" was not common, and people who had such responsibilities -- up close or across the continent -- generally bore them in isolation, frustration, and confusion. Since then, many books, news stories, documentaries, websites, and organizations have sprouted up, offering insight or assistance to folks taking care of a parent, spouse, friend, or grown child. WISE services in Santa Monica now has a group for caregivers, too. Over the long years, a couple of dozen church members have benefited from having a regular opportunity to discuss their own situation with empathetic others who truly know how difficult things can be. We've shared problem-solving suggestions, resources, tears, laughter, and more. Members of the group will continue to be available to the church community as needed.

## CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR NURIT GORDON

It has been a busy year at the office with changes in Ministry and Leadership, ongoing facility projects and improvements, and with the additional energetic pledge drive this year.

High points of work done this year, on top of my regular weekly tasks, included the following:

Implementation of the budget approved at the 2017 Annual



Meeting; preparations for the new church year in September; on-boarding of new staff (the Rev. Greg Ward, Teri Lucas in the Religious Exploration department, and Ryan Humphrey in the Music department).

I generate the Monthly Finance Reports and Monthly Board reports. I schedule facility repairs as needed and projects as listed below. We mailed the end-of-year statements and followed up with the Stewardship Committee regarding lapsed memberships at the end of the year. Everything requires follow up and recording of the data so that we have an accurate history of membership, pledges, and finances at the church.

The majority of work in February and March had to do with generating the 2018-19 budget, which is still a work-in-progress at the time I write the report. This year, too, was handling the switch from a Calendar Year pledge drive to a Fiscal Year pledge drive (including the matches from the new Sustainability Fund).

As of April 2018, we are still receiving pledge payments for 2017. We received a significant amount (\$5400) in March and April after we sent a letter to members who had not yet fulfilled their pledge commitments.

#### **OTHER PROJECTS AND HIGHLIGHTS FROM THIS PAST YEAR:**

- Facility maintenance and projects
- Forbes plumbing overhaul
- Forbes linoleum replacement, following the project above
- HVAC: major cleaning and installation of new heating system filter
- Sanctuary and external lighting: completion (almost) of project
- Irrigation system improvements
- Carpet and upholstery cleaning
- Re-upholstery of Forbes sofa, chairs
- Minister's doors to order and install (doors are here, awaiting installation)
- Installation of two new faucets in Forbes women's bathroom and water heater
- Forbes Arizona entrance: soil engineer's recommendation to underpin the area around the doorway with reinforced grade beam
- Annual tree trimming and annual window washing.

#### **WORKING WITH COMMITTEES:**

In addition to working with the Facilities Development Committee (FDC) on regular basis, I am coordinating with the Communications Team and the FDC to establish roles and responsibilities chart (RACI) charts to describe their efforts.

I am also working with Green Committee to help keep our space green and comply with all that is required to keep it that way.

Working with Stewardship, I mainly provide pledge information, which changes on daily basis.

Working with Membership, I follow up with people who are changing their membership status or who make inquiries that call for Membership Committee follow-up.

I have been working with the Treasurer in preparation of the 2018-19 budget and also, when action is needed, provide information regarding CD maturity.

**MEETINGS:** Weekly meetings with Minister; weekly meeting with staff; meeting with Committee chairs and members as needed.

**NEW:** Minister's Sermons sale. Monthly we publish the Minister's Sermons, per members' orders. Each copy costs \$10 and the proceeds are deposited into the Minister's Discretionary Fund.

- Our EDD reserve was finally activated after a three-year waiting period when we were self-insured and transitioning into using the reserve only.
- Sustainability Fund: I keep record of all these pledges. Some are spread throughout the next four years, while others are already paid in full. We are still getting pledges in. I generate the matching amounts to the increases.
- Rentals: Rentals keep being a great source of income but not without all the hard work we do at the office -- and much of it thanks to Nancy Thompson. She meets with all our prospective rental clients and maintains and follows up with the current ones. We have between 30 to 35 weekly meeting at the church; most of them are 12-step groups. We also had about 25 events rentals including memorial services, recitals, and other meetings with a large number of participants.

**OFFICE STAFF:** I want to thank Nancy Thompson, our Administrative and Financial Assistant, and Jackie Schwab, our Communications and Volunteer Coordinator, for all their hard work and their support to the Administration and Membership at the church. Their dedication is priceless. They are a great team to work with and, with their help, we are able to keep all church operations and communications working smoothly.

## **COFFEE COMMITTEE**

*Linda van Ligten, Coordinator*

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 aware of our environment. We serve coffee and tea in ceramic cups. Coffee grounds are put into the compost barrel. 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. Our committee is grateful for the numerous people who have donated cookies and tea this past year; Girl Scout cookies were especially appreciated.

As coordinator, I would like express my appreciation for a great group of dedicated people on this committee. They are as follows: Kit Shaw, Alicia van Ooyen, Phyllis Kory, Sheila Bjornlie, Leah Moore, Susan Stahl, Pam Teplitz, Sylvia Young, Sheila Cummins, Kim and Barbara Andres, Deirdre Dietel, Eileen McCormack, Hugo Contreras, Cathy Wolfson, Linda Marten, Katie Malich, and Rebecca Crawford.

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.

## COMMUNICATIONS AND VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR JACKIE SCHWAB

Overall, this has been a very productive and busy year in my role as Communications and Volunteer Coordinator. I have continued to coordinate creation of the Thursday email announcements and the weekly Sunday Orders of Service. Special email announcements concerning specific events or information, as needed, have also been part of my job duties.

This past year I have been able to use the flexibility of my part-time work hours to help support both the Communications Team and the Membership Committee – attending meetings during various times and following up with assigned tasks for each committee as assigned and needed.

I look forward to continuing to support UUSM's communications and programs as determined best by the UUSM community at large. And I look forward to the next year at UUSM. A huge "Thanks!" to everyone I have worked with over the past year!

## COMMUNICATIONS TEAM (COMM TEAM)

*Lois Hutchinson, Chair*

The role of the Communications Team (Comm Team) is to support the vision and mission of UUSM by coordinating efforts across multiple communications channels. This year, team members

- Led the board to approve the team's charter;
- Helped staff to convert newsletter notification emails to a more-graphical presentation and platform;
- Finalized a checklist to help members and staff promote events;
- Completed a roles and responsibilities chart (RACI) to inform leadership, Rev. Greg, and other staff;
- Connected with numerous committee chairs to help them plan and execute communications strategies;
- Streamlined production of this very Annual Report you are reading.

In the late summer and fall, Comm Team members polled the membership to determine "How do you get info about UUSM?", evaluating the various outreach strategies. Ten interviewers reached 74 randomly assigned respondents, most often by phone. The purpose of the survey is to guide us in making evidence-based decisions about how we allocate resources – and maybe try some new things. Check out the results at [http://www.uusm.org/sites/default/files/uploaded\\_images/uusmsurveyinfographic.pdf](http://www.uusm.org/sites/default/files/uploaded_images/uusmsurveyinfographic.pdf).

The members of Comm Team are primarily the volunteers and staff currently working hard on the church's newsletter, social media, publicity, website, etc. We welcome new members with expertise (Are you on Instagram?) to help us increase our collective efficiency and effectiveness.

## DINING FOR DOLLARS (D4\$)

*Farrokh and Garland Allen, General Chairs*

Dining for Dollars (D4\$) 2018 is proud to report that our expected income for this year's bidding will exceed \$35,000. On February 18 and 25 we held our annual silent auction of events generously provided by members and friends of our congregation. We had 71 diverse dining opportunities which included themed home-meals and several outings to interesting destinations in greater Los Angeles. In addition, we had seven "Goods and Services" offerings which included a custom sermon offered by our minister, professional counseling, and custom hand-knit art works. Just under 1,000 winning bids were accepted. Collection of monies has approached 100%.

Our events span the calendar from early spring 2018 through January 2019. These gatherings build our community as members get to know one another one-on-one and in small groups. We were pleased to offer a discount coupon to first-time bidders as well as a free event ticket to each of our new congregational members. The social value of D4\$ is of equal importance to our church as the money raised for our general fund.

We are thrilled that 28 people worked together to make the D4\$ project happen. Our committee included Farrokh and Garland Allen (General Chairs), Melinda Ewen and Rebecca Crawford (Data Management), Carol Ring (Graphic Design), Cheryl Barnett, Barbara Gibbs, Emily Hero, Linda Marten, and Mary Naughton (Solicitors). Plus, we had a team of over 20 people on the final bidding day who chose the winners, did data entry to digitize the handwritten data, and made us lunch. And Lucy Hahn is the "reminder" who contacts hosts a short time before their event to make sure all goes smoothly.

We will kick off the 2019 season in November with a thank-you party for our committee and a getting-to-know-you opportunity for new volunteers. We are proud to support our church community!

## DIRECTOR OF MUSIC (DOM)

### DR. ZANAIDA ROBLES

UCCSM continues its long history of extraordinary music-making. Congregational hymn singing is stronger than ever, and our musical literacy as a congregation is to be commended. Anthems for the offering and music for the morning segments of the service vary in style and reflect the different themes and topics emphasized at each service. Whether offered by the choir, by our staff musicians, or by a guest artist, anthems during worship represent our best effort to present our most highly skilled work in service and in gratitude for the sacredness that binds us during worship.

Our six-person music staff consists of the Director of Music (myself), newly hired Staff Accompanist Ryan Humphrey, and Choir Section Leaders Colleen Keene, Jyvonnie Haskin, Gabriel Paredes, and James Hayden. Each member of the music staff brings a wealth of talent, training, and experience in music performance. The choir is comprised of volunteers with varying musicianship skill levels. Anyone from our church community is welcome to participate. However, the pace at which we learn music is quick, and basic sight reading and aural skills are helpful. Sections leaders provide vital support needed for our volunteer choir members to confidently sing even our most challenging music with accuracy and finesse. Our music staff and volunteers not only provide musical support and leadership during congregational hymn singing, but we perform a variety of skilled solos and ensemble works in various styles through our anthems that serve to enrich the worship



experience.

The Music Committee, comprised of volunteers from the choir and from the larger church community, provides crucial support to the music department in the areas of Choral Library Maintenance, Promotions and Correspondence, Choral Development and Retention, Special Events, Guest Artists, and Fundraising. This year, due to our improved organizational structure and streamlined meeting schedule, our Music Committee has increased its overall support of the music department by helping to provide opportunities to work with artists like Roy Zimmerman and Jason Shelton. We've collaborated with neighboring UU Church music communities. We've continued our outreach activities at local nursing homes. And we've raised funds to provide more music staff support at the 9 am service.

The annual Remembrance Vespers is a time when we offer a major choral work from the classical genre. On November 5, 2017, our Remembrance Vespers featured Requiem by W. A. Mozart. It was a special evening of music through which we were able to turn toward that which we hold sacred. Through our music, we shared our stories of love, loss, and healing.

2017-18 has been a challenging yet satisfying and dynamic year of musical newness as we embraced our new minister. We bid a fond farewell to Accompanist Daniel Gledhill in December. We continue to build strong bonds of community through our musical experience. My goals for the coming year as Director of Music are to continue to encourage musical literacy and congregational singing during worship; to continue working with our new minister to create a rich worship experience with music that comforts, uplifts, and challenges us; and to improve the stewardship of our resources to ensure transparency and sustainability for our music program. I remain honored, privileged, and humbled to serve as Director of Music at UUCSSM. We would not be able to engage as deeply in our spiritual artistry if wasn't for the love and support we receive from this congregation.

## **DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION (DRE) KATHLEEN R. HOGUE**

As I pointed out in last year's report, there has been a shift in the way that families "do church," with more sporadic attendance across the board (regularly attending families often come once or twice a month, rather than three to four times as once was typical). This matters little as far as preparation for classes is concerned since teachers, supplies, and curricula are still necessary regardless of how many children attend. Last year's change at 11:00 AM, creating one multi-age class, ended up being a good call. The children seem to be enjoying coming together as a multi-age group and learning about the themes from Soul Matters.

This year, 38 children and youth were registered (68 attending) with an average attendance of 24. We are serving 50 families. In the past, attendance records did not consistently include the COA and OWL classes. The COA class has four children participating regularly this year, and the OWL classes have eight to 15 in each. We currently have one staff member (Preschool) and a paid childcare provider, the new LRE Assistant Teri Lucas, and many additional volunteer helpers.

My role in Sunday morning worship this year included collaboration with the Rev. Greg Ward on regular and intergenerational services. I have provided countless stories and been involved from the Great Flood to goat coats! I have also been available during this time of transition to assist individual Worship Associates with technology and other issues and have now stepped back as they have become more comfortable with their

new responsibilities.

On May 20 we will celebrate Lifespan Religious Exploration (LRE) Sunday with a special focus on love, acceptance, and our UU Principles. The service will include a Bridging Ceremony for our high school seniors and recognition of all of the volunteers who make our Lifespan RE programs possible.

I continue to be impressed with all of the good work that goes on here. I am also grateful that the congregation stepped up when the RE Program leaders expressed the need for an assistant in the RE department. These extra 10 hours a week have proven invaluable in allowing me to focus on more of the long term and visioning aspects of the program. I am continuing with the process of becoming a credentialed religious educator. This work helps me to improve our RE program for all ages and stages of life and to provide leadership in our community. I will be presenting myself to the Religious Education Credentialing Committee in Boston in June of 2019.

Details of our extensive Lifespan Religious Exploration (LRE) program are in a separate report, below.



## **DISABILITY SUPPORT GROUP (DSG)**

*Michael Young and Mark Christiansen*

The Disability Support Group (DSG) has been active for almost two years. We have authored the "Are You Aware" articles in the Newsletter and maintained the DSG table in Forbes after second services. Our goals are: to provide a discussion space for people with disabilities; to increase awareness of the needs of people with disabilities in the church, and to promote a sense of welcome for all.

Last March we talked about doing different activities such as reach out to Religious Exploration, and Peace and Social Justice, as well as the new Care Ring with Linda van Ligten. Also, we're looking for different ways to increase visibility for our group and our involvement in other church activities.

## **ERNIE PIPES LECTURE SERIES**

*Diana Spears and Patrick McGuire*

When the Rev. Ernest D. Pipes, Jr., retired 26 years ago after 35 years as Minister of what he calls "the little church at Eighteenth and Arizona, in Santa Monica" the annual Ernie Pipes Lecture Series was established by a Committee led by Ray Goodman. The Series has provided a variety of noted speakers beginning with the Rev. William Schulz, then President of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), who also spoke at the 25th anniversary in 2016. In between, speakers covered a wide range of subjects from the environment, health, civil liberties, philosophy, and religion.

Speakers were politicians, ministers, activists, media professionals, and an actor. The Series represented the kinds of concerns that inspired Ernie throughout his ministry and we feel it has been a fitting tribute to his time in the pulpit at UUSM. And we continue to delight in Ernie's regular presence among us as our Minister Emeritus.

In 2017, the Series welcomed back our Minister Emerita, the Rev. Judith Meyer, to give an important talk, "Falling Out: Alienation and Community in Divisive Times." Rev. Judith ministered here at UUSM for 15 years, from 1993 to 2008, before moving to Tennessee with her husband, architect David Denton. She offered reflections on life in a "red state" – including walking nearly everywhere instead of driving, while getting to know many people on those daily walks and in community activities. She suggested ways to cope with the widening and hostile differences in our country. Judith reflected on how democracy on our national stage is being threatened – the ignoring of the science of climate change, the shunning of critical thinking, and the dismissal of civility – and how this trend is disturbing. She asked, "How can we survive this?"

Although she doesn't have a magic bullet, Judith did lay out a path in her closing words: if we nurture the qualities within that teach us how to speak the truth and help one another, there is hope if we can figure out how to meet with others in a public space. "Because ... something about being together on common ground brings hope that we can still make the corrections that will save us from ourselves. And with that hope, you and I will remain human."

## FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (FDC)

*Beth Brownlie, Bryan Oakes, and Brad Hutchinson (Tri-chairs)*

Active members include Nurit Gordon, Alison Kendall, Jo An Peters, Steve White, and John Zinner. We have active representation on the Board and regularly give reports to the Board. The FDC provides:

- Advice on maintaining the functionality of all facilities
- Expertise and project management for facility improvement projects large and small
- Proposals to maintain the safety of buildings and outdoor areas for staff, members, and rental visitors
- Quick action on occasional needed repairs to buildings and infrastructure
- Research and proposals on sustainability goals for the church community
- Momentum toward a highly sustainable campus through energy and water savings: reducing waste overall along with our carbon footprint.

This year we continue to refine the Sanctuary Lighting Upgrade (SoUL) Project. This includes reconnecting and replacing the exterior lighting that surrounds our campus, which is required by the City of Santa Monica. This was disconnected when we started the Office Replacement, Pergola, and Sanctuary Lighting Project. We are hoping to get it done quickly, so we will not get a citation from the city. It is required to have a certain amount of lighting for safety.

Also, we replaced the plumbing in Forbes Hall, a significant project. We replaced the Forbes Women's Bathroom faucet fixtures and added a new instant hot water heater at this location, again, another requirement by City code. Other significant projects we undertook are: painted the Cottage trim and windows, making repairs to our garden watering system with flags that



identify leaks, cleaning up and planting new California native and drought-tolerant plants, reupholstering our lounge chairs in Forbes Hall. Our staff member, Nurit Gordon, keeps the committee informed and expertly executes our extra projects and regular maintenance tasks including trimming trees, maintaining our storm water management system, and keeping carpets cleaned. We painted the interior of the cottage this year with a great amount of help from our staff person, Kathleen Hogue, and dedicated volunteers, including Linda van Ligten. Our exterior courtyard has been improved with many umbrellas, thanks to Steve White. Shout out to everyone who helps us get the work done!

Our goals for 2018-19 include improvements to our buildings, landscape, and campus to bring them further in line with our values; particularly our seventh principle, which calls us to be in harmony with the Earth and all living creatures. The FDC plans to work toward the following goals in coming years:

- Develop a comprehensive list of all equipment on campus and estimate life-span and cost replacement. This will inform us on upcoming capital expenditures.
- Identify and clarify the roles and responsibilities on this Committee. Review Church Policies to ensure alignment with goals and roles/responsibilities.
- Replacing our Sanctuary Front Doors with City code compliant, operable, and accessible doors.
- Make upgrades to the Arizona Entrance at Forbes Hall to alleviate the subsidence of the Building.
- Review replacement options for our ailing HVAC system in Forbes Hall.
- Review options for placing a lift in Forbes Hall to make all classrooms more accessible to all.
- Convert all interior lighting to LEDs to reduce our energy costs and avoid the environmental hazards of mercury-laden fluorescent bulbs.
- Once our building systems are all converted to the lowest practical energy usage, we plan for solar panels to be installed on Forbes Hall. The goal is to become a Net Zero Energy Building (a mandate of the California building code).
- Improve the indoor air quality of all spaces by placing walk-off mats at main entries, cleaning our carpets and floors more regularly, and keeping dust at bay within our spaces, thereby improving the health of our entire Community.

The committee works well together. All members bring immense experience and expertise to the table, along with a thoughtful, inquisitive approach, and deep affection for our communal space. We have worked hard at developing trust in our community through extensive communications: multiple town halls, e-blasts, and newsletter articles. Project books to view – detailing budgets, quotes, and plans for FDC projects – are available in the office.

We are always on the lookout for new members and ask that community members let us know about programs and features that would improve our connection to our UU values and improve the overall UU Santa Monica experience.



## FAITH IN ACTION COMMISSION (FIA)

*Sarah Mae Harper and James Witker, Co-Chairs*

The Faith In Action Commission (FIA) is composed of four committees – Peace & Social Justice (PSJ), Green Living, Hunger Task Force, and Interweave. Individual committees have provided their reports separately, except that Interweave needs new leadership. In the interim, PSJ has taken responsibility for planning our congregation’s annual involvement in LA Pride, coming up June 10. The Hunger Task Force continues the Lunches for Bunches program, and we hope that committee will re-expand its work as well.

The FIA Commission represents all the programs and activities at UU Santa Monica focused on putting our UU principles, values, and commitments to love and justice into action in our local community and the wider world. We’ve been busy and feel that the work we do to advance causes of peace, justice, and sustainability are centrally important, and that the outreach and visibility that results from our work is advantageous and a credit to our congregation. As always, we invite you to get involved.

**COOPERATION AND COLLABORATION:** In the last year plus, FIA has sought more collaboration between its own committees and with other congregational interests. When more of us work together on issues of common interest, our projects can get bigger and more interesting/ambitious. For example: Spring 2017’s “Faithful to the Future” presentation and reception with Michael Dowd (worked on by the Green Committee, Adult RE, and AAHS); October’s screening of “Love Thy Nature” with the filmmakers (Green Living and FIA in general); February’s Second Sunday Supper and Roy Zimmerman concert (a smashing success organized by PSJ and the Music Committee with support from Rev. Greg and Green Living). We have also pursued opportunities to work with outside groups such as the LA Westside chapter of Organizing For America (OFA), with which PSJ co-hosted November’s Anti-Racism panel and the Homelessness panel in March, both big successes.

**RALLIES AND MARCHES:** FIA has also led UUSM’s involvement in the Downtown LA Marches (Women’s March, March for Science, March for Our Lives, etc.) which have become so numerous since the 2016 election. These outings are opportunities to meet and connect with other progressive concerned citizens/humans, and they provide representation for UUs, too. FIA has also led involvement in marches with UU congregations all over LA through the JUUstice LA group.

**SOCIAL MEDIA AND PROMOTION:** FIA has increased our messaging through social media, primarily Facebook with occasional tweets (Twitter), plus posting our events to our

dedicated Meetup.com group, which includes several hundred subscribers not otherwise connected to UUSM. We tend to use a handle/nickname, “UU Santa Monica Peace & Justice Team.” This is because we’ve found “Faith” to be a confusing or loaded term these days, as it is usually understood to be primarily concerned with Christianity and sectarian aims rather than the broad, humanistic goals of UU values. But we do not advocate changing the name of our commission at this time.

**NEW BROCHURE:** With input from committees and team members, James created a tri-fold brochure to give a concise overview of FIA in a way that would be intelligible and compelling to visitors and people seeing it for the first time. Pam Teplitz has assisted with editing and printing, and we’ve placed them in the sanctuary foyer and in Forbes to help publicize our work and invite participation.

## FICTION READING GROUP

*Respectfully submitted: Lucy Hahn and Melinda Ewen*

The Fiction Reading Group, which meets on the Third Monday of the month in Forbes Room 1, from 7:00 p.m. until 8:30 p.m., started out as a pleasant and friendly group, and has become even more delightful over its past four-and-a-half years of existence. Having two leaders is very handy, as one facilitator can travel while the other carries on. We usually have five to eight attendees and have heard that a number of people, based on the announcement of the books we are reading, also read those books even if they don’t come to the discussion. We’ve been having wonderful meetings in 2017 and 2018, with insightful and varied participants, and generally excellent book selections. All are welcome, with the proviso that you make a healthy stab at reading the book.

This year we read: (July was a triple-header) *Brave New World*, by Aldous Huxley, 1984, by George Orwell, and *The Handmaid’s Tale*, by Margaret Atwood; (August) *Divergent*, by Veronica Roth; (September) *It Can’t Happen Here*, by Sinclair Lewis; (October) *Jane Eyre*, by Charlotte Bronte; (November) *To the Lighthouse*, by Virginia Woolf; (December) *The Golden Bowl*, by Henry James; (January) *Who Is Rich?* by Matthew Klam; (February) *Zen and The Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, by Robert Persig; (March) *Conversations with Friends*, by Sally Rooney; (April) *A Gentleman in Moscow*, by Amor Towles; (May) *Underground Railroad*, by Colon Whitehead; (June) *Mrs. Fletcher*, by Tom Perrotta.

## GARDEN OF ETERNITY COMMITTEE

**PURPOSE OF THE COMMITTEE:** Plan Garden of Eternity events, including Day of the Dead Celebration in November, and remind members and families of the availability of engraved bricks and benches as memorials to loved ones.

**Committee Members:** Alison Kendall (Chair), Nurit Gordon, Helen Brown, and Ernie Pipes. Former committee member Dr. Raymond Goodman died in 2018. His family is determining how they wish to add to the Garden of Eternity, where Ray’s beloved Betty became the first church member honored in our Garden.

**2017 ACTIVITIES:** About 10 bricks were installed in 2017 in time for the Day of the Dead ceremony held in November. Among those memorialized were Marion and Milton Holmen, who were long-time members of this congregation, Linda Marten’s mother, and Rev. Greg Ward’s parents. Altogether, 30 bricks have been installed so far.

**2018 ACTIVITIES:** Memorial Day promotion for engraved bricks. We hope to establish events during the church calendar

to encourage members to order bricks or benches in time for the November ceremony, and to identify ways to remember significant donors.

## **GREEN LIVING / GREEN SANCTUARY COMMITTEE**

*Alison Kendall, Chair*

The Green Living Committee, part of the Faith in Action Commission (FIA), meets monthly on the first Sunday of the month at 12:30 pm in SE Cottage. We have an active core of 16 members, a large email list, and partnerships with many church groups for programs.

**GREEN SANCTUARY ACCREDITATION AND SUSTAINABLE QUALITY AWARD:** The beginning and end of our church year were marked by official recognition for our Green Stewardship activities. On March 17, 2017, we received Green Sanctuary Accreditation by the UUA. Reviewers noted our Environmental Justice partnership in South LA and our Good Neighbor policy to reduce driving and parking impacts. And on April 26, 2018, we will receive our third Sustainable Quality Award from the City of Santa Monica. The Award reviewers particularly noted our Green Building education efforts. Beth Brownlie was especially helpful in compiling these award applications.

**VEGGIE BUS COMPLETION:** In September we celebrated completion of the conversion of a school bus to a seed library, performance stage, and classroom with our Environmental Justice partners at Community Services United (CSU), a South LA organization working on healthy food access and community empowerment. We provided green building and grant-writing assistance to CSU and helped them form a vital partnership with the LA Chapter of the US Green Building Council. We continue to support their ongoing Green Building Remodel project to create a café, produce market, catering kitchen and community center at the Paul Robeson Center on Vermont.

**SUNDAY SUPPERS AND CINEMA:** We hosted Second Sunday Suppers twice: in the Fall with a focus on Waste Reduction, and (co-hosted) in February just before Roy Zimmerman's concert tour fundraiser. In partnership with Peace and Justice, we hosted the "Love Thy Nature" Cinema film-showing with a reception for local environmental activists. Along with PSJ members, Green Committee members participated in the Women's March and the March for Science. Chair Alison Kendall is on the Steering Committee for the City of Santa Monica's May 19, 2018, Climate Fest and is helping plan the event and to present UCCSM activities there encouraging others to take "green actions" at home and collectively.

**EARTH DAY SERVICE AND GREEN LIVING FAIR:** The Green Living Committee worked with the Rev. Greg Ward and Worship Associate James Witker on a message to urge "Action not Despair" at the Earth Day Service on April 29. The Green Living Fair in the courtyard featured Committee members and other environmental activists sharing ideas on ways we can personally and politically work to address Climate Change and conserve resources. In RE that day, our youth planted edibles in the raised vegetable garden beds behind the Cottage.

**GOALS FOR NEXT YEAR:** Continue our partnership with CSU as they complete their major green remodel; support Emission Reduction efforts by members and church; develop a funding proposal for installing Photovoltaic Panels on Forbes Hall to offset church electrical energy use. This new project is feasible but

requires member investments of \$30,000, ideally by those able to benefit from federal and state tax benefits. It expresses our core values and is financially sound with a short payback period (under 10 years). To advance this project we need help from members who have investment expertise.

## **HEART AND SOUL WORSHIP**

*Submitted by Kikanza Nuri-Robins*

The Heart and Soul worship committee prepares and leads the quiet, contemplative worship service that is held once a month, at 5 pm, before the Second Sunday Supper. Committee members Kikanza Nuri-Robins, Joyce Holmen, and Karen Hsu Patterson have been joined in recent months by Worship Associates Rima Snyder and Catie Grasso.

We use the same monthly worship themes as in the morning services and RE programs. In Heart and Soul, we are able to go more deeply into the personal aspects of the themes. Our goal has been to offer a service that is an alternative for some and a supplement for others. Through music, silence, readings, and homilies we explore what the themes mean for Unitarian Universalists in a changing world. We have had as many as 15 worshipping this year, up from 5 attendees three years ago. Our goal was to offer a consistent worship experience and to build community among those who seek a quieter more contemplative experience.

In the next year we will continue as we have done, as we seek ways to connect our work more directly with that of the Worship Associates. The services will make even more use of silence and may begin to incorporate musical chanting using pieces from the Taize community.



## **HEART TO HEART CIRCLES / SMALL GROUP MINISTRY**

*Norm Richey, Chairperson*

Our Small Group Ministry is called Heart to Heart Circles. It consists of several groups whose members come together to speak and listen, especially listen, to what is being shared. To many who have participated, the Heart to Heart Circle is one of the most powerful and rewarding programs offered here at the church. This truly describes the experience of what the group is all about, a powerful and rewarding time for connecting heart to heart. What distinguishes the Circles from other groups is that there is no cross talk. This allows space for deep listening without judgment, and a safe space for all to share thoughts, feelings, and reactions to a monthly discussion theme, and how that theme may or may not have relevance in each of our lives.

As we closed out the 2017 Circles in December, the Facilitators'

Team decided to restructure the program to correspond to the Church's year. To get in sync, new Heart to Heart Circles started in January and will run through June. In January, 56 people signed up and were divided into five groups with an average of 11 members each. Each meeting featured shared readings on monthly themes, which included: Hope, Intention, Perseverance, Balance, Emergence, Creativity, and Blessing. Each topic was a catalyst for the sharing of, and deep listening to, personal stories. There will be no groups in July or August. The next Heart to Heart cycle will run from October 2018 through June 2019, with registration starting in August.

Heart to Heart Facilitators attend two monthly meetings; one to prepare for Circles, a time when leaders learn from each other and practice deep listening and sharing skills using the theme for the month; then a Heart to Heart Circle with members' sharing. The Heart to Heart Program sponsored the April 8 Second Sunday Supper, with a number of volunteers making the event a wonderful success.

Each year at the close of the program, the planning team asks for feedback from participants. The majority of members report that by the end of the program they feel that they are much better listeners – and that they better understand the meaning of deep listening. Most feel more connected with their respective group members, and some feel more connected to our UU community. From the Heart to Heart Circle experience, participants develop a deeper appreciation for and understanding of the UU First principle, "The inherent worth and dignity of every person."

2018 FACILITATORS: Kathleen Hogue, Margot Page and Wendi Gladstone, Cheryl Sims and Mark Berlin, Phil and Edna Bonacich, Betty Barclay, and Natalie Kahn. Shared Leadership Roles: DRE Kathleen Hogue; Norman Richey, Chairperson. Also, many thanks to Nancy Thompson for her ongoing administrative support.

## INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

*Steven DePaul, Jeff Ellis, and Jamie Duckman*

The Investment Committee's main responsibility is to oversee the UUCCSM Endowment Fund that was established by the Committee on Money Resolutions in 2015. Our Endowment Fund is intended to grow over time, helping to stabilize and strengthen the financial resources of our church. By reinvesting the interest and dividends, plus receiving an established percentage of all new bequests to the church, we hope to assure that financial future.

Our Endowment Fund is currently invested in two types of assets.

**WE HAVE OVER HALF OF OUR FUNDS IN THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST COMMON ENDOWMENT FUND (UUCEF).**

The remainder of our funds are in FDIC-insured Certificates of Deposit (CDs) that have maturity dates stretching out over three years. The interest is segregated from other church accounts and remains in the Endowment Fund. Over time as the CDs mature, that money is invested in the UUCEF using a dollar-cost-averaging approach.

We are using the UUCEF for a number of reasons, as you will see below. The main points are that we join with over 300 UU churches across America and the Unitarian Universalist Association itself to have a diversified investment portfolio with professional management, and also that we follow our principles of Socially Responsible Investing.

### **THE FOLLOWING IS AN EXCERPT FROM UUCEF.ORG:**

UUCEF was established in 1962 to make investments that

reflect UU values. It is a common investment fund for endowment funds, trust funds, and other assets of UU Congregations that have a long-term investment perspective and the need for income to support their missions. Assets are held in US and international equities, domestic and global fixed income securities, and other holdings intended to provide broad diversification.

The UUCEF's goals are to provide: 1) growth in the value of invested assets, and 2) sustainable distributions for congregational support. In order to reach these goals, the UUCEF has the following investment objective: achieve consistent returns within a moderate risk tolerance over the long term, sufficient to allow Congregations to take regular distributions and maintain the value of principal after adjustment for inflation and after all expenses.

Investing in the Fund can relieve an organization of the responsibilities of investment management and move that task to professional managers and advisors, whose work is directed and monitored by a team consisting of the UUA Board of Trustees, the UUA Investment Committee, the UUA Committee on Socially Responsible Investing, and UUA staff.



## LIFESPAN RELIGIOUS EXPLORATION COMMITTEE (LRE)

*Kathleen R. Hogue, DRE*

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 our Director of Religious Exploration, we meet once a month to brainstorm, plan, and organize programs in our subcommittees. We come together occasionally for various events throughout the year. We held a retreat over the summer (more of an advance) for the subcommittees to come together and work on ways to be more collaborative, to clarify roles, and to enhance spiritual practice in our daily lives.

Notably, this year we held an ice cream social on Sunday, September 24. Parishioners enjoyed a crash course in what we do in Lifespan Religious Education (RE) while eating sandwiches and ice cream. This event not only brought people together, it helped them to learn about all of the programs that we offer and how they can become involved. In December, the RE Committee for Children and Youth once again provided a spectacular pancake breakfast for families that participated in our holiday pageant. Our visibility in the church continues to be enhanced by the presence of a weekly table in Forbes Hall staffed by committee members who answer questions about our programs and help with registration for classes.

### **RE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

Programming for children and youth is made possible by more than 40 UUSM members who volunteer their time as teachers,



assistants, event helpers, committee members, and more.

**NURSERY/CHILDCARE 9:00 AM AND 11:00 AM** - Our program continues to provide extremely high-quality care for infants, toddlers and young children up to age three and older children as needed following services and for special events. We are blessed to have Mark Lattman join us most Sunday mornings to provide families with the most loving and professional care possible.

**PRESCHOOL 9:00 AM** - Though we began hopeful for this grade level and we trained teachers in the Spirit Play Curriculum, we eventually joined the preschool children with the K-2nd grade class once again this year. Our preschool teacher, Lizbeth Rivera is helping out in whatever classes where she is needed. We will make another attempt to offer Spirit Play next year.

**KINDERGARTEN-2ND GRADE 9:00 AM:** "Spirit Seekers" is a curriculum written by UUSM member Sabina Mayo-Smith. This year, the Spirit Seekers explored Sacred Stories. These stories come from many different faith traditions. We consider that sacred which is worthy of respect and awe. Sacred stores are important that frame the way we see the world. The program uses the banners that are displayed in the sanctuary to guide our story selection as well as AAHS (Atheists, Agnostics, Humanists & Secularists). We also talk about each faith's artifacts, rituals and traditions. The class includes picture books, crafts, games and snacks.

**3RD-5TH GRADE 9:00 AM "Spirit Explorers"** - How do we know what we know? All meaning stories, origin stories or creation myths, regardless of time or setting, have been a reflection of all the knowledge and technology available to its particular culture. "The UUuniverse Story" is designed to celebrate what we know in this century and to nurture a sense of awe and wonder for the world around us through a hands-on, science-based curriculum intended to give an appreciation of the incredible achievements of our species to understand the world and our place in it. Kids engage our UU Principles and values as they explore the chemistry of life, the ideas of evolution and change over time, and the interconnectedness of all people from our shared ancestry with each other and every other life form on the planet.

**6TH-7TH GRADE MIDDLE SCHOOL 9:00 AM "Interfaith Quest"** - This is a two-year comparative religions course that takes participants outside of our own walls to learn about the world's religions through building relationships and doing interfaith service work with youth from other religious traditions. Participants reflect on the unique and universal of religious experience, explore their own values as they relate to many other faith traditions, and increase their appreciation of religious diversity. The concept for this new course was inspired by the book *Acts of Faith: The Story of an American Muslim in the Struggle for the Soul of a Generation*, by Eboo Patel. Patel's experience taught him that when youth from faiths who share the common value of doing good work in the world come together to work cooperatively on a service project, it not only helps to break down barriers of misunderstanding, but also deepens one's own faith through sharing it with others.

**9TH-12TH GRADE 9:00 AM:** Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (YRUU) empowers teens, with the guidance of adult advisors, to create their own vision and mission for their program. YRUU youth explore 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 takes part in social justice projects, organizes social gatherings, and plans and leads a Sunday worship service for the congregation. The teen hosted a D4D Taco Night on October 21, then held several



fundraisers including a babysitting night to raise funds for their UU-United Nations Office (UU-UNO) trip to New York. Six youth then shared during April 22 service their recent experiences at this comprehensive seminar on supporting refugees and taking action on the global migration crisis.

**MULTI-AGE PROGRAM 11:00 AM:** "Soul Explorers" - Kids of all ages explore the monthly topics used in our congregation from the UU program Soul Matters. Children engage in stories, art, music, meditation, nature, and service. Using an experiential rather than a "school" framework, each session strives to engage children in four fundamental spiritual experiences. "The Four S's" of Nurturing the Soul are: Silence (meditation, listening, mindfulness), Service (leadership, helping others), Sunshine (connection with nature and our bodies through outdoor activities or movement), and Silliness!

**COMING OF AGE (COA)** - This program for 8th graders, offered every other year, is a unique curriculum designed to mark the transition from childhood to youth. It provides opportunities for youth to learn who they are and where they are on their spiritual journey, bond with other teens, celebrate their gifts, learn about this church and how it works, and articulate their own personal beliefs within the context of our UU faith. This year we offered COA for our 8th graders as well as any high school youth who had not yet had an opportunity to Come of Age at UUSM. The program culminated with Coming of Age Sunday on April 22, when five youth presented their credos during their service.

**FAITH IN ACTION SUNDAYS** - We offered three Faith in Action Sundays this year, engaging children and youth in acts of service to the larger community. Projects included making sandwiches at Turning Point Homeless Shelter and working on a vegetable garden. In October we had a special session on what to do when bad things happen. Children had the opportunity to write to their government officials. We also planted a diversity garden to remember that though we are all different, we are also all the same. We live on this same earth together and we all want to be happy, loved and safe.

**OUR WHOLE LIVES (OWL)** - We are proud to offer this extraordinary series of sexuality education curricula for five age groups: grades K-1, grades 5-6, grades 8-9, grades 10-12, young adults, and adults. Developed by and used in Unitarian Universalist and United Church of Christ congregations across North America, OWL helps participants make informed and responsible decisions about their sexual health and behavior. It equips participants with accurate, age-appropriate information in six subject areas: human development, relationships, personal skills, sexual behavior, sexual health, and society and culture. Grounded in a holistic view of sexuality, Our Whole Lives provides not only facts about anatomy and human development, but helps participants to clarify their values, build interpersonal skills, and understand the spiritual, emotional, and social aspects of sexuality. In 2017-18 we offered two OWL classes, each taught by co-ed teams of church members who have attended official OWL trainings, and each with meetings

for the children's parents.

OWL for the K/1 grades supports parents in educating children about birth, babies, bodies and families. Following Parent/Child Orientation, the six sessions engage children with stories, songs and activities and include a weekly HomeLink – a homework project for parents and children to do together to promote dialogue between them. Facilitators: Amy Thiel, Nick Henning, Kim Santiago-Kalmanson, Mike Monte, and Beth Rendeiro.

OWL Grades 5 and 6 class nurtures and supports the “three Rs of childhood sexuality” – Respect, Relationships, and Responsibility – by helping children gain self-respect and respect for others, build relationships with members of all genders and with many kinds of families, and understand their responsibilities regarding their own health and that of others. Facilitators: Nick Henning, Kim Santiago-Kalmanson, Mike Monte, and Beth Rendeiro, Linda van Ligten.

### RE FOR ADULTS

The Adult subcommittee seeks out, approves, and reviews programming offered each year. We have streamlined the application process and developed a Facilitator Packet that includes everything a group leader may need to have a successful program. We have been honing in on our purpose and outlining specific objectives for the year while working on our Charter. We expect that process to be completed this May.

Adult RE programs help us grow in wisdom, compassion, and ethical living. Small-group discussions give us the opportunity to learn from the rich body of knowledge available to us and to develop our own insights. We can learn from each other's differing perspectives and clarify our own. In so doing, we clarify our thinking and practice relational skills that will help us live by our values as we serve the larger community and the world. Adult RE is about transformation – of the individual, our Church community, and the larger society. The following are programs that we have offered this year.

### WEEKLY/MONTHLY PROGRAMS

**MEDITATION GROUP** - An Enjoyable Dive into the Who and What We Are - This group now meets on the first and third Mondays in Room 4. The class is presented to help participants master specific meditation skills. We endeavor to answer the questions Who am I? (attitudes and beliefs) and What am I? (Essence or True Nature). This class includes meditations which explore participants' spiritual goals. The bi-monthly group meetings also focus on insights gained throughout the month. It is expected that participants have a regular meditation practice. Facilitator: Bill Blake.

**OPEN MEDITATION** - Carol Ring, Bev Shoenberger, and Norm Richey began this year holding a space for anyone to come meditate with them twice a month – once in the afternoon and once in the evening. We sit in silence for 20 minutes, walk together for 10 minutes, journal, and share selected readings and discussion. Our intention is to integrate meditation with our daily lives, so that we can be more grounded, present and authentic. With five to 12 participants, all who have attended have found this time of quiet meditation and shared exploration to be deeply nourishing – a time of simply “being” amidst all the “doing” of our lives.

**60 AND OVER SENIOR WOMEN'S GROUP** - Women of this age group experience some unique challenges in relation to health, family, and life in general. Participants come together to share stories and wisdom together. The group first met in April on the first and third Tuesday mornings and is ongoing. Facilitator: Sandra Beebe.

### SERIES

**HEART 2 HEART CIRCLES** - Over the past several years, Heart



to Heart Circles (H2H) have become an integral part of our UUSM community. Within a Circle, members have the opportunity to share one's self, and to develop the skill of deep listening in an atmosphere of confidentiality, openness, trust, and acceptance. H2H Facilitators now use a shared leadership model to promote efficiency in the ongoing tasks and responsibilities. The program is also moving to a church-year calendar, offering six sessions for the 2017-18 year (five groups meeting with an average of eight to 12 participants each), and after that we will offer nine sessions per year. Chair: Norman Richey.

**SPIRITED SEEKERS** - “We shall endeavor to keep an open mind, delighting in the multitudinous expressions of spirituality and the deeply personal encounters with the divine, according to our understanding. We aim to discover new ways of looking at spirituality beyond the bonds of a specific theology, and we seek to enrich our own practices if we choose to engage in any.” Spirited Seekers aims to honor all six of those Sources for UUs in our spiritual growth and development. Last year's very ambitious goal of meeting each month generated several sessions. In May 2017, we hosted a talk by Julia Jonathan on Osage Indian Shamanism, which attracted eight attendees. During a 20-minute trance drumming, at least one person claimed to have met her spirit animal and felt illuminated and changed by the experience. Spirited Seekers has been on hiatus since last May but leader Sarah Robson encourages people to come forth and share their own spiritual interests and journeys, such as Mary Romanek's Hinduism Demystified.

**IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO BEGIN AGAIN** - Based on acclaimed author Julia Cameron's program of the same name, this was an eight-week course scheduled for June and July. Using actionable, simple steps, the group focused on “Discovering Creativity and Meaning at Midlife and Beyond.” The series is designed for those seeking to navigate changes or help create changes in one's life. This program was discontinued after three weeks due to attendance. Facilitator: Catherine Wolfson.

**SUMMER FILM SERIES** - “Standing for the Future,” with Michael Dowd - Michael Dowd explores the evolutionary significance of religion and the religious significance of science. He suggests that only a sacred, evidence-based view of past, present, and future can bridge the faith-reason divide and clarify our way forward. How shall we frame the need to shed our business-as-usual outlook on life and take on a new vision of possibility that can unite us as a species in joyful self-sacrifice and service? What vision will charge us with a sense of heroic purpose that the future is, indeed, calling us to greatness? Five sessions were held in June & July. Facilitators: Kathleen Hogue and James Witker.

**FAITH LIKE A RIVER HISTORY COURSE** - The group explored the dynamic course of Unitarian, Universalist, and Unitarian Universalist (UU) history: the people, ideas, and movements that have shaped our faith heritage. It invited participants each Sunday in October to place themselves into our history and consider its legacies. What lessons do the stories of our history teach that can help us live more faithfully in the present? What lessons do they

offer to be lived into the future? Facilitators: Kathleen Hogue and James Witker

**BUILDING YOUR OWN THEOLOGY II: ETHICS** - In this course, Gilbert's model has the Self connecting to a system of ethics – the system that you use to choose how to act in your relationships with yourself and others. Some questions are: Who am I? To whom and to what am I related? Within what communities do you identify yourself and how do those identities affect your life, your beliefs, your choices? Does who you are make a difference in what you believe? An average of 12 people participated on the four Sundays in February and March. Response was enthusiastic with strong support for a follow-up course this Fall. Facilitator: Leon Henderson-MacLennan.

**HUMANIST VOICES IN UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM** - Participants read and discussed this new and remarkable little volume of provocative, inspiring, and heart-warming essays that just might challenge one's views of Humanism. Contributors include luminaries of Secular Humanism and Unitarian Universalism such as Edd Doerr, Michael Werner, Chris Stedman, the Rev. David Bumbaugh, the Rev. Kendyl Gibbons, and the Rev. William Murry. Scheduled with four sessions in March, interest was so strong that we had to offer an additional section each week plus an extra Sunday, with an average of six to 12 people in each gathering. As the discussions were so rich and helpful, most participants requested another course on Humanism in the near future. Facilitator: James Witker.

**YOUNG ADULT TACO NIGHT** - In an effort to bring this group together, DRE Kathleen Hogue held a taco night at her apartment on April 13. Anyone ages 18 to 40 is invited to attend our next events and join in an ongoing group.

### ONE-TIME PROGRAMS

**REVERENCE FOR LIFE** - The purpose of this two-hour class on September 30 was to bring the Unitarian Universalist Animal Ministry (UUAM) to our Church. This event was followed by a dinner at the Veggie Grill. Facilitators: Bruno & Amy Lacombe.

**LAST HOURS OF LIFE** - At one's most vulnerable hour, our UU Principles guide us to be there for one another, acknowledging the inherent worth and dignity of all. Participants gained inspiration, encouragement, and information giving them the powerful opportunity to learn how to be present for someone at the transitional moment of death. This was a two-part event held on October 27 and 28 with about 15 participants. Facilitators: Cassandra Christenson & Beth Rendeiro.

**NON-VIOLENCE TRAINING IN THE SPIRIT OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING** - Non-violence is a philosophy, a spiritual practice, and a strategy. Beginning with framing in the UU faith, the training focused on the six principles of nonviolent direct action, and the six steps of a nonviolent campaign. Components included values exercises, historical examples, and responding to violence. The workshop was developed by clergy and lay members of CLUE's Santa Monica committee, building on the work of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. This was a day-long workshop on November 18. Over 30 people participated, and feedback was very positive. Facilitator: Abby Arnold.

**NEIGHBORING FAITHS** - Beth Shir Shalom (Judaism) - UUSM members of all ages were invited to join a Family Shabbat service on Friday evening, December 1 at the Beth Shir Shalom synagogue located at 1827 California Ave, Santa Monica. Facilitator: Dorothy Steinicke.

**THE COMMON READ** - "The Third Reconstruction" - Participants gathered on December 3 to discuss The Third Reconstruction

which serves both as a memoir and as a detailed, pragmatic guide to building and sustaining a social justice movement. From the UUA website: "Drawing on the prophetic traditions of the Jewish and Christian scriptures, while making room for other sources of truth, the book challenges us to ground our justice work in moral dissent, even when there is no reasonable expectation of political success, and to do the hard work of coalition building in a society that is fractured and polarized." Facilitator: Audrey Lyness.

**CAN WE MAKE ROOM FOR LOVE?** - This was a one-day workshop where participants were able to share their views, explore their questions, cultural overlays, attitudes and assumptions about love, loving relationships, marriage, and monogamy all in a safe, intimate atmosphere of inquiry and support. Approximately 20 people participated on February 10, and interest was strong for a follow-up group but scheduling has not allowed for this so far. Facilitators: Ian Dodd, Margot Page, and Beth Rendeiro.

**HINDUISM DEMYSTIFIED** - Participants are invited to explore one of the oldest religions, discussing and learning about where the concepts of karma, yoga, non-violence, reincarnation and vegetarianism all developed, what the main deities represent or how mantras are chosen and used, and how Hinduism is like Unitarian Universalism. This class began April 22 with 15 in attendance and will conclude May 25. Facilitator: Mary Romanek.



## LUNCHES FOR BUNCHES / HUNGER TASK FORCE

*Patrick Meighan*

In 2017-18, our congregation bagged and delivered 100 sack lunches per month to OPCC, or their Turning Point facility on 16th Street, and/or to their Safe Haven facility on Cloverfield. Lunches for Bunches (L4B) is a program of the Hunger Task Force, part of Faith In Action (FIA). In any given month, 8 to 15 UUCSM members participate in the preparation and packaging of our sack lunches. Over the course of the year, perhaps 50 to 75 different members, friends, and visitors have chipped in with this effort at least once: folks of all different ages and abilities, taking delight in the opportunity to work together to fill the stomachs of hungry people whom we'll probably never have a chance to meet or see. What a great way to spend a part of a Sunday! As such, we truly believe that our Lunches for Bunches program benefits UUCSM at least as much as it benefits the community we serve, and we're excited to continue L4B into 2018-19. Thank you. Contributions designated for the Hunger Fund are also greatly appreciated.

## MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

*Norm Richey and Beth Brownlie, Co-Chairs*

The Membership Committee is one of the most important committees in our UU community for a committed and

participatory membership is the life blood of our church. After several months of unfortunate dormancy, the committee was resurrected and took on new life in 2017, with an infusion of new members who have brought exciting energy, passion and commitment to the mission, purpose and vision of this committee in particular and our UU Church in general.

It is the mission of the Membership Committee to: welcome and reach out to newcomers to our UU Church; help and facilitate newcomers becoming members; integrate new members into the life of the congregation; cherish, nurture and support existing members; and actively seek out potential new members. Working closely with the Minister, Board of Directors, office staff, and other committees in order to fulfill its mission, a goal is to ensure that all members have the best possible experience as they explore and participate in UU Congregational life.

**GREETER TEAM:** *Barbara Gibbs, Chair*

To help meet its mission of welcoming and reaching out to newcomers, the Greeter Team welcomes and greets visitors as well as members during the half-hour preceding each Sunday Service. The team consists of 19 members, including three substitutes, each assigned to one church service per month. At the Greeter Team table, positioned on the front patio near the main sanctuary entrance, visitors are invited to write their names on visitor-labeled name tags as well as to fill out an information sheet for the office in order to electronically receive the Thursday announcements and monthly newsletter.

**WELCOME TABLE - VISITOR CENTER:** *Barbara Gibbs, Chair*

The Welcome Table/Visitor Center also welcomes newcomers. It is located on the lower patio, just outside Forbes Hall, and is staffed for approximately 30 to 45 minutes following each Sunday morning service. Currently there are eight members who rotate, with at least one at the table after every service. The volunteer answers visitors' questions and, importantly, distributes visitor packets (prepared by Carol Ring) that include informative pamphlets and other material pertaining to UUSM as well as the national Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA).

**MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE:** Kim and Barbara Andres, Barbara Gibbs, Carol Ring, Nina Emerson, John Susman, David Olson, Linda van Ligten, Sarah Robson, Jackie Schwab, Jo An Gaines, Alistar Jooben, Ting Lin, Beth Brownlie, and Norm Richey.

**GREETERS:** Denise Helton, Dwight Flowers, Audrey Lyness, James Duckman, Bryan Cahill, Karen Patch, Kim Andres, Barbara Andres, Tom Foretich, Katie Malich, Roberta Frye, David Olson, Wendi Gladstone, Kirk Attebury, Michael Young, Steve Young, Patricia Wright, Beverly Alison, and Barbara Gibbs.

**WELCOME TABLE:** Sheila Cummins, Carol Ring, Wendi Gladstone, Linda van Ligten, Barbara Andres, Kim Andres, Maria Scremin, and Barbara Gibbs.

## **MEN'S DISCUSSION GROUP**

*Richard Mathias*

The purpose of the UCCSM Men's Discussion Group is to offer a group setting for men to discuss a wide-ranging list of topics of interest especially to men. We have also gathered to watch various TV sporting events, gone biking and bowling and more. We have volunteered at Step Up On Second, the West Side Food Bank, and gathered things for Goodwill, etc.

Some members of the group have been long-time attendees and some may only attend one or a few meetings. The only role other than members who attend the meetings is the leader who is currently Richard Mathias. The leader finds and accepts various possible topics and decides which ones will be discussed. He

also begins each meeting and tries to manage the check-in and discussion so that all get equal opportunity to speak. He also coordinated the group's hosting of the Dining for Dollars Pancake Breakfast the past two years and will do so again this year.

Our focus is to have as many men as possible join in our discussion. This year we increased our average number of attendees per meeting from a few (three to five) to perhaps six to 12 or more. Last year we raised over \$300 at the Breakfast. Our goals for the coming year are to increase our attendance and to once again host the Breakfast.



## **MUSIC COMMITTEE**

*Cindy Kelly, Chair*

The purpose of the Music Committee is to work with the Music Director, the Minister, and the Congregation to support the Music Program. We raise funds to support our program, create special events for our community and the larger community, and provide communication and education about our traditional, quality music program.

The Music Committee members are: Director of Music Dr. Zanaida Robles, Choir Director; Cindy Kelly, Chair; Kim Miller, assistant; Leslie Beauvais, fund raising, concerts, and talent; Rima Snyder, communications and music catalog; Diana Spears, community outreach; Barbara Andres and Kelly Hatfield, hospitality for Dining for Dollars; and Lars Kjeseth, sustainably of the music program.

### **OUR GOALS ARE TO:**

1. Increase visibility
2. Provide more help with cataloging and storing of music
3. Cultivate a list of guest artists
4. Raise money for the Music Fund
5. Support musical events
6. Continue our outreach to the community
7. Add new members to our committee

**INCREASE VISIBILITY:** The Music Committee made posters, flyers and programs for musical events. We wrote copy for the Newsletter, Online Newsletter, and Order of Service each month. We also provided copy for newspapers and our church Facebook page. We maintained two bulletin boards in the music room for showcasing our choir and posting events.

**MAINTAIN AND CATALOG MUSIC:** Under the direction of our Director of Music Dr. Zanaida Robles and Choir member Rima Snyder, our very valuable collection of music is cataloged and saved. Each member of the choir is given a number and has a file in which copies of the music are placed. Then the music needs to be collected and refiled in the choir room. Norb Gallery, Diane Fletcher Hoppe, and Kim Miller have given their time to make sure the music is collected and filed in a timely manner.

**CULTIVATE A LIST OF GUEST ARTISTS:** Under the direction of Leslie Beauvais we have started to reach out to people within and outside the church who would like to perform at services and events. She is compiling a list of these performers.

**RAISING MONEY TO SUPPORT OUR MUSIC PROGRAM:** The committee raises money to support the music ministry. The reason for this is that the amount of money allocated by the Operating Budget of the church does not fully pay for our section leaders, our music purchases, for the upkeep of two pianos, the organ, and a keyboard, or to sponsor guest musicians, or other ongoing support for the music ministry.

**FUNDRAISERS:** Two Music fundraising concerts were organized by Leslie Beauvais. The music committee provided organizational support to Leslie by making flyers and programs for the concert, organizing hospitality for the performers, and providing people to receive donations at the door.

**SUPPORT FOR MUSICAL EVENTS AT THE CHURCH:**

- The committee organized the sponsorship of Second Sunday Supper and Singing of Carols in December.
- We co-sponsored, with Faith and Action and the Green Committee, the Roy Zimmerman Concert: by advertising, collecting money, and sponsoring the Second Sunday Supper.
- The committee will also support the choir's Dining for Dollars Concert on June 9 and provide refreshments afterward.

**OUTREACH TO THE COMMUNITY:**

- Diana Spears and the committee organized choir members and other vocalists to sing for Mother's Day 2017 at two assisted living homes in Santa Monica. Likewise, in December, they organized another ad-hoc group to enjoy singing Christmas carols in three such homes.
- Spring 2018: We were happy to add Barbara Andres, Kelly Hatfield, and Lars Kjeseth to our committee.

## NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

*Abby Arnold, Editor-in-Chief*

The Newsletter Committee continues to operate within its charter to produce a monthly newsletter for the congregation. During the 2017-18 program year, we had a change of editor-in-chief. Rick Rhoads moved away, and Abby Arnold agreed to take over, first on an interim basis, and then as the ongoing editor-in-chief. We produced 11 newsletters during this year, as we combined three months into two issues during the summer. The editorial team includes Barbara Andres, Rebecca Crawford, Laura Eklund, Joyce Holmen, and Dorothy Steinicke. Tom Kafka and Kit Shaw joined the team after January's committee outreach fair, and we are very glad to have them!

Carol Ring and Pam Teplitz trade off designing each issue, and Liz Fuller repurposes the newsletter contents for the website.

During this program year, we added regular news from the Choir and the Stewardship Committee and did features on the UU General Assembly in New Orleans, and on Camp de Benneville Pines.

The newsletter is mailed to about 100 households each month and is downloaded from the website by another 40 to 50 people during the month in which it is published.

Production of each newsletter takes over 100 hours of volunteer time, so the committee has discussed ways to either increase the newsletter's distribution or begin transition to an all-online format. Along with the Communications Team, we evaluated the newsletter's popularity, role in the congregation, and costs in both time and money. We proposed printing the newsletter in

color. We also proposed mailing it to all member households that have not opted out of receiving a hard copy, rather than requiring members to ask for a mailed copy. Depending on the Board's acceptance of these proposals, we will continue to discuss and continuously improve the role, content, format, and distribution of the newsletter.

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE

*Bob Dietz (Chair), Linda van Ligten (Co-chair)*

Members: Liza Cranis, Barbara Gibbs, Nalani Santiago-Kalmanson, and James Witker

We, the six members of the Nominating Committee, are charged by the bylaws to nominate members to run for election at the Annual Meeting for the Board of Directors and the Nominating Committee and also to appoint members (subject to ratification by the board) to the Finance, Personnel, Investment, and Ministerial Search committees. We decided to make this process of selecting candidates more visible to the congregation.

We started last summer by talking to other UU churches to learn how they run their Nominating Committees, which helped us start off in a couple of directions. Some churches ask people to apply for their leadership positions. We used this idea (with a little help from Rev. Greg) to make our process more visible by encouraging people to start a conversation with us about paths to leadership positions. We worked on getting the word out through talking to people, newsletter articles, and a couple of events. The first event was called "Nom Nom with the Nom Com" and we gave people donuts as we chatted with them about our process and how we wanted people to feel free to express an interest in being considered for the positions we fill.

The second event was "Showcase Sunday," which we learned about from the UU Congregation of Phoenix. We asked the Membership Committee to join us in inviting all of the committees to staff a table in Forbes Hall to answer questions about what they do and to start conversations with potential volunteers. After both services members of the congregation were encouraged to check out the committees, ask questions, and express interest if they might like to join. We added two sections for groups that were not committees but are always looking for new members or volunteers: "Special Interest Groups" and "Sunday Volunteers." Feedback was very positive, enough so that we definitely plan to continue on with Showcase Sunday again next year, as a step toward increasing leadership and active involvement among our members.

The Showcase and other activities helped us to understand what the committees do and to start conversations with people about leadership. We strived to nominate a cohesive board. Five of 2018 nominees have never been on the board before, and three of the continuing members are running for new positions. There's no vote required for Ron Crane to become the "Past President." We



are also very happy with our two candidates for the Nominating Committee and for the appointments we made to the Finance Committee and the Board.

We want to thank Patricia Wright, Kim Miller, Emily Hero, Jerry Gates, and Kikanza Nuri-Robins for their aggregate total of more than 25 years of service as Board Members, and to thank James Witker and Bob Dietz for fulfilling their terms on the Nominating Committee.

Next year we plan to continue to examine our process and build on what we've learned. We want to thank the congregation for supporting us.

## PASTORAL CARE PROGRAM

*Respectfully submitted, Rev. Greg Ward*

**Purpose:** The Pastoral Care Program helps provide care and attention to members of the church in accordance with the implicit mission for the church to love and respond to one another in times of need. Beyond this goal, the Pastoral Care Program is intended to activate compassionate and responsive leadership within the congregation as a whole.

### COMPONENTS AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE PASTORAL CARE PROGRAM:

- Ministerial Team: Rev. Greg (Rev. Kikanza Nuri-Robins, consulting)
- Pastoral Associates Team: Bettye Barclay (Chair); Jo An Peters, Karen Hsu Patterson
- Care Ring Team: Linda van Ligten (Coordinator); Rick Teplitz, Greg Wood, Larry Weiner, Beverly Alison, Helen Brown, Sylvia Young, Tom Ahern, Katie Malich, Sarah Robson, Kim Andres

**MEETINGS:** Pastoral Associates Team meet on the first Tuesday of the month from 7:00 to 8:30 pm (Meetings are confidential); Care Ring Team meets on the first Wednesday of the month from 1:15 to 2:30 pm (Meetings are open and information is sensitive but not confidential)

**FOCUS OF THE 2017-18 YEAR:** The Pastoral Care Program is new at UUSM. In forming, we set significant goals for the year:

- To clearly convey to the membership at large that a successful Pastoral Care program for a congregation this size will require the efforts of a great many committed volunteers and the awareness and cooperation of the entire congregation
- To coordinate the efforts of the three basic areas of the Pastoral Care Program: (1) Ministers; (2) Pastoral Care Associates; (3) Care Ring Team
- To clarify the ministerial responsibilities for a Pastoral Care Program, which involve:
  - Support and training for the various components
  - Coordination of the components working together
  - Triage and personal care in times of crisis (death and/or significant loss or trauma)
  - Rites of passage coordination (memorials, etc.)
- To support the development and ongoing work of a Pastoral Associates component which augments and extends the Ministerial reach further into the congregation by focusing on helping people process with critical transitions in life (change in identity due to loss of loved one, loss of health, change of jobs or lifestyle, etc.)
- To offer basic care out into the congregation by supporting and coordinating volunteers who are attentive to signs of need and respond with love and compassionate attention
- To increase awareness of basic ways to request and offer care



through:

- The Milestones book
- pastoralcare@uusm.org
- Submitting a request to the minister, Pastoral Associates members, Care Ring Team members, and/or to the Office Assistant
- To develop a sustainable structure and to earn the congregation's respect and trust

The Pastoral Care Program has been successful in its first-year endeavors. Progress has surpassed expectations on all the goals listed above.

### GOALS FOR THE 2018-19 YEAR

- Continue to recruit and employ care-givers who offer outreach to those in need
- To incorporate the skills and leadership of our 2018-19 Intern Minister, Robin Stillwater

## PEACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE (PSJ)

*Deidre Dietel and Roberta Frye, Co-Chairs*

The Peace and Social Justice Committee (PSJ) has continued its work on behalf of the goals of racial justice, immigrant rights, and labor rights, and in opposition to racial, ethnic and religious bias and repression in the United States and other parts of the world. Recently it has begun a project to collect needed items for the homeless. PSJ is a committee of our congregation's Faith In Action Commission (FIA).

PSJ ACTIVITIES include educational events, among them speeches, films, and panel discussions, as well as distributing relevant materials at the Faith in Action table in Forbes Hall on Sundays and at various events; and participation in marches, demonstrations, and vigils. In these activities it often collaborates with other groups, particularly Clergy and Laity for Economic Justice (CLUE), the Committee for Racial Justice (CRJ), and recently Organizing for Action (OFA). The Committee anticipates that it will continue to address these and related issues in the coming year.

**RACIAL JUSTICE.** PSJ continued to collect signatures on petitions calling on the Los Angeles District Attorney to prosecute the policeman who in May 2015 shot an unarmed, homeless black man, Brendon Glenn, in Venice. In October 2017, it organized a rally in downtown LA to hold police accountable for killing unarmed, mainly black and brown, people. The Committee also hosted a talk by anti-racist educator and activist Shelly Tochluk (May 2017), reinstalled our Black Lives Matter sign at church (July); attended an interfaith rally against white supremacy in solidarity with activists protesting the murder of black churchgoers in Charlottesville, Virginia (August); and co-hosted a panel of civil rights activists and educators, attended by more than 100 people (November). The Committee has continued its support for the Anaheim Three, who were arrested in February 2016 when they protested a KKK rally,

including a recent fundraiser for legal support.

**IMMIGRANT RIGHTS.** The Committee participated in a prayer vigil for Pastor Noe Carias Mayorga who had been detained by ICE and was being held at the Adelanto Detention Center; marched and protested with CLUE and Bend the Arc at the Hall of Justice, demanding local law enforcement agencies not collude with ICE and in support of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA); and participated in an interfaith march and rally to support DACA and SB-54, which would bar local and California law enforcement agencies from complying with federal immigration enforcement if an immigrant has not committed a major crime.

**LABOR AND OTHER ISSUES.** PSJ joined CLUE and other community supporters to picket with workers struggling for fair treatment at Le Merigot hotel. The Committee also hosted a day-long workshop on principles and practices of non-violent resistance. Turnout was strong and the training included a grounding of non-violent direct action in UU history by the Rev. Greg Ward. We helped organize and participated in the Resist March in Hollywood (June); hosted “Seeing through the Wall,” a documentary about a group of Americans who traveled in 2016 to Israel and Palestine seeking to understand the life of Palestinians living in the occupied territories and East Jerusalem (August); participated in the No Muslim Ban Ever protest in downtown Los Angeles (October); organized support for and congregational participation in the Brady Campaign Against Gun Violence interfaith vigil held at St. Monica’s Catholic Church – to mark the five-year anniversary of the Sandy Hook mass killing – with remarks by Rev. Greg (December); joined thousands of others in the Women’s March in downtown Los Angeles (January); with the Music Committee and support Rev. Greg and the Green Committee, hosted the Second Sunday Supper and concert with singer/satirist Roy Zimmerman, which packed the sanctuary (February); hosted photojournalist Francesco da Vinci, who spoke about his struggle as a conscientious objector during the Vietnam war (March); and participated in the March for Science in downtown LA and the annual interfaith solidarity march (both in April).

**HOMELESSNESS AND OTHER PROJECTS.** In August, PSJ began collecting items for the homeless at the FIA table in Forbes Hall, focusing on basic needs such as blankets, feminine hygiene, and emergency supplies, which will be distributed in backpacks through what is now called “The People Concern” (formerly OPCC, the Ocean Park Community Center) and Didi Hirsch Mental Health Services. In March, PSJ and OFA presented a panel discussion, “Our Homeless neighbors: Addressing a Growing Crisis,” including advocates and a formerly homeless student who has developed a home for other formerly homeless students at UCLA. In December we read and discussed the Rev. William Barber’s book, *“The Third Reconstruction.”*

## PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

*Alan Brunell, Chair*

Personnel Committee members are selected by Nominating Committee and ratified by the Board of Directors. The chairperson is selected by the committee and ratified by the Board. The committee must have at least four standing members, two of whom shall be or have been members of the Board.

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ARE:** Garland Allen, Phil Bonacich, Alan Brunell (Chair), Rebecca Crawford, Sylvia Young; and Rev. Greg Ward, non-voting member.

**FUNCTIONS** (plagiarized from the Church By-laws): make recommendations to and advise the Board about personnel

policies and procedures and about personnel issues regarding the Church paid staff and ministers; review and recommend revisions of the job descriptions and employment agreements; review and recommend changes in the compensation for all paid staff and ministers; review complaints, questions, or disputes from the Church paid staff or from members of the Congregation.

We are happy to get questions from church members, who can email me (Alan Brunell <abrunell@yahoo.com>), and I will pass the information on to the committee.

## RIGHT RELATIONS TEAM

*Vilma Ortiz and Sue Stoyanoff, co-chairs*

Right relations refers to nurturing relationships to inspire growth and transformation and to allow us to live out our deepest, most life-affirming vision, mission, and values. Right relations are created and maintained at all levels of congregational life – personal, interpersonal, and institutional.

Right relations work is grounded in understanding that conflict is inevitable; what matters is how we respond to conflict. Elevated, persistent, and unaddressed conflict is destructive to congregational life. To transform conflict from destructive to healthy, we address the systems, practices, and traditions in place. Right relations provides tools for responding to, and dealing with, disagreement and conflict. We strive to deal with conflict in healthy ways by listening respectfully and communicating deeply. This work includes addressing agreements of relational behavior (such as our Congregational Covenant of Right Relations), establishing clear processes on how to deal with disagreements, and providing clarity of core values, mission/vision, and roles.

By all accounts, we are successfully adopting the process of right relations. Church members regularly tell us that they feel less anxiety in the church. We also hear from our members about their commitment to “practice” (or struggle to practice) right relations. Still, because conflict is inevitable in any community, disagreements and conflicts continue to arise. In sum, the process is working, yet we have much to learn. The Right Relations Team is charged with supporting our congregation in a process of right relations designed to nurture our better selves.

**TEAM MEMBERSHIP:** The Right Relations Task Force was established in spring/summer 2016. We worked with right relations consultant Nancy Edmundson until December 2017. Since our Developmental Minister, the Rev. Greg Ward, came to our church in September 2017, we have been working with him to move right relations forward. As we move forward with the work of right relations, we changed our name in January to the Right Relations Team to indicate our continued presence in our church community.

**MEMBERS OF THE RIGHT RELATIONS TEAM ARE:** Vilma Ortiz and Sue Stoyanoff (co-chairs), Emily Linnemeier, Audrey Lyness, Beth Rendeiro, Cassandra Winters, and James Witker. (Linda Marten and



Tom Peters resigned from the Team during the year.) We are in the process of recruiting additional members for the Right Relations Team to begin serving in June 2018.

**MEMBERS OF THE SUPPORT TEAM ARE:** Cindy Kelly, Margot Page, Kim Kalmanson, Nalani Santiago-Kalmanson, Linda van Ligten, Patricia Wright, Steve Young, and Sylvia Young. We will recruit additional members for the Support Team in May 2018.

### **CONGREGATIONAL COVENANT OF RIGHT RELATIONS:**

Our most notable accomplishment in 2017-18 is facilitating the development of a Congregational Covenant of Right Relations. We held two covenant workshops and numerous circles to involve the congregation in this process. A final version was approved by the Board of Directors in December and will be presented at the congregation's annual business meeting in May. This Covenant of Right Relations is shown below.

**DEVELOPING THE COVENANT.** On October 7, 2017, about 65 members of the congregation, including many Board members, attended the first Congregational Covenant Workshop which was facilitated by our UU Consultant, Nancy Edmundson. We discussed what we would like to include in our covenant. From the ideas collected that day, we developed a draft covenant. In November 2017, we held three dialogue circles. Over 30 people attended dialogue circles and provided feedback on the draft covenant; others submitted comments by email.

**APPROVING THE COVENANT.** The Board of Directors considered the Congregational Covenant of Right Relations at their December meeting. The covenant was approved by the Board and Board recommended that it be adopted by the congregation. The membership will vote on adopting this covenant at the annual business meeting on May 20, 2018.

**IMPLEMENTING THE COVENANT.** On March 4, 2018, we held a second Congregational Covenant Workshop, and over 40 people participated. Following a brief overview about covenants in general and our Congregational Covenant of Right Relations in particular, we moved into small group activities that focused on how to build skills that facilitate living into the covenant. A highlight of this effort is that Nancy Edmundson attended and we were able to express appreciation to her for her service to our church. In April and May 2018, we will offer more skills-building circles to continue the efforts of owning and living into the covenant.

### **ONGOING ACTIVITIES**

**CIRCLES.** We have convened Circles almost every month since right relations efforts were established. Congregants have appreciated participating in Circles where they practice listening to different perspectives, expanding their own understandings, and contributing to the right relations process. Listening Circles were our first and continuing effort; over 200 people have participated in Listening Circles to date. As part of Appreciative Inquiry, we held Circles in which we shared stories of meaning and conflict resolution; this led to our Core Values Statement. More recently as we developed our Covenant, we offered Dialogue Circles. We plan to continue offering Circles in the future.

**REQUESTS FOR RIGHT RELATIONS.** Church members have used Requests for Right Relations (previously called A Note to RRTF) to communicate their concerns. The purpose of the Request process is to encourage and support direct communications. When a Request is submitted, it is promptly acknowledged and a "triage team" of Right Relations Team members reviews and responds. Each circumstance is unique, and our responses vary from identifying who to communicate with, offering coaching for

communication, offering a facilitated conversation, or identifying areas that need support outside of the scope of Right Relations Team.

**COVENANTS, GROUND RULES, AND PROCESS OBSERVATION.** These tools work together to create and facilitate healthy group interactions and interpersonal relationships; they ensure that our gatherings are collaborative, respectful, and constructive. Church groups are increasingly acknowledging the importance of developing and using covenants, ground rules, and process observation, and the Right Relations Team is being asked to support them as they develop these tools.

Covenants are aspirational agreements about how we will be in relationship with each other. Covenants are living documents that are revisited regularly to stay current with the group. The Right Relations Team has a covenant as does our Board of Directors. The members of our church will vote on adopting the proposed Congregational Covenant at the Annual Meeting in May.

Ground Rules are expectations about how we will interact in gathering so that we live up to our covenants. They ensure that our gatherings are collaborative, respectful, and constructive. The Right Relations Team has developed Ground Rules for our gatherings (meetings, Listening Circles, Sharing Groups). Circles have especially benefited from practicing ground rules so that trust is established and maintained as participants share deeply.

Process Observation follows interactions in group gatherings so that we better abide by our ground rules and live up to our covenants. Process observers affirm what we are doing well and provide suggestions for what we can revise. The Right Relations Team uses process observation in our meetings to build capacity and gain experience with the practice. We plan to hold a training for church leaders on process observation. This will include an opportunity to learn more about establishing and using ground rules and ensuring healthy practices in meetings.

**CONGREGATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS AND EDUCATION.** We provide a regular Sunday morning presence at our information table in Forbes Hall, along with regular Sunday morning announcements. Our monthly newsletter articles are intentionally written to keep the congregation informed of our activities and processes, as well as to educate. Our website includes these monthly newsletter articles as well as other informative resources. In addition to the above, we plan to provide more formal learning opportunities for the congregation.

**FUTURE WORK.** The Right Relations Team looks forward to continuing our work of educating and supporting our congregation as we strive to live respectfully and fully with one another.

## **CONGREGATIONAL COVENANT OF RIGHT RELATIONS**

*Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Santa Monica*





**PREAMBLE:** As a congregation, we commit to learn and grow together and to develop strong relationships with each other. In so doing, we honor our past, engage in the present, and walk side by side into the future. We strive to live in right relationship with one another when addressing inevitable conflict. Thus, our disagreements may become wellsprings of creativity and transformation. We aspire to an expansive vision of our beloved and chosen community by accepting, appreciating and celebrating our diverse perspectives.

**WE COMMIT TO BE COMPASSIONATE AND LOVING THROUGH WORDS AND ACTIONS BY:**

- Expressing kindness and caring to others even when it's challenging
- Supporting each other in times of joy as well as in times of struggle, pain, and grief
- Asking for help when needed and being open to accepting care from others
- Being welcoming and hospitable

**WE COMMIT TO PRACTICE DIRECT AND HONEST COMMUNICATION BY:**

- Speaking my own truth
- Striving to hear every voice and letting others speak for themselves
- Practicing deep, open, and respectful listening
- Respectfully acknowledging others' perspectives
- Turning from reaction and judgment to wonder and inquiry in understanding others

**WE COMMIT TO ADDRESS THE HARMFUL IMPACT OF OUR WORDS OR DEEDS BY:**

- Acknowledging mistakes, offering apology, asking for forgiveness, and making amends
- Trusting the sincerity of apologies and striving to forgive
- Refraining from making assumptions about others' intentions and motivations
- Remaining engaged with one another; emphasizing building and mending relationships

**WE COMMIT TO HONOR DIVERSITY BY SHOWING RESPECT IN WAYS THAT ARE MEANINGFUL TO OTHERS BY:**

- Appreciating the vast array of spiritual beliefs and personal values among us
- Admitting to my biases and being open to shifts in my perspective
- Accepting others as they are and being intentionally inclusive
- Being empathetic and celebrating diversity
- Embracing our shared humanity and supporting our individual journeys

**WE COMMIT TO NURTURE AND ATTEND TO THE WELLBEING OF OUR COMMUNITY BY:**

- Expressing appreciation for what others contribute
- Making an effort to get to know others and allowing others to get to know me
- Showing up, being present, and honoring commitments
- Striving to collaborate, compromise, and seek consensus

**CLOSING:** By affirming this Covenant of Right Relations, we commit to embrace the inevitability of conflict and to stay with the spirit and intention of our Covenant. In times of harmony, may it deepen our bonds with one another; in times of conflict, may it guide us.

APPROVED BY BOARD OF DIRECTORS: DECEMBER 12, 2017.

On the agenda for adoption by the Congregation at the Annual Meeting on May 20, 2018.

## SCIENCE NON-FICTION BOOK GROUP

Rebecca Crawford

The Science Non-Fiction Book Group meets once a month to discuss a thought-provoking array of books and some questions they raise. Our 2017-18 list included *"Lives in Ruins: Archaeologists and the Seductive Lure of Human Rubble,"* by Marilyn Johnson; *"The Invention of Nature: Alexander von Humboldt's New World,"* by Andrea Wulf; *"Powers of Two: How Relationships Drive Creativity,"* by Joshua Wolf Shenk; *"Rise of the Robots: Technology and the Threat of a Jobless Future,"* by Martin Ford; *"The Soul of an Octopus: A Surprising Exploration into the Wonder of Consciousness,"* by Sy Montgomery. All are welcome.

## SECOND SUNDAY SUPPERS

This year different committees signed up each month to host this popular event. Fifty to 70 folks would gather around festive tables for a tasty potluck meal. Sometimes we'd stay for a concert, panel, or film, too. Congratulations to all for making people feel welcome, for all the good food and conversation, for bringing your own dishes and utensils (to take home and wash), and for cleaning up together in the Kitchen and Forbes Hall. To keep this going each month, we need volunteers such as yourself, so contact any Board member and say, "I can help us keep having Second Sunday Suppers."



## STEWARDSHIP TEAM

Gretchen Goetz and Kit Shaw (co-chairs)

Members: Cindy Kelly, Katie Malich, Kim Miller, Patricia Wright

### OUR WORK IN 2017:

#### HOUSE PARTIES IN FALL 2017

The theme for this year's Fall Pledge Drive was "Moving Forward Together." Stewardship hosted House Parties again this year at Rev. Greg's recommendation. The parties were slightly different in format than in previous years in that they were guided by trained facilitators. Each party was attended by the host, two facilitators, and a Stewardship Team member.

In advance of the house parties, facilitators attended a three-hour training session presented by Rev. Greg. The purpose of this new house party format was to continue to build community and encourage conversations between members and friends. Additionally, the facilitators focused on furthering understanding and discussion of how our church works financially and encouraged reflection on pledging. Six House Parties were held, which were attended by 53 church members and friends.

#### ANNUAL PLEDGE LETTER sent in October 2017

Prior to the parties, the church office sent out the annual pledge letter requesting the pledge and a request to raise pledges

	2018	2017	2016
Amount pledged	\$381,735	\$383,946	\$391,367
Number of households	257	276	269
Average pledge per household	\$1,485	\$1,391	\$1,455
Number increasing pledge amount	71	32	64
Number decreasing pledge amount	4	30	28
Number same as previous year pledge	23	65	63
New pledges	2	16	6
Rollovers	147	133	108



so that we could meet our fundraising goal of \$450,000 (which is approximately 15% higher than last year's budgeted pledges). This estimate was made in order to avoid a deficit budget again this year without having to cut any programs or staff hours.

Additionally, as in previous years, we encouraged pledging by donating increments of our operating budget to a charity (this year: the Westside Food Bank), based on returned pledge cards and increases in unit pledges. \$1,000 was donated to the Westside Foodbank from the pledge drive. The letter contained information about the House Parties, which were also advertised at the pulpit, in the Thursday e-mail announcements, Sunday's Order of Service, and one or two separate e-mail blasts.

#### ROLLOVERS

During the campaign, we also received updates from the Church Administrator, Nurit Gordon, regarding pledges received and the number of increases, decreases, or no changes in pledges. About 50% of pledge units are "roll-overs" (those who have their pledges automatically deducted from their bank accounts). While automatic deduction is efficient because it is a steady and reliable source of income for the church, "rolling over" also makes it too easy for people to ignore the pledge drive. One goal of the Stewardship Team is to work on getting members more actively involved in thinking, considering, and evaluating their pledge on a yearly basis.

#### SECOND SUNDAY SUPPER IN NOVEMBER 2017

Stewardship sponsored November's Second Sunday Supper as a "large house party." Rev. Greg gave a well-received presentation about how our church works financially, and a Stewardship Team member sat at each table to facilitate a general discussion following the presentation.

#### OUR WORK IN 2018:

"A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION" Spring Pledge Campaign in 2018

In February, members of the Stewardship Team and other church members met with Rev. Greg to discuss the status of our pledge total and the cuts in staff hours and programs if the dollars received did not rise to meet our budget. A plan for a second pledge campaign was developed. All members were asked to increase their 2017-18 pledges, with most pledges being matched by a newly formed "Sustainability Fund." This plan was organized by Rev. Greg, Vice President Jacki Weber, and the UUSM Board of Directors. The Stewardship Team provided support and hosted an informational table in Forbes Hall on Sundays throughout March.

SECOND SUNDAY SUPPER IN MARCH 2018 (Theme: Italian Family-Style)

In March, we co-hosted the Second Sunday Supper with the Membership Committee. There were lots of lasagnas! Membership reached out to invite new members, gave raffle prizes at the supper, and organized discussion topic handouts at each table to

encourage discussion about the value of membership.

#### THANK YOU TO PLEDGERS

We publicly thanked pledgers by publishing their names in the monthly newsletter for the months of December, January, and February. The February list included members who were "roll-overs" from last year (did not actively turn in a pledge card, but continued to pledge through automatic deduction from their bank account). Additionally, hand-written "thank you" cards were sent early in the campaign (to members who actively turned in a pledge card). Stewardship will write a second set of "thank you" cards to members who participated in the second pledge drive, increasing their pledges or donating to the Sustainability Fund.

#### MEANINGFUL NUMBERS

As of mid-April 2018, the 2018-19 pledges (including \$28,224 in increases made during the second pledge drive) totaled \$381,735. The amount that will match that \$28,224 increase from the newly formed Sustainability Fund is \$29,454.

Overall, our data shows that there was a significant increase in the number of pledges that increased, and a decrease in number of pledges that decreased. There were also fewer new pledges and more rollovers. SEE CHART THIS PAGE.

#### CHALLENGES

We are still learning how to become financially healthy and to pledge and commit at levels that will sustain the church. In our current unique position, with Rev. Greg guiding us, the Spring Pledge Campaign early this year, along with the accompanying new Sustainability Fund, we have taken "a step in the right direction" towards this goal. Rev. Greg has shared that while this increased financial health will benefit our congregation, it will also "send a clear message to the rest of the denomination – and those sought-after ministers in high demand who are considering where to go in three to four years – that UU Santa Monica is catching fire and heading in a positive and exciting direction."

We would also like to identify and recruit new team members. Stewardship currently consists of six women, three of whom are also serving on the Board of Directors. The team would appreciate new members, especially men, to bring diversity to the group.

#### GOALS

Our main goal continues to be to bring the congregation together to support the church financially at a level that avoids the need for staff or programs to be cut. We would like to move towards aspects of building community and support for each other as ways to achieve this goal.

## SUPER SENIORS

*Helen Brown*

Once a month about a dozen 80-plus-year-olds meet in the Sanctuary after the 11:00 am service to socialize and discuss

the challenges of aging. Members value sharing memories, the friendship of exchanging experiences, and keeping in touch between Sundays by phone. We have had lectures, for example from WISE on ideas and resources helpful to seniors. Bruno Lacombe's program last year on a gentle exercise program for seniors led to an offshoot group that meets weekly for his class in Forbes Hall. You're welcome to join us.

## USHERS

*Dan Patterson, Head Usher*

A team of friendly ushers is responsible for meeting all who come to our Sanctuary doors for Sunday morning services: to welcome, to give out the order of service, to answer questions, to provide assistive listening devices, and to take care of the morning offering. To join this hearty band and sign up for one service each month, contact Dan Patterson, patterson169@gmail.com

## WORSHIP ASSOCIATES

*Respectfully submitted, Rev. Greg Ward*

Purpose of the Worship Associates' Team: The Worship Associates exist to (1) produce consistent high quality worship services which integrate inspiration, ideas, music, and learning to challenge UUSM Members and Friends to transform and grow into the best relationship with self, other, and the world; (2) to offer diverse programming from a variety of perspectives including race, class, age, sexuality, gender, cultural, intelligences, social and experiential framework; and (3) develop leadership and organization skills and abilities. The Worship Associates Team reports to the Minister.

### MEMBERS OF THE WORSHIP ASSOCIATES' TEAM

Ministerial Consultant: Rev. Kikanza Nuri-Robins

Worship Associates' Executive Team: Jacki Weber, Abby Arnold, Margot Page

Second Year Worship Associates: Leon Henderson-MacLennan, James Witker, Rima Snyder

First Year Worship Associates: Cassie Winters, Dorothy Steinicke, Catherine Grasso

**MEETINGS:** We meet the second Thursday of the month from 7:00 to 8:30 PM at the church. The Worship Calendar with all the information for upcoming services, coordinated with major church events, music, RE programs, etc. can be found at:

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1c7CnYEM\\_HVv9qDZKXEUBksksJUizgdJluowe8pM25P8/edit#gid=1406220120](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1c7CnYEM_HVv9qDZKXEUBksksJUizgdJluowe8pM25P8/edit#gid=1406220120)

**FOCUS OF THE 2017-18 YEAR:** The Worship Associates is a new program at UUSM. In forming, we set a significant number of goals for the year:

- Form a high-functioning, high-commitment team of approximately nine persons who could develop a cooperative style with trust and leadership development as the key elements
- Build a platform of tools and expectations such that each Worship Associate could understand the liturgy we use and could design, develop, and produce quality worship programming
  - Establish a tiered organizational structure to encourage continual learning and leadership development throughout the three-year commitment of being a Worship Associate
  - Strengthen the lay-leadership component of the Worship programming at UUCSSM by supporting and training the Worship Associates and other lay leaders to participate and produce quality worship
- Encourage new ways in which the energy produced in worship

could channel into other vital areas of the church including into RE, Social Justice, Music, Stewardship, Adult Learning, and vision

- Increase from two to four lay led worship services to seven to nine lay led Worship Services of comparable quality to professional services
- Develop a sustainable structure and to earn the congregation's respect and trust
- Have fun

The Worship Associates Program has been successful in its first-year endeavors. Progress has surpassed expectations on all the goals listed above.

### GOALS FOR THE 2018-19 YEAR

Continue to increase the diversity especially in race, age, gender, and multicultural awareness

To have another successful year of welcoming new WAs and celebrating retiring WAs

To increase our ability to successful channel energy from worship into other church events and programming.



*Love  
and  
Justice*



## ALPHABETICAL LISTING OF PROGRAMS

COMMITTEE OR TITLE	PAGE NUMBER
AAHS (Agnostics, Atheists, Humanists, Secularists and Skeptics).....	7
Art Wall.....	9
Bookstore.....	9
Camp de Benneville Pines Weekend.....	9
Care Ring (see Pastoral Care Program).....	9
Caregivers' Support Group.....	9
Church Administrator Nurit Gordon.....	9
Choir (see Director of Music Report).....	11
Coffee Committee.....	10
Communications & Volunteer Coordinator Jackie Schwab.....	11
Communications Team (Comm Team).....	11
Developmental Minister Rev. Greg Ward.....	5
Dining for Dollars (D4S).....	11
Director of Music (DOM) Dr. Zanaida Robles.....	11
Director of Religious Education (DRE) Kathleen R. Hogue.....	12
Disability Support Group (DSG).....	12
Ernie Pipes Lecture Series.....	12
Facility Development Committee (FDC).....	13
Faith In Action Commission (FIA).....	14
Fiction Reading Group.....	14
Finance Committee (see Treasurer's Report).....	6
Garden of Eternity Committee.....	14
Green Living / Green Sanctuary Committee.....	15
Greeters (see Membership Committee).....	15
Heart and Soul Worship.....	15
Heart to Heart Circles / Small Group Ministry.....	15
Hunger Taskforce (see Lunches for Bunches).....	19
Interweave (see Faith In Action).....	14
Investment Committee.....	16
Lifespan Religious Exploration Committee (LRE).....	16
Lunches for Bunches / Hunger Task Force.....	19
Meditation (see Lifespan Religious Exploration).....	16
Membership Committee.....	19
Men's Discussion Group.....	20
Minister (see Developmental Minister).....	5
Music Committee.....	20
Newsletter Committee.....	21
Nominating Committee.....	21
Our Whole Lives (OWL) (see Lifespan Religious Exploration).....	16
Pastoral Care Program.....	22
Peace & Social Justice Committee (PSJ).....	22
Personnel Committee.....	23
President Ron Crane.....	5
Pulpit Hosts (see Worship Associates).....	26
RE for Children and Youth (see Lifespan Religious Exploration).....	16
Right Relations Team.....	23
Science Non-Fiction Book Group.....	25
Second Sunday Suppers.....	25
Stewardship Committee.....	25
Super Seniors.....	26
Treasurer's Report and Finance Committee.....	6
Ushers.....	27
Volunteer and Communications Coordinator (see Communications & Vol. Coord.).....	11
Welcome Table (see Membership Committee).....	19
Worship Associates.....	27

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# REPORT ON PROGRAMS

# 2017-18