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# UNITARIAN SOCIETY OF GERMANTOWN

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The Rev. Kent Matthies, Minister  
Mark Daugherty, Music Director

January 22, 2015

Dear Congregant,

On the winter solstice, the burning wheel raced across USG's parking lot, representing the Sun returning with light and warmth. As we brave the cold winds of January, our hearts are warmed by thoughts of how far we have come to build our beloved community with compassion, service and empowerment.

Half way through our fiscal year, we are encouraged by the strong showing of financial support from our members. It is a welcomed response to concerns over a large budget deficit (\$48,000) that is drawing down our General Endowment Fund. Plans for drawing down the deficit will be discussed at a Town Hall Meeting on February 28.

We began the year with a new governance structure designed to streamline decision making and clarify lines of authority. Following its role in the structure, the Board developed Strategic Initiatives to focus our efforts in building the beloved community. Carrying out its role, the Ministry Executive Team contacted each committee to set goals that would implement those initiatives. In addition, it began its review of the way we handle finances at USG.

The first half of the year has been filled with activities, only a fraction of which are summarized in the attached report. We can all be proud of our efforts to build the beloved community and we can look forward to more light and warmth in the months to come.

Dennis Strain  
Board President

## Mid-Year Review

### Where We Started

**Second Service:** 130 people responded to a congregational survey: 69% (88 members) liked the option of having two services; 26% did not; 76% recommended trying and improving the 2-service model for another two years. The Board voted to extend the second service for two years.

**New Governance Structure:** In April, the Board adopted a Policy Governance Structure. It delegated to the Minister, supported by a team of staff and lay leaders, the authority to manage the regular operations of the church in accordance with policies adopted by the Board. In response, Reverend Kent, with approval of the Governance and Ministry Task Force and the officers of the Board, recruited a Ministry Executive Team consisting of himself, Gloria Smith, Beth Lazer and Treva Burger. The new structure, favored by many UU congregations, streamlines the decision making process and clarifies the lines of authority. The Board monitors the work of the Ministry Executive Team and sets policies to guide its actions.

**Edna Jones Bequest:** Edna Jones left a large unrestricted bequest of \$295,621 to USG. The Board voted to pay off the loans for the Sullivan Chapel construction project (\$123,254) and place the remainder (\$172,367) in a Building Maintenance Fund for emergency repairs and extraordinary projects (e.g., widening the driveway).

**Consolidated Investment Fund (CIF):** The CIF consists of six funds totaling \$1,421,253. The unrestricted General Endowment Fund is \$968,248. This amount will be reduced by the budget deficit (\$48,000) and the creation of the Building Maintenance Fund (\$172,367). It will be increased by the income generated by our investments.

**Operating Budget:** For a budget of \$551,758, staff expenses are \$363,536 (65%), building \$104,000 (19%), programs \$32,100 (6%), UUA and JPD dues \$26,208 (5%), and administrative \$25,914 (5%). Staff expenses include Minister, Assistant Minister, Church Administrator, Assistant Administrator, Music Director, Sexton, bookkeeper service, cleaning service, and childcare. Program includes \$17,500 for music and \$1,800 for speaker fees. This year's budget projects \$363,000 in total giving (\$320,000 in pledges; \$12,000 in plate collections, and \$31,000 in special gifts). The remaining income comes from rentals (\$69,463), fund raising (\$31,000), CIF investment income (\$39,400), and the transfer (\$48,000) from the General Endowment Fund.

**Audio/Visual Project:** In December of 2013, the Master Plan Implementation Committee proposed a grant application for installation of a video system (\$24,737), replacement of the audio system (\$27,766) and upgrading of the lighting system (\$6,215). In February, the Board approved contributing \$5,000 from the CIF to a scaled down version of the project. In April, we received a \$20,000 Chalice Lighters Grant; combined with a \$5,000 member contribution and the \$5,000 approved by the Board; this funded the scaled down project.

## **Where We Are**

**Consolidated Investment Fund:** The General Endowment Fund received \$10,000, the return of a loan made to The Reinvestment Fund of Philadelphia.

**Current Budget:** Half way through the fiscal year, we have received \$228,000 in contributions (63% of budgeted amount) and \$317,000 in total revenue (57% of budgeted amount). Expenses (\$236,000 - 42% of budgeted amount) are normal for this time of year: utilities will increase during the winter and most Building and Grounds projects occur in the spring.

**2015-16 Budget:** In October, the Board set the following parameters:

- Board agrees we are committed to fair compensation;
- Board agrees we should pay UUA and JPD dues;
- Defer decision on Buildings and Grounds budget restriction until MET and Buildings and Grounds gather more information on potential items (30-60 days);
- Board agrees we should not pursue a paid intern minister but instead pursue a student minister with grant support;
- Board endorses vigorous pursuit of increasing income in order to reduce the deficit. Aggressive reduction of expenses has been pursued in previous and current budget years, and the Board agrees that to significantly impact the deficit income increases are needed.
- The Ministry Executive Team has created a schedule for developing the budget. Inputs will be gathered in January and February and the first draft presented to the Board in March.

**Strategic Initiatives:** The Strategic Initiatives are designed to guide the Ministry Executive Team and to focus the efforts of the congregation for the coming years. Drawing on the [USG Mission Statement](#) and the [Covenant of Membership](#), the Board has adopted the following initiatives:

### **1. Member Engagement**

Breathe the spirit of life into the membership covenant so that its five tenets are known, meaningful, and engaging and the covenant animates our congregational life.

### **2. Spiritual Development & Growth**

Offer a variety of lifespan spiritual development opportunities that assist participants in discovering, articulating, and sharing their values, beliefs, and faith so that we may grow and develop as individuals and as a community.

### **3. Outreach**

View our community as expansive, creating opportunities to connect, witness, and serve beyond our congregation, taking our seven principles out into the physical and virtual world beyond our walls.

**Sunday Services:** In an effort to make each service a unique experience, the first service now focuses on *Centering* and the second service focuses on *Celebrating Life*.

**Participation:** For the first twelve Sundays of the church year, average attendance is 232, down from last year's average of 239 for the same period. 81 children and youth are registered for our Child Spiritual Development courses; 77 adults are registered for the Fall Adult Spiritual Development courses. The Small Group Ministry program has 110 participants.

**Social Action:** In August, Reverend Kent went to Washington DC with the UUPLAN Immigration Justice Team. He, Yvonne Marlier and 113 others engaged in civil disobedience and were arrested in front of the White House. The national media coverage of the entire day was quite large. In September, the Ending Racism Committee participated in a Bloc Party in Vernon Park to register voters for the November election. In October, our YRUU group participated in the AIDS Walk/Run Philly 2014. In November, USG sent five delegates, including Reverend Kent, to the annual meeting of the UU Pennsylvania Legislative Advocacy Network to organize actions for the coming year. In December, the Ending Racism Committee developed a Statement of Conscience in response to the events in Ferguson and Staten Island. Early in January, Reverend Daniel Gregoire led eight USG members on a Haiti Service and Learning Trip. In ice

bound Philadelphia, over 600 people came to USG for the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service.

***Expansion of Nominating Committee:*** The motion to expand the Nominating Committee passed by a vote of 48 to 2 at the September Annual Meeting. Dennis Brunn and Gerry Whelan were elected to a one year term; Sam Stormont and Jessica Slivak to two year terms; and Rick Rodes and Sarah West to three year terms.

***Ministry Executive Team:*** The team has worked to align responsibility with authority and to create pathways of authority that help empower volunteers and get things done efficiently. They conducted a meeting for approximately 20 leaders on August 20 to review the governance structure change and share with them the MET Responsibility Grid and the goal setting process we would like to put in place. The team has connected with each committee to develop goals that would implement one or more of the Strategic Initiatives. It coordinated efforts to provide financial information following the September Annual Meeting and is currently focusing on the procedures for receiving funds, budgeting our expenses, and paying our bills.

***Edna Jones Recognition:*** The Board asked the Ministry Executive Team to find an appropriate means of recognizing the bequest of Edna Jones. MET called on Susan Bockius, Linda Bernstein and Peter and Marny Walsh to develop a proposal. In December both MET and the Board approved their proposal (1) renaming the Assembly Room the Edna Jones Assembly Room, (2) creating a plaque that acknowledges Edna's many contributions, and (3) having a special event in the Spring to recognize those contributions.

***Reverend Daniel's Ordination:*** In September, the Board voted to co-sponsor Reverend Daniel's ordination with the Community Church of New York UU. The congregation unanimously affirmed that vote in early November. On November 9, 45 USG members journeyed to New York by bus - under the fabulous leadership of Bill Dowdall, who lost not one soul - to witness the ceremony, and more came by car. The group included thirteen choir members, welcomed and praised for their participation by the Rev. Bruce Southworth, Senior Minister at CCNYUU.

***Audio/Visual Project:*** The installation of the screen and projector in the sanctuary is a major accomplishment done by a combined team of Master Plan Implementation Committee and the Buildings and Grounds Committee. We used the screen for our Diwali Celebration on November 1st and began using the screen for Sunday morning worship services on November 16th. Sarah Spath, Gloria Guldager, Kin Sims and Reverend Kent have worked to prepare the image presentations, including words and music to hymns. They invite feedback from

the congregation on how to make the best use of these resources with the ultimate goal always being excellence in worship. We also installed new speakers on the chancel so that people on the chancel can hear better.

### **Looking Forward**

Feb. 1	Adult Spiritual Development's Winter/Spring semester begins
Feb. 28	Town Hall Meeting on Planning for Growth
Mar. 14	All Church Dinner
Apr. 18	Service Auction