

UNITARIAN SOCIETY OF GERMANTOWN

2017-2018 Annual Report

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Submitted by Susan Smith, President Board of Trustees

◆ **Members** – Michael Campbell, Joanne Holden Davis, Eva Finney (Secretary), Jenn Leiby (Incoming President), William Morrow, Eli Searce (Vice President), Jess Slivak (Incoming Vice President), Susan Smith (President), Debbie Ward

◆ **Mission** - The Board of Trustees is charged with the temporal affairs and property of the Society (By-laws, 1978). Under the governance model launched in 2015, the Board has responsibility for strategic direction, financial oversight, integrity of building and grounds, personnel policies, evaluation of the Senior Minister's performance, investment fund oversight and Committee on Ministry.

◆ **Goals Established for Past Year**

- Completion of elevator construction and driveway repairs
- Oversight of Anti-racism initiatives
- Financial oversight and strategic planning

◆ **Significant Accomplishments of Past Year**

- Completion of a self assessment of Board functioning; adoption of a structure for routinely monitoring progress towards goals.
- Held a retreat focusing on financial education/updates and consideration of membership growth
- Appointed Eli Searce and Debbie Ward to head an Anti-Racism Task Force to coordinate a common focus and plan for USG's anti-racism efforts..
- Reviewed the purpose and status of all investment funds.
- Approved updated financial policies to reflect the elimination of the Finance Committee and the enhanced role of the Treasurer.
- Approved the Safe Congregations Policy and Quick Guide.
- Voted to amend the UUA By-laws to strengthen the linkage between UUA leadership and congregations.
- Developed procedure recommendations to reduce/eliminate legal liability stemming from potential copyright violations related to YouTube videos of our services.
- Voted to formally support the ordinations of Connie Simon and McKinley Sims.
- Worked closely with the Elevator/Driveway Committee throughout the year to bring the projects to fruition.
- Considered recent Attendance and Participation Trends as reported by the Senior Minister.
- Began working with the Stained Glass Window Committee to determine how to accomplish necessary repairs.
- Voted to give Congregational Awards to Elaine Hills, Andrea Durham, Jay Klales, Tom Ott and Janet Haas
- Elected Jenn Leiby and Jess Slivak and President and Vice President for 2018-2019. Eva Finney will continue as Board Secretary.

◆ **Goals for Upcoming Church Year**

- Successful completion of Elevator/Driveway project.
- Completion of updated Strategic Plan.

- Completion of a comprehensive plan for the repair of the stained glass
- Continued collaboration with MET to achieve membership grow

GOVERNANCE & MINISTRY TASK FORCE

Submitted by Linda Bernstein, Chair

◆ Members

Linda Bernstein, Chair, Rev. Kent Matthies, Susan Smith (Board President,) Jessica Slivak , board member, John Davis (Nominating Committee member) Delores Hill (MET representative,) Shobhi Kanal, member, Treva Burger, member, Andrea Parry, member.

Linda Bernstein, Andrea Parry, John Davis and Treva Burger are rotating off. Incoming member Lee Meineke has been approved by the board. Other incoming members have yet to be determined.

◆ Mission of Committee

- Forum for discussion. Provide a small group forum for representatives of the Board, the MET, and other lay/staff leadership to clarify and discuss significant issues before they go to the Board. The intention is to enable input from a broader perspective and reduce Board time in doing groundwork.
- Policies and procedures. Assist Board in noting need for new policies or policy updates. Prepare draft policies or policy updates for Board review and decision, or recommend others with more specialized knowledge to do the drafting. Prepare drafts of Board procedures as needed.
- Governance process. Monitor and refine allocations of responsibility between Governance (Board) and Ministry (MET/other church volunteers and staff), and obtain Board concurrence. Monitor collaboration between Governance & Ministry. Continue to refine governance processes and interactions.
- Nominating Committee. Support the work of the Nominating Committee.
- Board self-governance and self-evaluation. Support the Board as requested.

◆ Goals Established for Past Year

- Forum for discussion. Provide a small group forum for representatives of the Board, the MET, and other lay/staff leadership to clarify and discuss significant issues before they go to the Board. The intention is to enable input from a broader perspective and reduce Board time in doing groundwork.
- Policies and procedures. Assist Board in noting need for new policies or policy updates. Prepare draft policies or policy updates for Board review and decision, or recommend others with more specialized knowledge to do the drafting. Prepare drafts of Board procedures as needed.

◆ Significant Accomplishments of Past Year

- Conducted ongoing discussions of issues faced by the board to provide a sounding board for board/staff/MET processing.
- One particular area was consideration of modifications to the Safe Congregation Policy (on going.)
- Part of the GMTF mission is to be available to sort out territorial disagreements between the board and MET. Although this was envisioned as a possible area of conflict in adopting

the new governance structure, those types of disagreements have not materialized. MET serves largely as a sounding board to process issues before they get to the board.

◆ Goals for Upcoming Church Year

GMTF will continue to investigate issues and be sounding board. GMTF will begin meeting every other month starting in July.

MINISTRY EXECUTIVE TEAM (MET)

Submitted by Delores Hill, MET Representative

Members: Reverend Kent, Church Administrator Gloria Guldager, and lay leaders Dennis Brunn, Delores Hill, and Kay Weiser.

The Ministry Executive Team (MET) manages the day-to-day operations of the church. MET works closely with committees such as Building and Grounds, Stewardship, Worship Arts, Welcoming, Child Spiritual Development, Adult Spiritual Development, and the Social Justice Council to help ensure they meet their goals. In addition, MET is responsible for preparing and maintaining an operating budget which has been reviewed and approved by the Board.

Significant accomplishments for 2017-18:

- MET worked intensively on anti-racism issues throughout the year in collaboration with the Board and key committees. Two of this year's worship services consisted of "teach-ins" which focused specifically on racism and the culture of white supremacy. In addition, USG devoted one Sunday service highlighting the Promise and the Practice of Our Faith Campaign to raise funds for Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism. At this special service, USG raised \$3,125, an amount which exceeded our goal and will be matched by sources identified by the UUA. In addition, MET is collaborating with the Board's Task Force on Racism which has produced an audit that will examine the multicultural aspects of the congregation such as minority authorship of books, the number of congregants and church leaders of color, and minority vendors with the goal of identifying areas for improvement.
- MET implemented the Revised Safe Congregation Policy. After revisions were made to the Safe Congregation Policy by the Governance & Ministry Task Force and approved by the Board, MET was charged with developing procedures to disseminate the information to CSD teachers and volunteers, as well as the congregation. CSD teachers, volunteers, and parents received copies of a Handbook which provided policy highlights. In addition to the actual policy, the Handbook and a Quick Guide were posted on the USG website, and an announcement about the revised policy and information about how to access the documents was provided to the congregation via the weekly e-newsletter.
- Reverend Kent began developing a Roadmap which will strategically outline ministries and programs consistent with the goal of meeting a wide array of spiritual needs and aspirations of our congregation and people in the wider community. In addition to a presentation to the Board for their input, a meeting will be arranged with church leaders for their insight as we move forward with this important project.
- Because church attendance has decreased over that last several years, Rev. Kent formed a group to review and assess the reasons for this decline. The group collected and analyzed church

attendance data, as well as ASD and CSD participation over the last five years. They also listed several possible contributing factors for the decline such as program staff turnover and elimination of the 2nd service. A summary of the group's findings, the Attendance and Participation Report, was presented to the Board in February. Rev. Kent's group will continue to assess and analyze this matter.

- MET had oversight of several new initiatives during the year including a day-long program titled Mindful Communication: Creating Real Dialogue and a class on Mindfulness and Dialogue. These types of programs help grow community as well as generate additional income. MET also oversaw several successful community building events such as Diwali, Seder, Solstice, and the All-Church Retreat.
- MET introduced a new option this year for making pledge and contribution payments. In addition to regular payment options such as check, cash, and credit card, individuals may now use their cell phones to give via text. To date, many church members have used this new, convenient payment method.
- MET is pleased to help develop plans for the ordinations of Intern Minister Connie Simon and McKinley Sims. Several USG members are on the Ordination Committee for Connie along with members of First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia, our sister congregation with whom we are ordaining. We also created an Ordination Committee for McKinley Sims, and we are working to help raise monies needed for both ordinations.
- MET continues its oversight of USG's Security Task Force which continues to review existing security-related policies and determine whether additional security measures need to be put in place.
- Using guidelines and limitations provided by the Board, MET is working to develop a mission-based budget. MET will invite congregational and Board input before making any final changes. MET will deliver a budget to the Board for their approval.

MINISTER

Submitted by Rev. Kent Matthies, Minister

Ministry is alive and in the air this spring. Within the coming weeks our congregation will co-ordain two very fine new Ministers: McKinley Sims and Connie Simon. Both McKinley and Connie served our congregation with high dedication and skill. It is an honor to participate in these celebrations of ministry as both people go on to do great things. Congratulations to Connie on being called to serve as Minister of the First Unitarian Church of Cincinnati starting in the fall of 2018!

I did not write an Annual Report last year as I had the great privilege of being on Sabbatical from February 15, 2016- August 15 of 2017. I want to share with you some of the ways in which I spent my sabbatical focusing on spiritual growth and professional development.

MINDFULNESS BASED STRESS REDUCTION

MBSR is a program that has been taught over 30 years in US hospitals. This effort creates an important and fascinating meeting point between Eastern Spiritual traditions (predominantly Buddhism), ecumenical modern day spiritual modalities as well as medical and scientific approaches to holistic wellbeing.

Mindfulness has taken many shapes in modern US society. In the MBSR context Mindfulness is defined as “paying attention to what is without rejecting or holding on.” Many times mindfulness practice involves paying attention to breathe, body sensations, or sound. It often involves sitting, walking, or moving (yoga and tai chi).

I took an eight-week MBSR course at the University of Pennsylvania. Next I took a ten-week Practicum at Jefferson Hospital in which I was a student/observer during the morning class and then I was with 8 practitioners (counselors, social workers and clergy) in the afternoon.

In addition I attended a number of mindfulness and/or silent retreats, including;

- 1) A personal three days at the Jesuit Retreat Center in Wernersville, PA.
- 2) Four nights at a mindfulness retreat at Omega Institute in upstate New York.
- 3) Two-day long mindfulness silent retreats as part of the MBSR classes.

For over a year I have maintained daily meditation practice. Meditation has proven enriching and solidifying for my life. I believe it has increased my capacity to provide meaningful ministry.

Upon return to the congregation mindfulness has helped my preaching, pastoral care, organizational leadership and social justice efforts. I have begun to integrate mindfulness in my contributions to USG spiritual development offerings. I preached on various elements of mindfulness. In September I began offering a 45-minute meditation session on Thursday evenings from 5:30-6:15. In the spring of 2018 we moved the time to 6:30-7:15. With a wonderful leader, Barbara Cooper, I am now co-teaching a six-part mindfulness course on Sunday evenings.

VIDEO PRODUCTION

During sabbatical I took a number of classes at WHYY Media Commons on photo/video shooting and production. My goal is to help USG and affiliate organizations create video and graphic work telling our stories, and promoting our messages and principles. We have known for some time that we can expand our capacities in alternative learning styles (visual) and play a more effective role in modern communications. I made a sample video on mediation (killing two birds with one stone). I look forward to collaborating with many areas of the church life both in terms of figuring out what messages we wish to tell and how to do so. I believe we can promote a compelling vision for a USG video production team, which could be served by paid staff and volunteers to make effective video for our programmatic (worship, CSD, ASD, Social Justice, etc.), and our outreach (marketing, evangelism). Of course, we already have really good examples of this from fundraising and 150th anniversary excellent video work.

Unfortunately, due unexpected time commitments throughout my first 9 months back I have only participated in making a handful of videos (one for the Service Auction). However, I am highly committed to increasing production in the coming months and year.

Thanks so very much to everyone who worked so hard to help make my sabbatical possible. Thanks to the entire **Board**, especially Tom Ott and Susan Smith, the **Ministry Executive Team** Linda Bernstein, Gloria Guldager, Bill Dowdall and Jenn Leiby. **Caring Team:** Connie Simon, Bonnie McDairmant and Linda Bernstein. **Worship Arts:** Brian O’Leary & Jenn Leiby, **Social Justice:** Anne Gwynn, Mel Streib & Connie Simon. **Small Group Ministry:** Treva Burger & Jenn Leiby. **Budget Creation and Management:** Gloria Guldager and Bill Dowdall

This year – after returning from sabbatical it has been a great joy to work with the highly dedicated and effective Ministry Executive Team, of Delores Hill, Kay Weiser, Dennis Brunn, Gloria Guldager and myself. We have worked a tremendously wide range of ministry, program and administrative issues together.

Anti-Racism Ministries

The last couple of years have been particularly intense in the United States and the Unitarian Universalist Association. One area where the country and the UU denomination are both experiencing intense problems involves race and racism. Feeling called to build upon our already strong USG commitment this year I actively supported Susan Smith and the Board in the creation of their Anti-Racism Task Force. Debbie Ward and Eli Scarce have served as co-chairs with a group of folks dedicated to this soul work.

This Task Force, upon which I serve, actualizes a strong and essential element of the DNA of this church: Our charge given to us by the Board is:

Racial justice ebbs and flows too often lacking what people of color in our nation deserve. Too often lives are crushed and hearts are broken. Racism is the ground water that empowers the prison industrial complex, hate group attacks such as we saw in Charleston, and sub-consciously based, daily micro-aggressions everywhere.

We affirm our tenacious commitment to anti-racism work at the personal, congregational and wider community levels. In the coming weeks and months we will be working with USG leaders to ensure our engagement with the most effective, high-impact efforts possible. With love in our hearts we invite you to participate with the most energy and commitment you can.

Throughout this year I have worked consistently with this Task Force, the Board, MET, staff and a wide variety of People of Color and White folks to make our anti-racism efforts as alive and impactful as possible. The work involves listening to anger and hurt, engaging dialogue and learning, disrupting ways of operating that need to change *and* building upon many positive USG ministries and programs built over the past decades. This is work that none of our children nor us will finish, and we move forward giving all we have.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

This year with excellent leadership from Connie Simon we worked hard to once again serve as a leading headquarters for Dr. King Day of Service in Philadelphia. We had over 30 projects and approximately 500 people serve. With Linda Bernstein’s leadership we worked effectively in renovating the home of a wonderful resident of the West Philadelphia, Mantua neighborhood. With leadership from Social Justice co-chairs Dev Howerton and Lois Murphy we are growing our eco-justice efforts. This included a wonderful Earth Day worship service, led by Rev. Alison Cornish from a leading environmental justice organization (Power and Light) and a USG Earth

Day justice fair after worship. USG also organized people to march in public witness in multiple cities on March 22nd for the Anti-Gun Violence rallies.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE:

Overall we have a strong, healthy church, meeting many of the spiritual needs of a wide variety of people. The pillars of our beloved community remain strong; worship, spiritual development, caring, social justice. Yet knowing that the religious landscape in America is changing ever fast we must continue to innovate and take risks. We are called to more fully grow into our effectiveness of living out this mission.

I hear many people talking about a vision, which might emphasize our 6 acres of land and wonderful buildings as a 7-day and night per week Community Center for Spirituality and Justice. I hear you talking about creating a Wellness Center, which would allow people to care for body, mind and spirit. I hear you talking about USG becoming evermore a leading partner in justice and interfaith work throughout the region. Where will we go together? Let me know your thoughts.

It remains one of the greatest honors of my life to serve as your Minister. I am completing my 16th year of service at USG. In some ways this seems like a really long time. In other ways it feels like I recently arrived. In all ways it feels like a blessing to me.

CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Submitted by Gloria Guldager, Church Administrator

As I write this report, I am nearing completion of my 8th year as your Church Administrator. I do wonder where the time goes! The USG community continues to be very active and engaged in the betterment of ourselves and the world in which we reside. It is not easy! There were many accomplishments and developments that occurred throughout the year and I am pleased to report on some of the highlights.

MET & Operations:

I continue to serve on the Ministry Executive Team (MET) and I attend our weekly MET meetings. The detail of our work is included in the MET report below. I also continued my service on the Welcoming Community Team as a MET representative and attend monthly board meetings (as a staff member and MET representative). These connections with top leaders in the church are crucial to our work and help us be more effective and stay on track both financially and programmatically.

I spent a considerable amount of time this past year doing research for the Security Task Force discussing the security of the building and how it can be improved. Our review thus far has shown that our current methods of securing the building are not adequate and are often prone to operator error. In conjunction with the security task force, I am continuing to research improved equipment and methods to secure our building. I have recently gained the assistance of Tom Smith to help conduct this research and he and I will put forth a comprehensive proposal after the research is complete. Our goal is to have an accepted proposal in place that will coordinate with the improvements of the Assembly Room ramp door to provide improved handicapped accessibility to the building. Also as part of the security team work, Eric Foster has hung exit

door maps in all of the spaces of the building. Room Use procedures with photos will be hung in each room very soon.

Given our church structure, personnel management is probably the most difficult task I perform. Working without an active personnel committee contributes to the difficulty. Of course we are very lucky to have the consult of Betsy Gabriel, but laws that affect personnel change frequently. In addition, policies and best practices surrounding healthcare coverage is a moving target. We do the very best we can to stay on top of these important issues affecting our staff and hiring practices.

I thoroughly enjoy my work with all of the committees I serve on, especially MET. I find our new governance structure with my participation on MET has provided me with the help and support I needed in several key areas, most especially in budgeting, financial management, communications and volunteer management.

Finances:

I took over all bookkeeping functions as of May 1, 2017 and thus my priorities have been shifted to accommodate this work. I believe I have done an exceptional job creating new systems to perform these tasks and make sure they are done accurately and timely.

Communications:

Communications continue to evolve and grow in our new digital and social media landscape. We have done a fairly good job keeping up with all of these changes, but the learning curve is ever-present. Given my new financial responsibilities, I have relied more and more on Carolyn Scott to take the lead and manage the routine communications of the office. We are in a rebuilding phase of our volunteer communications team as Dennis Strain has moved away. Dennis was key in several areas including the creation of weekly verbal announcements. Carolyn Scott is currently holding down the fort in this area, but we are looking for additional communications volunteers that can assist with the ever-increasing communications needs of the church, especially in the area of social media. Treva Burger continues to handle most of the website event postings. Additionally, Mark Thompson provides much-needed website backup and support and when all of us are flummoxed, we call in the expert, Carl Leiby, to get us out of a pinch and get us back on track. We are eternally grateful for all the assistance these volunteers provide to our communications team!

Carolyn Scott spear-headed the project to reimagine and produce cleaner, more concise SPIRIT and Weekly eCommUUnicator newsletters. She has done an amazing job with this work. We are still in the training phase of helping leaders to submit their event announcement requests via the website portal.

Professional Development

I have attended General Assembly every year except for once since I began as Church Administrator. General Assembly and the corresponding AUUA pro days has proved most beneficial in helping me to learn and grow in my roll. I value the connections I make at General Assembly each year and I find it helps to renew my sense of purpose and mission in my work. I do plan to attend GA again this June in Kansas City. There have not been any corresponding opportunities at the local and district level. I am hoping to start a cluster admin group yet this spring or early in the next fiscal year.

DIRECTOR OF SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Submitted by Jason Bender, Director of Spiritual Development

It has been an honor and a pleasure to serve USG as Director of Spiritual Development for a second year. As I will be leaving USG to explore new horizons at the end of this program year, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the community for enriching my life during my tenure. It has been a gift getting to know you all, and I will take with me many friendships that are bound to last a lifetime. In reviewing the past year, I am happy to report the following accomplishments as Director of Spiritual Development:

- Helping facilitate a continued relationship between USG and Springboard Meditation Sangha in which we jointly offer meditation and mindfulness programming
- Worked with the anti-racism task force on several projects to support the work of ending institutionalized racism
- Continued to advise in our high school Youth Group and co-taught the high school Our Whole Lives (OWL) course
- Remodeled the childcare space (i.e. Committee Room) with the help of the CSD Committee and Howard Silver
- Introduced intergenerational music programming as a way to provide opportunities to build community and nourish the spirit
- Participated in several intergenerational worship services and continued work on ways to make them more friendly to our youngest members of the community
- Lead the Christmas family service and co-directed *The Grinch Who Stole Christmas* with Janet Haas
- Co-facilitated a series of four teacher workshops and one parent workshop with Kira Baker-Doyle
- Lead the weekly Dialogue group on Tuesday night

In the coming months, I will look forward to working with the new DSD to ensure a smooth transition in leadership. I wish everyone the best that life has to offer. May your days be filled with peace and happiness.

MUSIC DIRECTOR

Submitted by Mark Daugherty, Music Director

Music is an important part of the Sunday morning worship experience at USG, and it is a collaborative effort. The collaboration is with the speaker (usually Kent, sometimes Connie, sometimes a guest), the worship associate of the week, and me. Ideas and input are shared and appreciated all around. At USG we feature both instrumental and vocal music as a part of the worship, but it is the choir that anchors the music at USG. This is an amazing group of people who selflessly give of their time and talent to enrich the worship experience for our congregation. This normally involves a rehearsal on Thursday evening that runs about two hours, plus an hour before the Sunday service. Occasionally, we may also rehearse on Saturdays in preparation for a music service. Speaking of which, we presented three music services this year: in December we performed *Seven Joys of Christmas* (music by Kirke Mechem) with Cheryl Cunningham on harp. In February we celebrated Beverly Gross Spencer's 30th anniversary as our alto soloist. We performed Robert Ray's *Gospel Magnificat* and several shorter selections

featuring Bev. For this program an instrumental combo made up of piano, bass, guitar and drums accompanied and enriched the singers. It was a pleasure working with Corin Duey on guitar, one of USG's own talented musicians. Along with Corin, we also heard Alex Ramirez on bass and Bill Cahn on drums. In May we celebrated May Day and Spring with a program anchored by George Shearing's jazzy *Songs and Sonnets*, a suite of original pieces using texts by William Shakespeare. This program featured me on piano and Alex Ramirez was back on string bass. In addition to Beverly, our soloists also include Robert Hefele, Tom Schoonmaker and Audra Casebier. You've heard them many times over the course of the year, both as section leaders and soloists. Bob, Bev and Tom have all been with us for a number of years. Audra the soprano was new this year.

Last summer I went to New Orleans, to attend General Assembly and once again I found it to be an inspiring event filled with energized transforming worship and opportunities for learning. I also sang in the GA choir again. Later in the summer I also went to Arlington, VA, to attend the UU Musicians' Network annual conference. For me this is an event not to be missed. It is filled with high-quality music making and worship that is truly inspiring. The music-making was phenomenal, consistently on a high level. And of course it was great to meet with my colleagues from all over the USA and Canada to exchange ideas and learn from each other. I came back with several new musical ideas that I am itching to try when the time is right. The choir usually enjoys the new music that I find at this conference, and the congregation has also benefitted from this wonderful denominational resource. Since 2016 I am also the district liaison for the Pennsylvania wing of the JP district within UUMN.

I still use the organ to enhance our worship when it seems most appropriate. The instrument has not yet been repaired and brought back to tip-top shape, but it still works for some hymnody and repertoire. We have had two independent consultants that have looked at the instrument and offered their opinions on it. It was striking how similar their ideas were. Most of the time I am at the piano for services and what I call the Walsh Steinway continues to be a joy to play. Apparently it is also good for the listener because many times over the course of the year people have said how much they like the piano. Many, many thanks are due to Peter and Marny! Additionally, we have a small upright piano in the sanctuary that I will be moving to make room for another small grand piano that has been donated to us. The choir continues to rehearse in the upstairs Assembly Room where the Sameck grand piano is. This piano also is used for occasional musical programs. It is a good resource. We also have the electric keyboard in the sanctuary.

I continue to serve on the Worship Arts Committee and I am always amazed at how passionate the members are about Sunday services. (There is also the quasi-committee that puts together the annual Seder and I am a part of that). It continues to be a pleasure to work with the committee members as we strive to create worship that is transformative and inspiring. I think we're succeeding. It is a pleasure to look out at our congregation on a typical Sunday morning and see the lively mixture of people who have come to worship together at USG.

ADULT SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Submitted by Gerry Whelan, Chair

◆ Members

Gerry Whelan – Chair, Jason Bender - Director of Religious Education, Rick Rodes, Joanne Davis

◆ Mission of Committee To provide programs, events and communal gatherings that support members and friends of the Unitarian Society of Germantown in finding spiritual paths that are meaningful and relevant to their individual journeys as well as to the community as it moves forward compassionately in defining, refining and strengthening our Beloved Community.

◆ Goals Established for Past Year

To make programs more accessible by eliminating registration and allowing participation in programs on an ad hoc basis, to offer programs and activities on an ongoing basis rather than a semester basis (eliminating ASD Faires)

◆ Significant Accomplishments of Past Year

The ASD Committee has chosen to focus more of its efforts on programs and activities that are less didactic than in past years and to sustain successful programs.

- Community Day (CD) was originally planned to be offered twice this year, in November and in March. The November offering was quite successful and well received and attended. It followed the model of workshops preceding the service but this time only one set of concurrent workshops was offered and attendance was better. The workshops including choir, drumming and yoga were incorporated into the Intergenerational Service which once again included Bread Communion with bread freshly baked by our younger members and distributed to all at the end of the Service. And again, the Day closed with a Community Brunch open to all USG family and guests. Delicious and a bonding for the whole community and guests and actually generated a modest revenue.
- Exploring Elderhood has become one of the most popular and best attended programs ever offered. Honorable Elders from our congregation as well as guests meet once a month for a program and activities designed and presented by volunteers on a rotating basis, resulting in diverse participation and ownership. Most programs have some time when participants gather in small groups to discuss the topics and these have been especially popular. Each session is followed by a potluck TGIF. The larger turnouts seen in the earlier sessions have winnowed down to a core of 12 -20 regular attendees depending on the topics but this group makes continuing the program worthwhile although some more participation at the organizational level will be needed to continue the program into its third year.
- Mindfulness Meditation and related activities have become a much more robust part of the ASD program this year:
- Ongoing Meditation Programs:
 - The Sunday morning Meditation practice continues albeit with a small but steady cohort of participants. For the first two Sundays each month a guided meditation and discussion are offered from 9:15 - 10:15. On other Sundays the Meditation Room is open for private meditation. The biggest challenge facing this portion of our Meditation Program is its juxtaposition to the Sunday Service which makes it difficult for some to attend. However, this part of the program has been running for two years

- or longer and involves very little expenditure of resources so there is no reason not to continue it and encourage more participation.
- Tuesday Evening Dialogue - These sessions include brief meditation but focus primarily on discussion exploring the nondual aspects of spirituality. These have been led by our DSD and with his departure their future is less certain but if regular participants are interested in continuing the practice the ASD committee would certainly support that activity.
 - Thursday evening Mindfulness Meditation with Reverend Kent - these sessions only began in the last few months of this year and provide an opportunity for those who may be newer to Mindfulness Meditation to participate in a small community setting of guided meditation and teaching.
 - Special Meditation Programs and Teachings:
 - Introduction to Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction - this four week program provided an introduction for those with no or little prior meditation experience to learn the basic foundations of mindfulness using the techniques of breathing, body scanning and looking inward. Similar course have been the gateway for millions of people to begin regular meditation practices. The course was given earlier this year by Deborah Cooper, an experienced teacher and will be repeated in the Fall.
 - A six-week Sunday evening discussion course based on Practicing Peace in Times of War by Pema Chodron will be starting in May co-taught by Reverend Kent and Deborah Cooper
 - We have now established a firm relationship with the Springboard Meditation Sangha (SMS) in Mt. Airy and have offered one program with another coming up in May.
 - A Day of Teaching with Josh Korda, a well respected teacher in the DharmaPunx movement was held with over 70 attendees. The event was highly successful and established USG as a site capable of hosting large teachings.
 - A One Day Mindful Communication Retreat: Creating Real Dialogue with Oren Sofer, another well respected Dharma Teacher will be held in a few weeks and 50 people are expected to attend.
 - These events are not only solidifying our relationship with Springboard but establishing USG as a Meditation and Teaching resource for the wider community and generating donations for teachers, and funds for USG and Springboard.
 - A new program, Difficult Conversations, a structured series of moderated conversations on difficult and divisive topics will be initiated and, if successful, will be continued through the year. The first topic of discussion will be Abortion.

◆ Goals for Upcoming Church Year

- Continue to offer Community Day once or twice a year perhaps with a new variety of workshops, worship services and brunches.
- Continue the Exploring Elderhood indefinitely as long as support is evident.
- Continue and expand all Meditation and Dialogue Programs both USG based and in conjunction with Springboard.
- Design and develop an attractive display module for permanent posting at Hospitality Hours indicating ongoing and new ASD program and providing information to encourage participation.
- Recruit new members to the ASD Committee
- Solicit and generate new ideas for programs and activities,

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS COMMITTEE

Submitted by Bill Blasdel & Kurt Ahrens, Co-Chairs

◆ Members

Co-chairs: Bill Blasdel & Kurt Ahrens. Active members: Lynne Kalish, Andre Stormont, Carolyn Cotton, Scott Smith, August Anderson, Tom Ott and Howard Silver. Inactive contributing members: Carl Leiby

◆ Mission of Committee

Operate, repair, maintain and continually improve our historic, beautiful property, working within constraints according to the following priorities:

1. Assure a Safe facility
2. Preserve & protect the property from degradation (biggest threat – water leaks)
3. Reduce/control operating costs (including utilities)
4. Enhance the property for members' use, accessibility, and for rental income
5. General cosmetic improvements and refurbish one space each year.

◆ Goals Established for Past Year

1. Stay within approved FY 17-18 budget - this might still be possible but multiple large repairs and projects to meet our priority mission goals of safety and preserving/protecting the property will likely require funds be drawn on the Maintenance Reserve Fund to fund major repairs through the end of the fiscal year.
2. Re-affirm priority statement and develop a prioritized list of projects for the fiscal year - Repairs & projects involving safety, preserving & protecting the property and enhancing accessibility has come close to draining the budget for this year so there have been only minor cosmetic improvements.
3. Formulate, Propose and negotiate budget for FY 18-19 – B&G has not been involved in this process.

◆ Significant Accomplishments of the Past Year

1. Building a new Archives Closet.
2. Repairs and rehabilitation of Committee Room.
3. Replacing the Assembly Room non-ADA access ramp with a minimal slope concrete walkway .
4. Institution of a maintenance program for the 12 USG heat pump and air conditioner units.
5. Continue the multi-year repair & rehab of Sanctuary stained glass windows.
6. Upgrade systems in the CNS
7. Removal of several dangerous trees and branches

◆ Goals for Upcoming Church Year

1. Stay within approved FY 18-19 budget and remove the B&G budget from being reduced/cut to balance the overall USG budget .
2. Re-affirm priority statement and develop a prioritized list of repairs and improvement projects for the fiscal year, and execute them accordingly.
3. Formulate, Propose and negotiate budget for FY 19-20.
4. Engage the congregation in little projects and ad hoc workdays
5. Establish a “Proposal Form” for the congregation to suggest project to the Committee
6. Start a multi-year campaign to eradicate invasive and noxious plants on the property

CARING SYSTEM

Submitted by Linda Bernstein, Co-Chair

◆ **Members** Linda Bernstein, Bonnie McDairmont, Sarah West, Connie Simon, Kent Matthies

◆ **Mission of Committee**

To organize the energy of the USG community to provide comfort and assistance to fellow members during times of sickness or other hardship.

◆ **Goals Established for Past Year**

To respond in a timely manner to congregants in need. To keep track of people encountering difficulties so they remain in our consciousness.

◆ **Significant Accomplishments of the Past Year**

The entire USG community comprises the caring committee. The steering team harnesses the energy of the congregation to help out when people encounter challenges. The congregation responds generously when appeals for meals or rides are made. Many in the congregation send cards and other messages of encouragement to people in need.

◆ **Goals for Upcoming Church Year**

To continue to help the USG community respond with compassion to people in need.

CHILD SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT (CSD)

Respectfully submitted by Jason Bender, Director of CSD

◆ **Members** Sharon Mafuru, Janet Haas, Alan Gardner, Sandy Devine, Lucas Jaeger, Stephanie Shenck, Kira Baker-Doyle (chair)

◆ **Mission of Committee**

To design and implement programming that supports children's spiritual development at USG.

◆ **Goals Established for Past Year**

None established.

◆ **Significant Accomplishments of the Past Year**

Child Spiritual Development (CSD) continues to be an enriching and meaningful experience for many of the children and adults who are involved in the program. However, one issue that we faced this year was a drop in attendance and a low participation rate in most classes. There are a host of potential reasons for low participation, some of which are CSD related and some of which may be related to issues beyond the CSD committee's control. The issues beyond CSDs control have been outlined in a 2018 report submitted to the board of trustees titled *Attendance and Participation Analysis*.

Potential CSD related issues to low attendance may be related to some structural issues such as the usage of classroom spaces, volunteer teaching team dynamics (i.e. minimum of four teachers per class, limited time spent with kids, limited teaching experience, limited prep time, etc.),

curricula and lessons. As well as social issues like gender imbalance in the classroom, low parent involvement and lack of teacher support for kids with special needs.

This year CSD offered the following classes at 10:30am: PreK-K (3-6 years), 1st-2nd (6-8 years), 3rd-5th (8-11 years), 6th-8th (11-13 years) and high school OWL (14-18 years). We also continued Youth Group (which was started in the 2016-17 program year) for 9th-12th graders which met roughly every other Sunday from 6-8pm. CSD continues to have regular communication with parents through a weekly email sent from the Director of Spiritual Development (DSD). We continued to offer Teachers Workshops. These were attended by about a third of the teachers and the feedback from teachers that attended was overwhelmingly positive. We also offered a parent workshop providing information on the Natural Learning Relationships model of whole child development. This spun-off into a book club that met twice. The CSD committee renovated the Committee room (our childcare room) to make it feel like a more inviting space for toddlers and to give parents a sense of ease in leaving their children in this space. CSD also semi-converted the Bristol room into a youth space. While the Bristol room still needs work, it is now the place that our Youth Group and HS OWL class calls home. It will likely be the space that our Coming of Age class uses next program year.

We continued to offer family fun events this year. As usual, the October pumpkin carving event was very well attended (more than 50 people). It is probably the most popular CSD event that we run. Based on requests from many parents (and as a result of a successful movie night in the 2016-17 year), we implemented a whole series of movie nights this year. The first two movie nights were hardly attended, so we canceled the final movie night based on this lack of interest. We replaced the final movie night with an intergenerational protest poster making event in collaboration with the social justice committee to make signs for the March for Our Lives protest in Washington DC and Philadelphia. We also offered the spring campfire again this year, which had about the same amount of attendees as last year (approximately 25 mixed-age). A new offering this year was a weekly intergenerational drum circle that ran for several months, and an intergenerational flute circle that ran every other week for two months. While there were a few sessions with 8-10 people, these events had mostly a low number of attendees. In total we had about 20 participants during the course of this program. Despite low attendance rates, CSD teacher-volunteerism this year was strong, and teacher moral remains positive. We are planning a final teacher workshop and celebration in preparation for CSD Sunday.

◆ Goals for Upcoming Church Year

1. Revisit the volunteer teaching model to see if there are alternatives available.
2. Increase youth participation with younger kids in this new volunteer teaching model.
3. Continue workshops based on the needs and interests of parents and teachers.
4. Support new DSD while they get settled and bring them up to speed.
5. Continue to brainstorm ways that we might bring music programming into CSD, some of which may be intergenerational.

EARTHSPIRIT CIRCLE (formerly “Earth Honoring Traditions”)

Submitted by Donya Coldwell, Chair

◆ Members

Donya Coldwell (chair), Sarah Frazier, Meg Ryan, Kris Alutius, Susan Bockius, Maggie Beaumont, Kat Grau

◆ Mission of Committee

To develop awareness of worldwide earth-honoring traditions and practices; to celebrate the seasonal and lunar changes during *The Wheel of the Year*; thereby, to introduce those who are not Unitarian Universalists to our beloved community.

◆ Goals Established for Past Year

To conduct Celtic earth-honoring celebrations of Samhain, Winter Solstice, Imbolc, Spring Equinox, Beltaine, Midsummer, Lughnasadh, and Mabon; and to increase opportunities for exploring diverse pagan spiritual practices.

◆ Significant Accomplishments of Past Year

Developed and conducted eight ceremonies in Celtic tradition based on former chairman Dennis Strain's research and Mara Freeman's Kindling the Celtic Spirit, a copy of which was donated to USG's library. Extended invitation to children (younger ones to be accompanied by an adult) to participate in our celebrations. Meg Ryan's special presentation, “Blue Blood Moon”, at a *Finding Our Roots* monthly meeting. Continued to study the pagan roots of most organized religions. Handbook of Celtic ceremonies' orders of service (OS) and song sheets organized and produced by the Chair, who also revised the *Casting the Circle* chants and wrote new pagan lyrics for existing melodies.

◆ Goals for Upcoming Church Year

Continue to conduct Celtic ceremonies as above. Research earth-honoring traditions—e.g., Goddess worship—from areas of the world other than Great Britain for future celebration. Use *Finding Our Roots* meetings (held in the four months without a ceremony) to identify ways of increasing USG participation in and outreach to local non-USG members to join our eight celebrations. As the latter becomes familiar with our friendly, dynamic, eclectically spiritual community, **EarthSpirit Circle** hopes to contribute to USG's growth.

ELEVATOR COMMITTEE

Submitted by Bill Dowdall, Chair

◆ Members Bill Dowdall, Chair, Linda Bernstein, Bill Blasdel, Carolyn Cotton, Charles Gabriel, John Pron, Gloria Guldager and Susan Smith

The Elevator committee began meeting approximately one year ago, at the conclusion of the capital campaign. We secured the services of an architect through a competitive bidding process. We presented our ideas to the architect, and met with him as he developed the plans that would put our ideas into reality.

We met over several months to put shape to our ideas. We received cost estimates on those plans in December 2017. The committee was surprised and dismayed to receive the cost estimates. The

costs were far in excess of the amount we had raised, and above what we thought the congregation could support.

Since December we have been meeting with the architect to revise the plans and rebid various elements of the work in order to arrive at a plan we could afford and one that would meet our needs. Items have been re-bid several times, and the scope of the project has been revised.

The plan we are going forward with is different from that which we originally conceived, and which was pictured in the brochure in the capital campaign. The current plan still locates the elevator in the corner of the building at the intersection of the Sullivan wing and the Daskam Room/Committee Room corner. It includes storage for tables on all floors. Since the current archives closet will become part of the elevator addition, a new closet for the USG archives has been created using space in the Committee Room.

The elevator envisioned is a full sized ADA-compliant elevator accommodating several passengers in addition to a wheelchair passenger. The elevator will also accommodate folding tables and wheeled racks of chairs to be transported from floor to floor. The elevator will allow circulation of all people from all floors of the building, including worship space, social space and restrooms. Handicapped individuals parking in the courtyard will enter at ground level and have full access to all floors of our building. This is what we had hoped for. Using the elevator will be a safe, dignified means of navigating the building. This corner of the building, now dark and gloomy, will be generous and flooded with natural light.

Sadly, at this time, we are not able to encompass a rear entrance to the building. The addition of a back entrance adds more than one hundred thousand dollars to the cost. The floor height of the elevator addition will be several feet below grade level. In order to make an outside entrance, large scale grading would have to occur to lower the ground by several feet. In addition, construction of retaining walls, paths and lighting would be required in the grove. These factors make the project far too costly and are not attainable at present.

Construction of the elevator is in accord with our 2008 Facilities Master Plan. It would allow further capital improvements including a rear entrance if desired at a future date. It would also allow for the construction of an education wing, as contemplated in the Master plan, at a future date.

During this process we reviewed our actions to see how we came to be so far from the project we thought we could create. We reviewed how we arrived at the cost estimates we used in the fund-raising appeals. We had two cost estimates. One was developed in a feasibility study performed by the Brawer and Hauptman Architecture firm, the same one that developed USG's master plan for facilities. They were intimately familiar with the USG building. Two congregants independently worked up an estimate. Their estimate was similar to the Brawer and Hauptman estimate. We felt we could rely on these estimates. We set the fund-raising goal at \$350,000, as being an amount the congregation could achieve. Together with the \$150,000 bequest from Gary Bromberg, the committee felt we could accomplish both projects, the elevator addition and the improved driveway.

In actuality, the Capital Campaign raised \$365,000, \$15,000 over our goal.

Conversations with our architect have shown us that our project is extremely complicated and difficult to construct. We are excavating a 30' pit that we then must build walls around, thus creating an addition. There are no natural openings in the walls so we must cut through very thick walls. We must provide for drainage and accommodate varying roof heights. The various craftspeople must be sequenced to work over time and in a small space. It would be easier and less costly to add an elevator to the outside of a free-standing building than to insert one at USG. Unfortunately this location is the only one that will serve all three floors of our building.

Despite our disappointment with part of the project, we are happy and proud to go forward with the elevator. It is important to keep in mind that our accessibility deficiencies will be optimally met: handicap parking is in the courtyard, one gets to the elevator by the shortest route and then one can access every single part of our building. A welcoming rear entrance would enable improved use of the grove, and provide a pleasant entrance from the parking lot, but it would not supplant the courtyard entry for the disabled. It will be a very good thing for all members of the congregation and the public to be able to circulate among all the spaces in our building with ease and dignity. This was our ultimate goal and we are about to achieve it.

Cost and Revenue Projections

COST PROJECTIONS

ELEVATOR	5,385	
Geotechnical Survey (core samples)	4,100	
Archive closet	1,800	
Site Survey	40,000	
Design	481,122	
Construction est.		
TOTAL		\$532,285

DRIVEWAY

Survey	1,380	
Clearing Brush	2,300	
Repaving/partial widening	35,000	\$38,680
TOTAL		

TOTAL BOTH PROJECTS **\$570,965**

REVENUE PROJECTIONS

Bequest	150,000	
Capital Campaign	365,000	
Chalice Lighters Grant (awaiting approval)	40,000	
Supplemental Fund Raising	16,000	
TOTAL		\$571,000

ENDING RACISM COMMITTEE

Submitted by Parvathy Menon, co-chair

◆ **Members** Nancy Anderson, Anne Bower, Chuck Bowser, Zachary Bosco, Treva Burger, Barbara Dowdall (co-chair), Andrea Durham, Tom Grabe, Devery Howerton, Shobhi Kanal, Lucinda Lea, Yvonne Marlier, Parvathy Menon (co- chair), Gail Mershon, Lois Murphy, Jim Salom, Eli Scarce, Cynthia M. Schiff, Connie Simon, Su Stout, Kay Weiser

◆ **Mission of Committee**

Vision: ERC envisions a society in which racial justice and equality are the reality for all.

Mission: ERC works toward dismantling racism in all its forms, individual, institutional, and systemic, through self-examination, education, advocacy, public witness, and service.

◆ **Goals Established for Past Year**

- Increase awareness about racism within USG through the weekly ERC table, lending library, recommended readings, etc.
- Encourage ERC members and USG congregants to address all forms and levels of racism through self-examination, education, advocacy, public witness, and service.
- Engage in community outreach through films and possible events
- Support CAMI (Coalition Against Mass Incarceration)
- Support TCRC (The Center for Returning Citizens)
- Address the 13th Amendment
- Collaborate with The Unitarian Universalist Church of the Restoration
- Screen Wilderness Journey and Harvest of Empires
- Organize a Jubilee at USG
- Invite guest speakers to USG

◆ **Significant Accomplishments of Past Year**

- Started ERC movie of the month. Movies are screened on the third Wednesday of each month. Screened the movies: Wilderness Journey, Harvest of Empires, Race – The Power of an Illusion, The Color of Fear, Race and Whiteness in the Era of Trumpism, Get Out, I Am Not Your Negro
- The group engaged in readings and discussions during each meeting. Emails discussions occurred between meetings
 1. Book Discussion: Waking Up White by Debbie Irving, September. Summer Reading Suggestions: Waking Up White - Debbie Irving, Lies My Teacher Told Me - James Loewen, and Negroland – Margo Jefferson
 2. An end of the year survey was conducted to evaluate how the group received all the changes that were made to the structure and activities of ERC with the following questions.
 - a. What brought you to ERC?
 - b. What are your goals as a member of ERC?
 - c. Has ERC helped you in any way?
 - d. What changes would you like for ERC?

Less than 50% of ERC members responded to the survey. During the ERC meeting dedicated to reviewing the survey responses, a couple of members shared that education about racism was distressing. The others did not share their thoughts on the issue. However, the majority of survey responses indicated interest in continuing the

education. Based on the review findings and due to time constraints, the education component was moved to second Sundays to give members, who are able to handle the discomfort of discussions about racism, two full hours.

3. ERC members voted to set aside \$300 for a cash gift to Connie Simon as appreciation for all her efforts at ERC and USG. The impetus for the decision was the recognition that Connie was an unpaid intern.
4. Invited a non-profit organization Men Who Care of Germantown (MCWOG) to an ERC meeting. In response to their wish list, ERC donated \$200 to the organization and various members plan to volunteer their time.
5. Reviewing USG interviews regarding race in our congregational history
 - a. Jacqui Wiggins was invited to be a guest speaker. The title of her talk was: African Americans in Times of War: The War Against Racism, Inequality, and Indifference Continues
 - b. USG members and friends joined the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE)
 - c. African American Read-In
 - d. Hosted Marietta Tanner's book launch - Driving in Second
 - e. Sponsored Concert: I Too Sing America Black History Month Concert at USG with Cory Walker performing as Cookie Diorio
 - f. Provided table in Fellowship Hour offering sale and borrowing of recommended books
 - g. Supported CAMI (Coalition Against Mass Incarceration)
 - h. Collaborated with UU Church of the Restoration
 - i. Participated in the November Social Justice Fair

◆ **Goals for Upcoming Church Year**

- Expand membership
- Encourage ERC members and USG congregants to address all forms and levels of racism through self-examination, education, advocacy, public witness, and service
- Continue close connection with UUA racial justice efforts-
<https://www.uua.org/multiculturalism>
- Continue ERC movie nights
- Increase awareness about racism within USG through the weekly ERC table, lending library, recommended readings, etc.
- Invite guest speakers to USG
- Support Coalition Against Mass Incarceration (CAMI)
- Support Men Who Care of Germantown (MCWOG) through participation in efforts to support students and parents at Roosevelt Elementary School
- Continue collaboration with The Unitarian Universalist Church of the Restoration
- Organize field trips
- Host an ERC Open House in the Fall of 2018
- Premiere excerpts of USG Interviews on race in congregational history
- Expand coordination of Ending Racism activities with other Delaware Valley congregations
- Establish Northwest interfaith links with groups sharing similar goals
- Host an end of year pot luck

MLK DAY OF SERVICE

Submitted by Connie Simon, Intern Minister

◆ **Members** Connie Simon (Chair), Kay Weiser, Dennis Brunn, Melissa Guerriero, Carolyn Scott, Ann Clarey

◆ **Mission of Committee**

The MLK Day of Service committee is responsible for identifying, planning and service projects, securing supplies and donations, recruiting and communicating with volunteers, supervising on-site logistics and developing and conducting worship for USG's annual MLK Day of Service. Our mission is to provide a day that combines meaningful service and spiritual development and honors of the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

◆ **Goals Established for Past Year**

In preparing for the 2018 event, our goal was to have participation of at least 400 volunteers and 30 service projects. We also established a goal of beginning our planning meetings and confirming projects earlier in the fall.

◆ **Significant Accomplishments of Past Year**

Almost 500 volunteers participated in our 2018 day of service, completing 32 service projects. We had new volunteer teams from several area churches. and schools. When the previous facilities at First United Methodist Church of Germantown were not available, the committee secured kitchen space at Summit Presbyterian Church for soup-making, beginning a partnership that we hope will continue in future years. Several people also participated in an economic justice protest hosted by Senator Art Haywood. Volunteers were enthusiastic and eager to participate; welcoming teams made sure every volunteer was greeted and welcomed into the space. Rev. Kent and Senator Haywood presented an award to Nancy Dearden in recognition of her years of service for MLK Day.

◆ **Goals for Upcoming Church Year**

1. Identify a new chairperson for the MLK Day of Service Planning Committee.
2. Increase the number of off-site service projects to ensure that all volunteers will have meaningful work to do for the entire day.
3. Re-evaluate the number of projects that reasonably can be conducted on-site at USG.
4. Have all project leaders confirmed by November 1.
5. Hold first planning meeting by October 1.

NICKY BROWN MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Submitted by Shawn Miller, Chair

◆ **Members** Shawn Miller- Chair, Ingrid Brown, Lida Holota

◆ **Mission of Committee**

The mission of the Nicky Brown Scholarship is to honor the memory of Nicky Brown by providing a yearly financial stipend to all individuals who meet the criteria for the stipend. The criteria includes anyone who is a pledging member or friend of the church who is attending college or a university at either the undergraduate or graduate level as well as other professional workshops.

◆ **Goals Established for Past Year**

- Increased awareness by publishing the notice earlier and reaching out to the education
- Liaison for the church.
- Updated the application forms.
- Improved the tracking mechanism for the application process

◆ **Significant Accomplishments of the Past Year**

This year the Committee was able to track and initiate contact with prior recipients easily based on the improved tracking and determine the student's status. The Committee also expanded its reach and had 10 students apply and awarded grants. Last year there were 8 students.

◆ **Goals for Upcoming Church Year**

Continue to increase awareness and availability to eligible students

- Continue follow-up with Students
- Fine tune the tracking system to enhance communications with all students receiving funds.

RENTAL COORDINATOR

Submitted by Carolyn Cotton, Rental Coordinator

◆ **Significant Accomplishments of the Past Year**

USG continues to provide space for a variety of different types of organizations and events.

Recurring tenants meet on a regular basis: Mt. Airy Home School Coop, Fun in the Sun Day Camp, Mt. Airy Learning Tree classes, Tibetan Association of Philadelphia, Osceola AA, Everyday Solutions NA, District 25 AA.

Returning tenants hold events at least once a year: IndivisibleNW Philly, Rotary Club, Commonwealth Youth Choir, Philadelphia Chorus.

One time events: Weddings, Memorial services, private parties, baby showers, non-profit meetings and workshops. There is a natural ebb and flow to the numbers of these events.

The Coop Nursery School and Apartment provide a steady income source.

SERVICE AUCTION COMMITTEE

Submitted by Sam Stormont and Linda Smith, Co-Chairs

◆ Members

Linda Smith and Sam Stormont, co-chairs. Members: Carolyn Cotton, Joanne Davis, Floyd Glenn, Janet Haas, Jenn Leiby, Lynne Kalish, Debbie Kish-Silver, Gwen Lindgren, Judi Morrow, Judy Rodes, Andre Stormont.

◆ Mission of Committee

To build fellowship and foster community at USG while raising the highest level of funds to enable USG to meet its overall goals.

◆ Goals Established for Past Year

- Develop and evaluate new fundraising and participant engagement strategies to ensure 2018 and future success.
- Build engagement with younger adults, young families, CSD and others who do not routinely attend the auction.
- Discuss overall auction planning, fundraising challenges, volunteer engagement, and target audiences with a goal of increasing funds raised during the 2018 event.
- Extend volunteer reach with new committee members

◆ Significant Accomplishments of the Past Year

- Reversed the downward trend of auction proceeds by raising \$23,815 toward our board-directed goal of \$24,000, with additional funds still to come from participation in poster events, continued followup on unpaid invoices and other revenue streams.
- Incorporated new strategies to increase main, poster and silent auction items available for bid to build interest, diversify attendance and proceeds. With this goal, we developed new ways to reach new potential donors and bidders, resulting in 50 main items available for bidding, 38 poster items and 44 silent auction items. This is the highest total of available offerings in the history of the auction; of these items a total of 58 offerings were completely new.
- Overcame a very challenging situation with the very important and difficult database manager position and the challenges of teaching a new volunteer auction programming. Thanks to all who assisted in this effort!
- Developed booklet layout in new larger format for easier reading.
- Worked extensively with CSD to incorporate child-friendly items for bidding, encourage youth participation, and developed new policies and other efforts to encourage young families to attend the event.
- Researched and advertised auction offerings that provided free attendance for children when accompanied by parents.
- Started the auction one hour earlier (5 p.m. instead of 6 p.m.) to accommodate families with children to encourage participation.
- Developed popular "UU Super Heros" theme specifically to appeal to all ages, but particularly young families.
- CSD Director worked with teens to offer items for bid including yardwork, childcare, and pet sitting.
- Researched new auction database programs that are more accessible and easier for volunteers to download and use. The *Together Auction* program looks very promising.

- Represented the auction group on new USG fundraising committee.

◆ **Goals for Upcoming Church Year**

Make investment in new more accessible auction software program used by other UU churches. Find and train additional database manager support.

- Coordinate with Stewardship and USG office for the limited valuable advertising and public relations space in Communicator and other outlets to promote both events.
- Reevaluate booklet advertising since current advertisers may suffer from advertising "fatigue."
- Continue to increase funds raised using workable strategies from 2018 and maximize successful activities from the 2018 auction (example: wine raffle).
- Determine which activities provide maximum fundraising potential with analysis of volunteer efforts needed to fulfill duties.
- Work with USG office to increase publicity before weekly services and at fellowship hour as needed.

SHARE THE PLATE TASK FORCE

Submitted by Eric Foster, Chair

◆ **Members**

Eric Foster (Chair), Bobbi Penniman, Mark Bangela, Tonya Vales. \

◆ **Mission of Committee**

- Connect to something larger than ourselves.
- Acknowledge our interdependence with each other.
- Shift our congregational outlook to one of abundance rather than scarcity.
- Strengthen our ties with our neighbors.
- Show our community that we are the church “of the loving heart, open mind and helping hands” in a very real and tangible way.

The committee meets about once a quarter to nominate, discuss, and/or review new organizations for open months. When possible, we coordinate awards with monthly social justice themes.

◆ **Significant Accomplishments of the Past Year**

Awards and recipients

As of this writing (May 1, 2018), the STP committee reviewed 9 submissions, approving 7 of them, all of them new to STP. The others are repeat (and virtually “default”) recipients. Here are the awards:

	2017-18	Amt	1st time STP award?
May	Phila Immig & Citizenship Coalition (PICC)	776	Yes
June	Women in Transition	857	Yes
July	Philadelphia Unemployment Project	629	No
August	UU House Outreach	809	Yes
September	Lingelbach/Henry	1,041	No
October	UUSC-UUA (Hurricane relief)	3,436	No
November	The Attic	966	Yes
December	PIHN	1,849	No
January	MLK Day	4,023	No
February	Phila Mural Arts	834	Yes
March	Rebuilding Philly	1,447	No
April	UUPLAN	1,015	No
May	Broad St Ministry		Yes
June	Covenant House PA		Yes
	Total - 12 months	17,681	

The 12-month total (trailing this writing) of \$17,681 is the highest in at least five years.

SMALL GROUP MINISTRY FACILITATORS

Submitted by Treva Burger

◆ Members

Kent Matthies and Treva Burger co-chairs, Andrea Parry, Mark Bangela, Mark Thompson, Stephanie Bonner, Eileen Whelan, Adrienne Wolkenberg, Parvathy Menon, Dev Howerton, Carolyn Cotton (Shobhi Kanal is a facilitator not currently attending meetings.)

◆ Mission of Committee

The Small Group Ministry program provides visitors and members a direct experience with others. Through sharing our stories and exploring monthly spiritual themes we become alive and known to each other. The existence of our small groups supports personal and community growth. We intentionally cultivate vibrancy with an open renewal process for our members each fall. There is an inherent dynamism in the process of forming, and re-forming each October, and to a lesser extent through the years as attendance and topics shift.

◆ Goals Established for Past Year

1. The Facilitators group will assess the number and size of groups each summer to determine how many openings we will have in the fall. Each leader also will ask their group members who will be continuing with the group. If it is determined that new groups are needed to have an adequate number of spots to recruit new members to, we will identify, recruit and train new leaders with a goal of having an increase in the number of people involved in Small Group Ministry groups each year. (Annually)
2. Small groups will plan to meet monthly with a goal of 6-12 members. Facilitators will meet monthly as a group to support each other, share wisdom and develop and fine tune curricula. (Ongoing)
3. Feedback will be solicited on curricula so we can make any adjustments felt to be needed to make them maximally effective and engaging to a large variety of people and determine if the 3 year cycle of themes chosen will work on an continuing basis. Since we are starting

the first year of the three year cycle and this is the first time we will be repeating every theme and curriculum and from only 3 years ago, we will be looking at ways to keep the themes and curricula fresh and consider the possibility of offering something different this year if the repeat begins to feel stale. (Ongoing)

4. SGM materials: curricula, group lists, facilitator meeting minutes, brochures, etc, will be kept in a dropbox. The dropbox will be kept organized. (Ongoing)
5. The SGM Facilitators will offer extra Pop Up (or drop in) Small Group after the service on Sundays in August and September, depending on what the community supports, in order to give people who feel unable or not ready to commit to a regular monthly group a chance to explore the themes and connect to other congregants more deeply. The second Sunday group will remain open to drop ins ongoing. (Re evaluate April 2018)
6. We have an ongoing goal of having each group engage in service work to USG or the greater community as part of their own small group covenant and/or the USG membership covenant at least once per year. We will begin to track who is actually following this guideline and think of ways to improve the participation if it is low. (Reevaluate April 2018.)

◆ Significant Accomplishments of the Past Year

We have 11 groups functioning well. We had several facilitators step aside this year and they were seamlessly replaced by group members who joined the facilitators group as well. The one group that ended was a second couples group, the remaining members still get together for soup, but do not do curricula.

We held a retreat to evaluate our options for curricula and decided to switch to the Soul Matters themes and curricula which will significantly decrease the work load of the Small Group facilitators who have been writing and editing USG's curricula for several years. We have a regular group after the service on second Sundays that Welcomes visitors and drop ins.

◆ Goals for Upcoming Church Year

1. The Facilitators group will assess the number and size of groups each summer to determine how many openings we will have in the fall. Each leader also will ask their group members who will be continuing with the group. If it is determined that new groups are needed to have an adequate number of spots to recruit new members to, we will identify, recruit and train new leaders with a goal of having an increase in the number of people involved in Small Group Ministry groups each year. (Annually)
2. We will begin a new process with the Soul Matters curricula and themes. The plan is to have two facilitators assemble the curricula the groups will use for each theme without editing, just pulling together pieces. If a group leader wants to use the Soul Matters resources to create something different with that theme for their group they are welcome to. We will evaluate whether this is working and tweak as needed throughout the year and make the decision whether to subscribe to Soul Matters again in the spring (6.30.19)
3. Small groups will plan to meet monthly with a goal of 6-12 members. Facilitators will meet monthly as a group to support each other, share wisdom and experience the curricula. (Ongoing)
4. Feedback will be solicited on curricula so we can make any adjustments felt to be needed to make them maximally effective and engaging to a large variety of people. Since we are starting the first year of the Soul Matters themes and curricula, we will evaluate throughout the year, how they are received and decide whether to renew in Spring 2019. (Ongoing)

5. SGM materials: curricula, group lists, facilitator meeting minutes, brochures, etc, will be kept in a dropbox. The dropbox will be kept organized. (Ongoing)
6. We have a goal of having each group engage in service work to USG or the greater community as part of their own small group covenant and/or the USG membership covenant at least once per year. We will work on ways to increase the number of groups fulfilling this important part of their covenant by offering service opportunities and regular reminders. (Ongoing)

SOCIAL JUSTICE COORDINATING TEAM

Submitted by Lois Murphy and Devery Howerton, Co-Chairs

◆ Members

Lois Murphy (co-chair), Devery Howerton (co-chair), Nancy Anderson, Linda Bernstein, Dennis Brunn, Treva Burger, Walter Ceglowski, Judy Dederick, Barbara Dowdall, Marilyn Dyson, Eric Foster, Yvonne Marlier, Parvathy Menon, Gail Mershon, Eli Scarce, Carolyn Scott, Connie Simon, Kay Weiser

◆ Mission of Committee

The Social Justice Council broadly serves to plan, facilitate, and coordinate the social justice program for the congregation. The Council also serves to inform and educate congregants about the various social justice activities with the goal of providing meaningful opportunities for taking action in alignment with our UU Principles.

◆ Goals Established for Past Year

The Social Justice Council broadly serves to plan, facilitate, and coordinate the social justice program for the congregation. The Council also serves to inform and educate congregants about the various social justice activities with the goal of providing meaningful opportunities for taking action in alignment with our UU Principles.

◆ Significant Accomplishments of the Past Year

Highlights of accomplishments by members of the Social Justice Council during the past year include the following:

- Successfully completed thirty-seven projects by hundreds of volunteers who turned out for the MLK day of service (as reported elsewhere).
- Several volunteers participated in the annual Rebuilding Philly event.
- Offered monthly social justice movies and discussions (including films on the rights of gay students, economic justice, immigration, environmental justice ,and peace between Israel and the Palestinian Organization)
- Changed the name of the committee from the Social Justice Coordinating Team to the Social Justice Council; developed and approved a charter for the Council.
- Held a well-attended Social Justice Fair after a service in November in which congregants learned about and indicated interest in the various social justice groups and activities.
- Held an Earth Day Fair in April in conjunction with a sermon by the Executive Director of the Pennsylvania chapter of Interfaith Power and Light, a network of communities and individuals of faith responding to climate change.
- Organized participation in the March for our Lives to end gun violence, Philadelphia, March 2018

- Updated and revised the social justice webpages on the USG website.
- Initiated renewal of USG's designation as a Welcoming Congregation (anticipated to be completed by May 2019)

◆ **Goals for Upcoming Church Year**

The goals for the next year are to continue to enhance communication and collaboration and to increase awareness and participation in social justice activities by members and friends of the congregation.

Significant initiatives for the upcoming year will include:

- Rescheduling a Rebuilding Philly project for October 2018;
- Continued arrangement of and hosting of ambitious Martin Luther King Day volunteer activities
- Developing a relationship as a congregation with POWER
- Continuing and expanding relationship with UUPLAN and collaboration with other Interfaith partners
- Expanding opportunities for Social Justice activism on issues including immigration, environmental justice, reproductive justice, economic justice, ending racism, mass incarceration, and voting rights.

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Submitted by Eric Foster, Co-Chair

◆ **Members**

Christine Ginsburg (Co-Chair), Rick Rodes, Tammi Talda, Eileen Whelan, Gerry Whelan, Eric Foster (Co-Chair)

◆ **Mission of Committee**

The mission of the Stewardship Committee is to foster financial and congregational ownership of USG among our members.

◆ **Goals Established for Past Year**

We didn't set SMART Goals in a formal way, but we tried to conduct a campaign with heart to raise \$360,000 in 2017-18 and \$370,000 in 2018-19.

◆ **Significant Accomplishments of 2016-17 pledge campaign**

1. \$352.3K pledged total – highest in last nine years and a 1.0% increase over previous year.
2. Total of 212 pledges – 98% participation rate, highest in five years.
3. Total YOY net increase (increases minus decreases) in individual pledges from the previous year was a \$3,371.
4. Average household pledge across all households was \$1,662.

◆ **Significant Benchmarks of 2018-19 pledge campaign**

1. Currently at \$247.3K, or 67% of our \$370K goal. This is in line with progress of last year's campaign at the same time from launch.

2. Continuing cleaning of the stewardship database – adding seven new households to the list and removing 18 obsolete or otherwise non-solicitable cases.
3. Solicited 229 households through postal mail. Currently have pledges from 93 (41% participation rate). If the not-yet pledgers this year pledge the same as last year, our pledge total will reach 98% of the goal.

Restructured the Suggested Giving Guide to better reflect range of pledging at USG. Communications involved an All-Church Stewardship luncheon attended by 90 congregants (resulting in \$27,000 in pledges), eight weeks of announcements in both the CommUUnicator and OOS, four three-minute “Stewardship Testimonials” from members in the chancel, supporting announcements by the minister and worship associates, and two specially produced stewardship videos shown during service.

Coordinated better with Worship Arts Committee in scheduling Stewardship events in the Sanctuary (particularly after weather-related interference).

◆ **Goals for Upcoming Church Year**

1. Goal for 2018-19 is \$370,000.
2. Currently, as of 5.1.2018, at 67% of goal, with 41% of households having pledged.
3. Improve communications with new members about stewardship generally and particularly the individual pledging process. Coordinate with Welcoming Committee in this regard.
4. Coordinate better with USG office when scheduling Stewardship events well in advance of the campaign.

UU PA LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY NETWORK (UUPLAN)

Submitted by Dennis Brunn, Chair

◆ **Members:** Dennis Brunn, UUPLAN Liaison; Yvonne Marlier, Co-leader, UUPLAN Immigration Justice Team; Eric Foster and Tom Smith, members of UUPLAN Gun Violence Prevention Team; Dev Howerton, member UUPLAN Reproductive Justice Team; Gail Mershon, member UUPLAN Environmental Justice Team. In addition, there are 10 USG members who paid membership dues since June 2016 and several dozen who contributed through share plate in April 2018.

◆ **Mission of Committee**

The mission of the UUPLAN Committee at USG is to promote awareness of UUPLAN’s advocacy work at the state level, to encourage USG members to join one of UUPLAN’s seven “Justice Teams,” and to encourage USG members to join UUPLAN as individual dues-paying members.

◆ **Goals Established for Past Year**

1. to increase awareness of UUPLAN’s work and our justice issues through periodic displays and at least and at least one workshop with an invited speaker;
2. to increase the number of UUPLAN members at USG to at least 40;
3. to support collaboration between ERC, CAMI (Coalition Against Mass Incarceration) and the statewide UUPLAN Anti Mass Incarceration Team;

4. to identify at least 3 new members of the Immigration Justice Team; to take at least 5 USG members to the UUPLAN 2017 Annual UUPLAN Meeting in Harrisburg in November.

◆ **Significant Accomplishments of Past Year**

1. UUPLAN displays have occurred approximately once a month;
2. Some new members have joined while the total remains about 40;
3. The link between UUPLAN's Anti-Mass Incarceration Team is still to be developed;
4. Immigration Team efforts to grow at USG have not yet been successful;
5. UUPLAN's approach to the Board and the Congregation asking for USG to become an institutional member of UUPLAN led to a positive congregational vote in May 2017;
6. Dennis Brunn, the UUPLAN Liaison at USG has continued for a second year as a member of the UUPLAN Board of Trustees. In that capacity, he helped select the new UUPLAN Exec. Director, Mr. Richard Williams, who began work in January 2018 and who has met this Spring with Rev. Matthies and Lois Murphy, Co-Chair of the USG Social Justice Council;
7. UUPLAN and the USG Social Justice Council co-sponsored the "Community Assembly" initiated by the March on Harrisburg and the PA Poor Peoples Campaign on Feb. 24 at USG, attended by 50 from both USG and the local area. The focus of the March on Harrisburg is to end gerrymandered districts and to reduce the influence of money in state politics.

◆ **Goals for Upcoming Church Year**

1. to continue promoting awareness of UUPLAN's work through displays and through workshops, speakers, films and readings;
2. to increase UUPLAN membership at USG to at least 45 and increase USG engagement in the several UUPLAN Justice Teams;
3. to support the goal of raising at least \$1500 for UUPLAN from USG through both Share the Plate and individual fundraising; and
4. to successfully recruit a new UUPLAN Liaison to replace Dennis Brunn by December of 2018.

WELCOMING COMMUNITY TEAM

Submitted by Treva Burger, Chair

◆ **Members**

Treva Burger, chair, Gloria Guldager, USG Administrator, Elaine Hills, Membership Secretary, Lisa Dutton, Eric Foster, Nancy LaFauci, Deb Kish-Silver, Alice Parker, Judy Rodes and Barbyose Sanders.

◆ **Mission of Committee**

To welcome visitors and provide them with a path to membership. And to deepen connections in the congregation of both new and current members.

◆ **Goals Established for Past Year**

1. Maintain or increase congregational membership each year. Ongoing
2. Engage more of the congregation in the role of welcomers: welcome table, ushers, tour guides, greeters, etc. by increasing recruiting and simplifying the tasks. Ongoing

3. Continue to help congregants connect with those in their Villages through social events within (All Church Dinner, Fall Potluck, CSD Carnival) and outside of church, caring, carpooling, justice issues, interviews, fellowship hour.
4. Plan an event with the minister for new members and active visitors who started coming while Kent was on sabbatical. 12/31/17
5. Create posters for the narthex bulletin boards. 12/31/17
6. Support the Congregational Survey Group to help develop that into a Growth through Service type program. 6/30/18
7. Begin succession planning by identifying a chair to start July 2018.

◆ Significant Accomplishments of the Past Year

- Villages were asked to host Fellowship Hour starting in June 2017 and after the summer they were asked to continue. By all accounts this has been a huge success, not only by making Fellowship Hours much easier to schedule, but also with helping people connect with others in their villages. And many are very happy with the heartiness of the spread, it is especially appreciated on days when people stay for meetings or events.
- A number of Villages also held social events, and several helped meet Caring needs.
- Posters were created for the narthex, one with annual events, the other with a map of the church.
- Now have a designated greeter at most Sunday services.
- Moved UU101 to after the service with the goal of increasing attendance.
- Increased welcoming on MLK Day by making USG postcard brochures and Principles and Purposes cards available throughout the church and also adding some informational slides about USG and UUism to the MLK Day slide show.
- Reached out to all those who joined in the last year or so to see how they are doing.
- Developed an exit interview for people who resign membership. Have not had a lot of success getting people to respond to a request to do it.
- Created Outreach to bridging seniors (from high school) If they are going away to school, we will send information about campus ministry options, the closest UU church to their college campus, the Youth and Young Adult Ministries Blue Boat blog and the Church of the Larger Fellowship.
- Started sending new member names and when the new member was willing brief bios and pictures to their Villages to help them get connected.
- Created a new form for the Welcome Table offering a place for people to ask questions make comments, suggestions, requests or update their contact info.

◆ Goals for Upcoming Church Year

1. Identifying next Welcoming chair by 7/1/18 or soon thereafter.
2. Ask Welcoming team to bring a variety of items for New Member Signing Sunday Fellowship Hours, so it's not all sugar and flour. Start July 2018.
3. Complete Principles banners for the sanctuary by 9/1/18
4. Have addition for gift bag for families with children that includes CSD brochure/info sheet and has info about play packs, child care and wiggle room by 9/1/18
5. Develop system of assigning "buddies" to active visitors or new members to help them connect by 9/1/18
6. Develop new ways of tracking visitors and helping them get engaged by 6/30/19
7. Work on new ways to make sure new members are engaged by 6/30/19
8. Evaluate usefulness of new question, comment, request, suggestion form 6/30/19

9. Update USG visitor postcard/brochure 9.1.18
10. Greeter training for people who will be only greeting and not also ushering. All interested will be welcome by 12/31/18
11. Plan a Visitor and New Member event with the minister for new members and active visitors from the pervious year each fall. Annually
12. Offer Usher breakfast in early December. Annually.
13. Send holiday cards to folks who we haven't seen in a while or are not able to come to church. Check list with minister/staff who also send cards. Annually.
14. Reach out to bridging high school seniors with info about UUism where ever they are going and also online. Annually.
15. Maintain or increase congregational membership each year. Ongoing
16. Engage more of the congregation in the role of welcomers: welcome table, ushers, tour guides, greeters, etc. by increasing recruiting and simplifying the tasks. Ongoing
17. Help congregants connect with those in their Villages through social events within (All Church Dinner, Fall Potluck, CSD Carnival) and outside of church, caring, carpooling, in addition to Fellowship Hour. Ongoing

WORSHIP ARTS

Submitted by Brian O'Leary, Chair

◆ Members

Brian O'Leary (chair), Jason Bender, Mark Daugherty, Eric Foster, Jenn Leiby, Rev. Kent Matthies, Carolyn Scott, Connie Simon, Kay Weiser

◆ Mission of Committee

To prepare and provide excellent worship services at USG.

◆ Goals Established for Past Year

- Enlisted and trained one new worship associate, Susan Doering, and may have enlisted Al Sanders.
- Address summer music earlier and more comprehensively this past year.
- Continued to deliver strong worship services.

◆ Significant Accomplishments of the Past Year

- The Worship Arts team has continued to fine tune the worship services.
- We have welcomed new worship associates to the team.
- We prepared a guide for new worship associates.
- We continue to take into consideration all feedback for creating the best flow and use of time for the worship services.

◆ Goals for Upcoming Church Year

- Enlist and train additional worship associates.
- Hold a special meeting with the worship associates to discuss the services.
- Continue to address worship service issues as this arise.