

Annual Report 2004-2005

May, 2005

STAFF REPORTS

Religious Exploration

Catherine Farmer, Director of Religious Education (DRE)

We have a Religious Exploration program to be proud of here at UCCSM! It's been a good, if busy, year, and I am very grateful for the dedication of the more than 70 members of this congregation who have volunteered in our program this year. The RE Council and I are now in the midst of planning for the fall, and are very excited about what's to come - there are lots of great things in store for next year!

The nature of the DRE position necessitates an overlapping of many tasks with various people in our congregation both to create and run our RE program, and to provide leadership for our church community. Some of the items listed below were accomplished exclusively by the DRE and others were done in cooperation with the RE Council, RE committees, or other church/district groups. This year the RE Council was chaired by Janet Goodwin. Members of the Council during the year included Chris Brown, Amelia Harati, Karen Patch, Beth Rendeiro, Linda Van Ligten, and Alicia Van Ooyen.

Way Cool Sunday School - Year Three: This year was our third year working with the Way Cool Sunday School RE model, an experiential RE format incorporating regular Worship and Social Justice, as well as curriculum-based Classroom Sundays, all grounded in a common focus on our Unitarian Universalist principles and values. Our focus for the first half of the year, across the elements of our program, was the Second UU Principle, Justice, Equity and Compassion, and for the second half of the year, the Third UU Principle, Acceptance of One Another and Encouragement to Spiritual Growth in our Congregations.

Worship: Kindergarten-5th Grades met together on the first Sunday of every month for a Worship Sunday, planned and led this year by the DRE, with support and collaboration from additional volunteers. Topics this year included a Day of the Dead, an Easter Egg Hunt, a visit from folk singer/storyteller Ross Altman, a May Day celebration complete with 12-foot Maypole, and so on. The focus of these Sundays is on celebration and recognition that something special happens when we come together at church. These Sundays have gone well, for the most part, but our current space limitations impact their quality. Neither room 4 nor the open lot outside at 17th street are ideal for creating sacred space. Next year, we also intend to tie the themes of our Worship Sundays more closely to what happens on Classroom and Social Justice Sundays.

In addition to the Way Cool Worship Sundays, this also included involvement in the sanctuary, at least once per month, preparing and sharing stories and celebrations such as introducing Guest At Your Table, co-producing the "Twelve Days of Winter" pageant in

December (along with Susan Jain and Greg Poirier), the story for Easter Sunday, leading the Bridging Ceremony, etc.

Classroom: The second and third Sundays of the month are Classroom Sundays for all ages. At each service, we offer a preschool class, K-1st Grade, 2nd-3rd Grade, 4th-5th Grade, and 6th-7th (Neighboring Faiths). Our 8th Grade Coming of Age program meets during the 9:00 service, and our Senior High YRUU (Young Religious Unitarian Universalists) group meets during the 11:00 service. Our preschool, Neighboring Faiths, Coming of Age, and YRUU classes meet every week and are not part of the rotational format. Overall, our classes have gone well this year, thanks to the many dedicated volunteers serving as teachers in our program. As with the Worship Sundays, our physical space impacts the program that we offer - our classrooms are small and dark, and our teachers have done an admirable job of presenting quality programming in less than adequate space. Our communication systems need improvement, however, and that will be a primary focus in our planning for next fall. We also have been short-staffed, particularly at 9:00, which means that some of our teachers have been contributing extraordinary amounts of time in order to keep our classes going strong, especially Sue Bickford, Jacki Paddock, Alicia Van Ooyen, Peggy Kharraz and Amy Giles.

Social Justice: On the fourth Sunday of every month, our K-5th students met together for a Social Justice Sunday. This year, we tried out a new model for our SJ program: one sustained project throughout the year. Between October and the end of April, kids learned about the Westside Food Bank and what it means to be hungry, and then created and painted more than 125 beautiful ceramic bowls which were then sold to members of the congregation, along with tickets to the Empty Bowls Luncheon, held on April 24th after the second service. And what a success! We sold more than 100 bowls, served lots of spaghetti lunches, and raised nearly \$950 to be donated to the Westside Food Bank, to "help fill some of the many empty bowls in the world." This is the portion of our program where kids truly "put hands and feet on our UU Principles." Special thanks go to the many volunteers who helped with each part of the program, especially Michele Prichard-Lane, Kit Shaw, Margot Page, Ellen Levy, Linda Van Ligten and Janet Goodwin.

Coming of Age: This year the Coming of Age group is even bigger than last year! We have eleven 8th graders in the program who have been working hard all year on exploring their personal faith within the context of our UU faith, and developing their credo statements to share with us in a Sunday service of their own creation on May 22nd. The program's success is due to the dedication of our COA leaders, Barbara Kernochan, Mel Horan, and Gary Kinsinger, and the support of the eleven church members who signed on to serve as mentors to each of the youth.

Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (YRUU): This year our YRUU group has expanded to include seventeen high school youth, who meet each Sunday morning with advisors Chris Brown, Liza Cranis and Bob Dietz. The highlight of the year came on April 10th, with our Youth Sunday service, planned and led by the YRUU group after months of planning and practicing. This year we have seen the size of our program double, and with the addition of this year's COA youth, our senior high population will

approach 30 next year. With the huge increase in size has come some growing pains, but the group has continued to be a very positive place for many of our teens, thanks to the leadership of the youth themselves as well as the dedication of our YRUU advisors. Currently a Youth Programs Task Force is meeting to come up with a proposal for next year's offerings for youth: we anticipate introducing an additional option at 9:00 that will be different in scope and focus than the current program at 11:00, which will continue in its current format.

Youth Activities: The Youth Activities Committee, chaired by Karen Patch, plans monthly social activities for our Coming of Age and YRUU youth to attend together. Not only is providing social activities vital for building community within our youth groups, but our format also ensures that by the time youth enter high school, they already know and feel connected to the older members of the group. Activities this year have included a pizza party, rock climbing, glow-in-the-dark mini golf, overnights, and more.

Our Whole Lives (OWL): OWL is a very important element of our educational ministry to children and youth, and I am very proud that we are a congregation that offers all five levels of the Our Whole Lives lifespan sexuality education program! This is thanks to the long-term dedication and organization of our OWL coordinator, Beth Rendeiro. This year, in addition to adult OWL (facilitated by the Adult Religious Growth and Learning Committee), we offered Junior High OWL (8th & 9th grades), taught by Kathy Cook, Karen Canady, Stanley Johnston, Carl Hoppe and Robert Simon), a concurrent Parent OWL meeting, led by Beth Rendeiro and Sue Bickford, and Senior High OWL (10th-12th grades), taught by Francois Bar, Judy Federick, Ron Crane and Jana Poirier). This was our first year of offering the senior high level, and we had 10 youth participate. The junior high class was our largest ever, with 16 students. Both of these classes call for a special commitment of time from teachers, students and their families, meeting every Sunday afternoon from January until the end of April. Next year, we will offer the elementary OWL classes for K-1st and for 5th-6th.

Nursery: This year has seen a lot of transition in our nursery program, with the departure of our Nursery Caregiver and the hiring of two new Caregivers, giving us a fully staffed program. Great thanks are due to Nursery Assistants Tom Ahern and Adrienne Silsbee for their support of the program through the transition. Our two new Caregivers are Lori Davis and Tamara Harati. Both are highly skilled and experienced in working with young children, and greet parents and children alike with warmth and enthusiasm on Sunday mornings. Our Nursery program is once again stable and welcoming.

Additional elements of the DRE position:

Events and Activities: Included support for as well as attendance at RE and church activities in addition to our Sunday morning classes.

Events for this past year included:

- Ingathering Sunday

- UNICEF Carnival
- Pilgrim's Feast
- Guest at Your Table fundraiser of UUSC
- Cookie Bake
- Winter Holiday Pageant intergenerational service
- Christmas Eve service
- RE Volunteer Party
- Youth Sunday
- Empty Bowls Luncheon
- Coming of Age Sunday (upcoming)
- RE Sunday (upcoming)
- Bridging Sunday (upcoming)

Communication/Networking: Included monthly column in the church newsletter, announcements in the Orders of Service, monthly DRE reports to the Board of Trustees and the RE Council, annual DRE report to the congregation, planning RE Council meetings, greeting and following up with RE visitors, communicating and meeting with parents and families both in person and via phone call, email and snail mail, and supervising the Nursery Caregivers.

Meetings:

- Monthly meetings with RE Council, Board of Trustees
- Weekly staff meeting with Minister
- Subcommittee and other meetings ranging from 1-6 times/group included Youth Activities Committee, Coming of Age, YRUU, Teaching Teams, Our Whole Lives, Winter Holiday Pageant, RE Social Justice
- Meetings with many church committees including Personnel, Building, Finance, Parent Support Group, etc.

Maintenance and Administration: Included registering and tracking enrollment and attendance of children and youth, managing the RE budget, coordinating supplies for Sundays, researching and making equipment purchases for the program, hiring Nursery Caregivers, etc.

Research and Planning: Included research both online (through REACH and LREDA resource/idea sharing discussion groups) and off. This benefits our RE program and church community by enriching and broadening our understanding of the goals we are working toward, providing new frameworks and models, and connecting us to a larger movement. Some of this is event/program specific; the balance is organizational, management or philosophical in nature.

Also included developing and presenting plans for RE Council/Committee structure, Teacher Training, RE recruitment, summer RE program, and next year's RE program beginning in the fall.

District/Denominational Activities and Professional Growth: As DRE, I make a commitment to continuing professional growth and development and to represent our church at various conferences and denominational affairs. Activities this past year included:

- Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA) PSWD Chapter Secretary (04-05) (3 meetings/year)
- UU Association's Campus Ministry Advisory Committee (CMAC), LREDA Representative (1 meeting/year - 3/17-3/20)
- Presenter at LREDA Fall Conference on the Way Cool Sunday School model, (10/22-10/25)
- PSWD LREDA Professional Days (4/20-4/22)
- UU Ministers Association/LREDA Retreat (1/26-1/27)
- DRE Cluster meetings (bi-monthly)
- Senior High Camp at De Benneville (7/23-7/30) (upcoming)

The Religious Exploration Program is strong, growing and exciting, thanks to many dedicated volunteers who seek to model and pass on our UU principles and values to our children and youth. In my second year as your Director of Religious Education, I have been very impressed by this congregation's commitment to its educational ministry as well as by the level of energy and excitement around growth and change. I thank you for the opportunity to work with you as your DRE, and look forward to what we will accomplish together for many years to come!

Music

Steve Wight, Director

This has been a very eventful year in the Music Department. The Music Committee has been energized by the hard work and vision of its chairperson, Peter VanDenBeemt. Under his leadership, we have begun several new programs. The "Stevenings" series are very well-attended, fun evenings exploring various aspects of the world of music - what Peter has called "stealth music appreciation." Louis Durra has begun a new jazz series, which in its first evening was already an unqualified musical and popular success. In addition, the Music Table in Forbes Hall makes available recordings of the choir, Louis Durra, and others, and helps to promote musical events at the church.

Some excellent professional musicians have come into the church family and volunteered their services. Clarinetist Bronwen Jones and guitarist Pete Snell join longtime contributors Christine Mourad, Julie Millett, and Karen Patch. In addition, we've been delighted to welcome several new members to the choir this year.

We have continued our relationship with Nevenka, a fine professional choir that expertly presents the wonderful music of Eastern Europe, and we are always looking for other high quality groups with whom we can create partnerships that enrich the life of the

church and of our community.

The past year has also been a year of loss. Longtime choir member Esther Kalver died last summer. Dean Voegtlen, for decades one of the leading lights of the music department and the church as a whole, died at year's end. Wally Giffen - another pillar of the church's music program who has over the years done the work of four or five expert musicians, always without pay - was stricken with a debilitating illness in August and is just now mounting what appears to be a solid recovery.

To be sure, there are areas of concern. For example, illness, death, work and school related issues have caused us to lose a great number of men in the choir in the last two years. In the face of these issues, as well as shrinking budgets, Peter VanDenBeemt, Louis Durra, and I have made an effort not only to maintain the music program of the church, but to try to raise the bar by redoubling both our imaginations and our work.

With the help of the choir members, the Music Committee, Children's Choir Director Judith Schonebaum, and the professional musicians who have given so generously, I feel that we are well on our way to accomplishing what we set out to do. We all remain committed to making the musical life of the church as vibrant and responsive as possible, and we welcome any in the congregation who would like to contribute.

Church Administrator Marie Kashmer-Stiebing

Overview of Administration Responsibilities:

The duties of the Church Administrator are many and varied. Among those duties are overseeing the operations of the Church office, including recruitment, interviewing, and training of paid staff and volunteers; providing administrative support for the Church staff, Board of Directors, Executive Committee, Membership Development Council, Faith in Action Commission, Stewardship Committee, Capital Campaign Committee, and Annual Meeting; attending business meetings and other Church functions; maintaining the church calendar; serving as point of contact for UUA surveys and information requests; overseeing rentals to non-church groups and church groups; and assisting in other ways as needed. By renting the Sanctuary and Forbes Hall meeting rooms and social hall at a reduced rate to non-church groups, the UUCSSM provides a valuable community service to a number of 12-step groups and other non-profits that benefit the community. Regular rental rates for activities such as weddings, memorials, baby dedications, recitals, concerts, and presentations were increased this year. While maintaining the rental calendar, rental agreements, and overseeing the usage of our facilities is ongoing and time-consuming, it has earned in excess of \$22,000 this year.

The scope of these responsibilities requires the teamwork and dedication of my fellow staff members—Steven Andrews, Administrative and Finance Assistant and Kevin Roller, Weekday Sexton—as well as the assistance of volunteers.

Staffing:

The Finance and Administrative Assistant left at the end of December and Brett Bennett, a church member, filled in for a short while. In April, Charles and Christine Haskell volunteered (for a one-year period) to take on the more important aspects of the Administrative Assistant position and have begun working six hours per week. The Church Administrator and Administrative and Finance job descriptions have been re-written and tasks under the Administrative Assistant job description have been distributed between them. Also, this year, long-time Sunday Sexton, Jose Ruvalcaba resigned to take a full time job with a construction company that has been working with our Building Committee. A Weekend Sexton job description was approved by the Personnel Committee and the Board of Directors in May. The Board of Directors also approved hiring a Weekend Sexton whose salary will not exceed the total already budgeted for the vacant Sunday Sexton position, Miscellaneous Facility care, and the gardening service for 17th Street.

At the request of the Finance Committee, I interviewed two accounting firms to ascertain the cost of outsourcing the Church accounts receivable and payable function and possibly payroll. If the work is outsourced, it will still be done onsite and on the Church Windows programs currently in use.

Volunteers:

This year we have been very fortunate to have John Fels work in the office every Wednesday and Sylvia Berke-Forster recently committed to working in the office a couple of hours on Thursdays. Anne Mac Queen and her “Friday” workers who “stuff” the order of service each week and label the newsletter for mailing each month are indispensable. Anne recently arranged for volunteers to collate, staple, and stuff the Annual Meeting packets mailed to members’ homes and again to collate the information in the packets to be distributed at the Annual Meeting—jobs that spanned several days. Peggy Butler volunteers regularly to assist Steven Andrews in preparing order-of-service materials. Christine and Charles Haskell are learning to use our Church Windows program in order to complete their responsibilities for pledge accounting. Drop-in volunteers who appear unannounced are appreciated and we are working on a way to always have something available for you to do.

More volunteers with data input and computer skills are needed, and I am willing to schedule time to work with volunteers in the evening in order to meet this need. Also, we especially need volunteers with business/job/personal development, personnel, and finance experience to join the Administration Committee. If you are interested in any of these volunteer opportunities, please contact me at (310) 829-5436, extension 100, to arrange a meeting with me and, if applicable, a meeting with the Administration Committee.

Building and Grounds/Facilities:

In the absence of a Building and Grounds Committee, the Administration Committee is charged with assisting the Church Administrator facilitate the upkeep of our building and grounds. Therefore, I began holding Church Work Parties the third Saturday of each

month. While attendance has been low, much has been accomplished—such as gardening; clearing away debris; scrubbing and cleaning the house at 1248 18th ; plastering and painting; installing railings; cleaning out garages, closets, and cabinets; attaching counter tops and installing shelves and timers; and installing locks. As with any aging facility, maintenance and repair needs are ongoing.

During the heavy rains the Church experienced quite a few leaks and the social hall, foyer, and closets in Forbes Hall were flooded. This occurred on a work-party Saturday and work-party volunteers did a yeoman's job of cleaning up and sandbagging to prevent further flooding. The Building Committee is working with us to decide whether to do a permanent roof replacement that will not be compromised during the remodeling phase of the Sanctuary or to make temporary repairs. Rod Lane and Steve Paddock were assigned to liaison with me on repair needs such as these. David Olson is liaison for day-to-day problems that might become Building Committee responsibilities.

Design and Décor arranged for new carpet to be installed in the Church offices. The carpet is wonderful; however, the door security wiring was damaged during the installation and we are unable to use it. Stuart Moore is considering how it might be repaired. Design and Décor also selected and ordered area carpets for two classrooms.

A number of electrical issues arose this year. When our furnaces began coming on and would not turn off, a furnace repair service and an electrician were contacted. The furnace repairman said it was an electrical problem and refused to check it out. The electrician said something was wrong with the furnace and refused to check it out. Warren Mathews and Stuart Moore put an end to the stalemate by troubleshooting the problem and making the needed repair. A new copier printer was leased that required installation of new conduit before the copier could be delivered. Estimates were obtained from three electrical firms that are also bidding on correcting two short circuits and other minor electrical situations, and the job was awarded to the lowest bidder.

Meetings and Activities:

To be aware and informed, I attend many meetings; some regularly and others on occasion. Following is an overview of these meetings and activities.

Monthly

- Administration Committee
- Board of Directors
- Executive Committee
- Finance Committee
- Personnel Committee
- Church Work Party
- Sharing the Caring (committee disbanded during this fiscal year)

Occasional

- Reverend Meyer, Minister
- Catherine Farmer, Director of Religious Education
- Building Committee
- Newsletter Team
- Stewardship Committee
- Telephone Outreach Program
- Annual Meeting and Special Congregational Meetings
- Fran Hotchkiss and tree maintenance company re upkeep of Church grounds
- UUA roundtable meetings
- Meeting of UU Administrators from San Diego, Santa Barbara, and Pasadena.

Miscellaneous

- Seventh Day Adventist Administrator and Minister
- Renters
- Met with competing insurers to ascertain if our insurance provider remains competitive
- Architect, electricians, roofers.

Administration Committee:

A talented and hardworking Administration Committee provides support and assistance to assure that the Church's expectations are met. During this fiscal year, Greg Wood succeeded John Schroeder as Chair and Patrick Meighan joined us. These members provide me with diligent and constant support.

The Administration Committee's ad hoc Computer Technology Group, chaired by committee member Greg Wood, completed its primary tasks of researching computer and backup needs for the office. New computers were purchased and installed and an automatic backup system was implemented. The group was officially disbanded; however, Greg Wood, Dan Kegel and Bob Dietz remain on call to help resolve technological problems.

We particularly need volunteers with business/job/personal development, building maintenance, personnel, and finance experience. If you are interested, please contact me at (310) 829-5436, extension 100, to arrange an interview and a meeting with the Administration Committee.

Accomplishments and Activities:

Invited copier/printer businesses to review the kinds of work done in the office and make recommendations and provide bids. After demonstrations of several copiers, we selected the Lanier LD160. The machine has the capability and capacity to print our monthly newsletter, church directory, and church catalogs; thereby enabling us to save money by no longer outsourcing these publications.

Made improvements to the formatting of the Church Directory and a new directory was printed in January 2005. To facilitate changes, corrections, and additions periodic updates will be published in the Church newsletter.

Added several new duties to my responsibilities—the End-of-the-Month clearing, assisting Stewardship with compiling and printing pledge reminder statements, and assisting in creating memorial service programs as needed at the passing of Church members.

Negotiated with the Seventh Day Adventist Church at 19th and Arizona to rent space at their church for our growing YRUU group to meet.

Assisted in the kitchen when Encuentro was held at the UUCCSM and attended the Bioterrorism Preparedness Program presented to our congregation by Church member Dr. Ray Goodman.

Prepare the payroll twice a month; maintain visitor, new member, and subscriber records using the Church Windows software; meet with or talk on the phone annually with our Church Mutual insurance representative; and prepare reports/notifications/updates to meet various Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) and Pacific Southwest District (PSWD) requirements in order to keep UUCCSM's listings at these organizations up-to-date.

I was subpoenaed to appear as a witness for the prosecution of the intruder in our building and reported to the court on Wednesday, June 23. After spending about four hours waiting, the judge rescheduled the case. Later, the defendant decided to plead no contest and I was not required to return to court.

Professional Development:

- Attended regional training for our Church Windows membership, contributions, and finance modules.
- Will attend Association of Unitarian Universalist Administrator's Professional Day and the UUA General Assembly in June.

COMMITTEES & COUNCILS

Committees and Councils are the groups that do the work of our church on a long-term basis. They tend to have regularly-scheduled meetings, require an ongoing commitment from volunteers, and attend to things like establishing policies and procedures, planning and coordinating major events, and keeping the church's many administrative functions running smoothly. Explore membership in one of these groups if you are already a church

member and would like to gain a deeper understanding of and make a deeper commitment to the inner workings of our congregation.

Administration Committee **Greg Wood, Chair**

Our current members are Greg Wood, John Schroeder, Patrick Meighan and Marie Kashmer-Stiebing serving in an ex-officio capacity. Our purpose is to help Marie solve problems in the office. Usually, the problems are related to personnel, building maintenance or computers. Lately the most urgent problems are a leaking roof, faulty electrical wiring and finding new members. We desperately need new members for our committee. We only meet once a month and sometimes there are free doughnuts! If you want to help us please call Marie.

Adult Religious Growth & Learning (ARGL) Committee **Jane Machnik, Chair**

The mission of the Adult Religious Growth and Learning (ARGL) Committee is to develop and present classes and workshops that support members and friends in their spiritual journey, their search for community, and their interest in a deeper understanding of our Unitarian Universalist principles and traditions.

Bienvenidos **Contact: Ofelia Lachtman**

Bienvenidos is a group of “welcoming” committees that function individually but that require the “umbrella” structure of a council to help and strengthen one another. The Bienvenidos Council is made up of (1) Greeters, headed by Arvid Knudsen, (2) Ushers, headed by Ned Wright, (3) Our Own Brochures, headed by Ofelia Lachtman, (4) Coffee Service, headed by Ellen Boag, (5) Ask Me Station, headed by Melinda Ewen, (6) Membership Center, headed by Richard Boothe, (7) Newcomer Orientation, headed by Judith Meyer, assisted by Ofelia Lachtman, (8) New Member Suppers, headed by Helen Burns, assisted by Shirlee Frank, (9) Without Portfolio, Laurel Bleak, John Fels.

Bienvenidos hosts a New Member Supper in the fall of each year.

Building Committee

Alison Kendall, Chair

The Building Committee's work this fiscal year began with a Building Options Study, which was presented to the congregation at a series of Town Hall meetings. The options study illustrated that the church's space needs could be satisfied on the 18th Street properties alone, that underground parking on the 1248 18th Street property would cost approximately \$600,000 and yield about 17 spaces per level, and that reuse of the old house for office space and construction of a new wing for RE classrooms was the most cost-effective option to satisfy needs. On September 19, the congregation approved this option and sale of the 17th Street property to provide funds for design and construction. The Committee held a Refine the Design charette in November for members to review and comment on the design. The revised design was resubmitted to the City of Santa Monica on February 18, 2005. A community meeting with six neighbors held March 13 identified church impacts on street parking as a major concern. A Good Neighbor program to encourage use of the garage at 16th and Arizona and carpooling, bicycle and walking to church has been initiated, and we will hold another neighborhood meeting in late April. We have received preliminary comments from City staff on our application and expect to have a hearing on our Conditional Use Permit and Variance with the Planning Commission in late Spring.

Building Committee Members: Carol Agate, Wally Boag, David Denton, Mel Horan, Alison Kendall (chair), Rod Lane, Keith Ludowitz, David Olson, Steve Paddock, Greg Wood

Bylaws & Policies Committee

Charles Haskell, Chair

On June 10, 2003, the Board established this committee to (1) review and study the Bylaws of the Church and its policies and procedures and (2) to make recommendations to the Board from time to time for revisions to the Bylaws and to the policies and procedures of the Church for adoption by the Board and the congregation.

Members of the committee include Carol Agate, John Agnew, Melinda Ewen, John Fels, Charles Haskell (chair), and Warren Mathews. Felicity Nussbaum was a member of the committee for the first half of the 2004-2005 church year. The BPC meets the first Tuesday of each month in the Blue Cottage from 6:30-8:00 PM. BPC recommendations for action by the Board of Directors are reached by consensus and recorded in minutes prepared by the chair. All meetings are open to members of the congregation.

The goal of the BPC is to facilitate discussion and decision-making about important policies and procedures by the Board of Directors and the congregation. Our work product is on file in the church office in a comprehensive manual, current Bylaws may be

reviewed on the church's web site (uusm.org), and amendments to our current Bylaws are being presented to the congregation for potential ratification at this annual meeting.

Camp de Benneville Pines Weekend
Marv Pulliam, Registrar and
Sharon Voigt Damerell, Programs

The 2004 UCCSM Retreat held on Father's Day weekend (June 18, 19, 20) was a full house. A total of 123 reserved space, which filled virtually every bed. There were 80 adults and 43 teens and children. The financial results were in the black. There is no question that the more the merrier applied to this event, and aside from the lines at meal times, the camp was able to accommodate our group without straining at the seams. There were a range of activities, including the traditional dam building, a covenant group introduction, a great talent show with all ages participating, and plenty of arts and crafts for all ages. Judith Meyer led a Building Planning Workshop with Alison Kendall on Saturday afternoon. In all, there were about 30 separate activities led by church members. This year we expect another full house of people and activities.

Circle Suppers
Contacts: Beverly Alison, Karen Canady, Phyllis Kory

Circle Suppers are periodic, informal potluck dinners, held in members' homes as a way for church members to get to know each other in small groups of 6 to 10 people.

Coffee Social Hour
Ellen Boag, Coordinator

Our wonderful volunteers commit to serving coffee once a month. Without them there would be no coffee to drink with the delicious cookies you so generously provide and there would be no lively sounds in Forbes Hall after the services.

Denominational Affairs
Contact: Carol Agate

Connects our congregation with the wider UU movement across North America.

Design & Decor
Contact: Ellen Boag

This committee decides on decorations, furnishings, colors, et cetera, anywhere in the church. We meet whenever there is a project for us. We expect to be very busy when new spaces are built.

Dining for Dollars
Contact: Helen Burns

The Dining for Dollars activity is a silent auction format of dinners and other events offered by church members and friends and bid on by church attendees, over 150 bidding units this year. It is the principal fund raiser of the church and the February 2005 bidding generated over \$23,000.00. The events span from March through November 2005 and include a Shakespeare presentation with English dinner, weekends at Sea Ranch in Mendocino County, Joni Mitchell and "Grateful Dead" evenings, a progressive Southern Huck Finn BBQ, tea and tarot, the Kentucky Derby and Preakness Horse races, "We Shall Overcome" songs of social conscience by our choir, a Scrabble tournament, a Que-Ten-Nanny, dinners at the Jonathan Club and the Bel Air Bay Club, hikes, picnics, and a multiplicity of ethnic meals: Uzbekistan, Thai, Indian, French, Spanish, Moroccan, Chinese, Persian, Italian, Mexican, and a Renaissance Feast.

These events provide a perfect setting for socializing with small groups of church people. Usually in private homes, and thus enhance our efforts to provide a sense of greater church community.

Ernie Pipes Lecture Series
Contact: Leonard Adler

Plans and presents annual speakers in ongoing lecture series.

Faith in Action Commission
Charles Haskell, Chair

Faith in Action was initiated in 2000 out of a desire and need for our congregation to find its own unique voice and vocation in ministry for social justice and peace. The name Faith in Action indicates our commitment to live out the values and tenets of our faith in the world around us. This name connects us to the proud and vital tradition of social

action in our Unitarian and Universalist congregations and communities throughout the world.

The mission of the Faith in Action Commission (FIAC) is to coordinate the varied social action efforts in the church, empowering the congregation to choose social justice issues for study and action, and integrating such activities fully into the overall life of the congregation in a way that is rooted in the moral and ethical values of our faith, as expressed in the Principles and Purposes of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

The FIA Commission meets quarterly. Members of the Executive Committee of the FIA Commission are as follows: Charles Haskell, Cathie Gentile, and Ron Crane. Members of the FIA Commission with specific liaison responsibilities include the following: Charles & Christine Haskell (Co-chairs of the Peace & Civil Liberties Committee); Ron Crane (Interweave and UUCCSM Board of Directors); Cathie Gentile (UU Legislative Ministry California and RE liaison); Eleanor Eagan (UU-United Nations Office Envoy); Phyllis Gabriel (UUSC liaison); Lyn Armondo (Women's Alliance and Step Up on 2nd meals); Marge Zifferblatt (Westside Shelter and Hunger Coalition liaison); and, Mar Preston (economic justice). Members at large: Patrick D. McGuire and Marguerite Spears. Rev. Judith Meyer serves as an Ex Officio member.

The FIA Commission is guided by a detailed policy and procedure manual that is reviewed and updated on a regular basis. Faith in Action activities are presented in a monthly newsletter column (Charles Haskell) and in a quarterly publication entitled the Faith in Action Bulletin. The Commission sponsors lectures, panel discussions, and other public programs in support of its work (FIA Speaker Series). The FIA Commission is responsible for the gallery art wall each November.

Based on the annual issues election of September 2004 and an all-church meeting in February 2005, the following program areas have dominated our attention for the year: peace, civil liberties, hunger, economic justice, marriage rights for BGLT couples, and our generous congregation program. Further information on Faith in Action activities appears below, as provided by programmatic leaders.

Hunger and Related Programs:

Four activities have dominated our commitment to hunger and related issues. Paula Bernstein has coordinated two food sorts at the Westside Food Bank, both of which were highly successful. Lyn Armondo has coordinated monthly dinners at Step Up on Second. This program has involved more than 50 of our church members and friends. Janet Goodwin has coordinated meals at Turning Point. Charles Haskell, Beverly Allison, and Marge Zifferblatt have worked closely with the Westside Shelter and Hunger Coalition. This has included participation in two committees of the coalition, one of which produced a highly successful celebration of formerly homeless people who had been helped by social service agencies and faith-based organizations on the Westside (9th annual Success Breakfast).

Peace & Civil Liberties Committee:

Because of the 2004 presidential elections, which consumed the time and energy of many church members, the Peace Committee was in hiatus the first part of the church year. However, following a rousing sermon by the Rev. Judith Meyer on what it means for us to be a Peace Site, the committee resumed monthly meetings under the leadership of Charles and Christine Haskell, co-chairs. The format of the committee has been changed to emphasize discussion topics, rather than miscellaneous business matters. The meeting in March was devoted to a discussion of what it means to be a peace maker. The April meeting was a showing of the documentary movie Arlington West, with a discussion lead by the film makers Sally Marr and Peter Dudar of Laughing Tears Productions. The May meeting was devoted to a showing and discussion the documentary movie entitled "The OIL factor—Behind the War on Terror."

Faith in Action Speaker Series:

The selection of speakers was guided by the FIA Speaker Series committee chaired by Max Epstein. The following lectures were given in the sanctuary.

- November 21, 2004. Kevin McKiernan: The Kurds and next year's civil war in Iraq.
- January 16, 2005. Harry Schwartzbart: Separation of church and state.
- March 20, 2005. Blase Bonpane: Latin America brings hope to the United States.
- April 17, 2005. Panel discussion of the problem of genocide in Darfur and the Sudan.

Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC)**Phyllis Gabriel, Liaison Member**

Under the auspices of the Faith in Action Commission, this committee connects us with the program and activities of the UUSC worldwide.

Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office**As per Eleanor Eagan, Envoy**

The most important UNO event for our local congregation this year has been sending a high school student, Jesse Figueroa, and an advisor, Liza Cranis, to the Intergenerational Spring Seminar held annually at our national office in New York. The April 14-16 three-day conference will address the social, political, economic and spiritual dimensions of the global HIV/AIDS crisis. This is a first; we would like to send an advisor and high school student from the R.E. Department each year to this highly stimulating experience.

Our UU/UN Office is located directly across the street from the United Nations, enabling participants to visit the UN as well as to hear speakers from the UN at the seminar sessions in our UN Office. Liza and Jesse will share their experiences with us in articles in the Summer issue of our Faith in Action Commission Journal.

Our minister delivered UN Day and International Human Rights Day sermons with a portion of the day's offering going to promote these causes.

Our PSW District UU/UNO committee has for some years focused our efforts on advocating certain changes in the national office relations with local envoys. We have urged them to send the Window on the World, our quarterly newsletter, UN Sunday materials, as well as any other liturgical materials to our ministers rather than to envoys only. We think this goal has been accomplished.

In addition, we recommend a sliding scale of annual congregational membership dues, ranging from one hundred dollars for the largest congregations to twenty dollars for fellowships or congregations of less than twenty-five members. It is unfair to have a single membership fee of one hundred dollars for all congregations of whatever size.

Again, we urge a restructuring of the unworkable relationship between the UUA and the UU/UNO. Our office is the official and single representative/observer for the UUA at both the UN Department of Information (DPI) and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), representing both Canadian and US congregations. We have consultative status at ECOSOC, which entitles us to present position papers and otherwise engage observers with ECOSOC members.

As a UUA affiliated organization, we receive no financial aid from the UUA, being totally dependent on congregation and envoy memberships and voluntary contributions. We have a fine, but greatly overworked national staff supplemented, fortunately, by excellent college and high school student interns.

The UU/UN Office will provide five workshops at the 2005 General Assembly in Fort Worth, June 23-27. More information about this and other activities of the UU/UNO is available on our website: www.uu-uno.org

Interweave/Welcoming Congregation Judy Federick, President

Interweave, the UU affiliate group for bisexuals, gays, lesbians and transgenders (BGLTs), and their friends and allies, is in its fifth year at UCCSM.

Given the unprecedented public awareness and discussion on the issue in 2004-2005, our primary issue for study and action this past year was marriage equality for same-sex couples.

Our activities during the year included the following:

We sponsored two resolutions at our church's Annual Congregational Meeting on May 16. The first, supporting civil marriage rights for same-sex couples, passed unanimously. The second resolution, to hang a banner outside our church proclaiming this support, was tabled for further discussion. In a modified format, it was then defeated at a special

congregational meeting on August 1.

On June 13, we co-hosted with the Welcoming Congregation program and the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, a forum moderated by Andrew Stewart entitled "In Our Own Voice".

Our Fourth Annual All-Church Interweave Picnic was held August 22, with proceeds going to Interweave's marriage equality campaign.

On October 10, we once again hosted the Coming Out Day Service, with guest presenter Rebecca Weinreich addressing "Every Breath I Take". Proceeds from the charitable portion of the offering that day were donated to the National "Marriage Equality Caravan".

In January, we instituted a lunch social on the last Sunday of the month at a restaurant within walking distance of church.

We continued our contact with the California Coalition for Marriage Equality, and in concert with the Welcoming Congregation program, conducted a forum on March 13, entitled "Freedom Riders 2004: Personal Stories from the Marriage Equality Express". California Assembly Bill 19, "The Religious Freedom and Civil Marriage Protection Act", which would remove the ban on same-sex couples' access to civil marriage licenses, was also discussed.

We also continued our relationship with the Santa Monica High School Gay/Straight Alliance (SAMOHI GSA). We made a donation in March and, in addition, members of Interweave visited one of its weekly school year meetings.

And finally, we are planning on Sunday, June 12, to march in the Christopher Street West Gay Pride Parade and carry the UUCCSM marriage equality banner we created but never got to hang!

We thank our church members, board, and attendees for their ongoing personal and political support for us in our fight to be recognized as fully human and fully deserving of equal rights and respect.

Finance Committee

Warren Mathews, Chair

The purpose of the Finance Committee is to oversee the financial aspects of our church's operations, develop the annual budget, and provide information and recommendations to the Board relating to finances.

The principal focus of the committee this year was on development of the budget for

2005-06, in the light of the progressively increasing deficits the church has been experiencing in recent years.

Recognizing that the source of these increasing deficits was a broader subject than the Finance Committee could deal with by itself, the Board decided to broaden the process of budget development this year. Starting with an initial conventional draft budget generated by the Finance Committee, the Board plus the Finance and Stewardship Committees and the senior staff held a four-hour facilitated budget-development retreat, . The output of that retreat was addressed two weeks later by a similar facilitated congregational workshop. The Finance Committee then incorporated the outputs of the retreat and the workshop into a quantified final budget.

The results of this sequence were (1) to involve a much larger number of church members in the detailed budget development process and (2) thereby to arrive as a much sounder budget than the church otherwise would have. It is anticipated that this same sequence will be followed in next year's budget development.

The standing members of the committee this year were Anita and George Brenner, Anne Cadwell, Ofelia Lachtman and Warren Mathews, Chair. Ex officio members were Carol Agate (Treasurer), Ed Field, Jr. (Investment Subcommittee Chair) and Jacki Weber (Stewardship Committee Chair). Regular staff attendee is Marie Kashmer-Stiebing (Church Administrator). Anne Cadwell will assume the chair position next year.

Gallery Wall

Contact: Shirlee Frank

The committee is charged with mounting ten solo exhibits each year on our GALLERY WALL in Forbes Hall. In November, the Faith in Action Committee uses the wall and in December, we oversee an exhibit of work by the “artists” in our congregation.

The Gallery Wall has been “hung” with paintings, photographs, original prints, and collages for the past 36 years. Many pieces of art have been purchased and our church has been an exciting showcase for both professional and emerging artists. Non-member artists contribute 20% from the sale of their work, while member artists contribute 10%. Our church also provides Forbes Hall if the artist wishes to have an opening reception.

Gardening Group

Contact: Fran Hotchkiss

The Gardening Group has been on hold for the last nine months due to the rainy season. Nedra Bickel and Howard Westley have their pruning shears ready for the new growth

that is bound to appear in the coming months. The Church gardener is keeping up with the needs of the church grounds.

Investment Subcommittee **Edward Field, Jr., Chair**

The subcommittee manages the investment of our endowment and reserve funds in order to grow our savings. Financial know-how is required to be a member. Standing members of the committee are George Brenner, Marv Pulliam, and Ed Field, Chair.

Lending Library Committee **Sandra Trutt, Chair**

The Lending Library met for the first time in May, 2004 with the following interested parties: Caroline Falk, Isle Kleinman, Nedra Bickel, Rob Briner and Sandra Trutt.

We made decisions to include books of a spiritual nature as well as thought-provoking fiction, highlighting UU Book Club Selections. The shelves in Forbes Hall behind the accordion doors were cleaned, the books culled and the shelves were re-stocked with newly donated books. We decided that books could be borrowed for up to 30 days, using an Honor Check-Out System.

Rob Briner did some checking on our Library name in memory of Robert V. Stern, a former active member of our Church.

A list of books, now in the library is posted among the shelves. Fiction and Non-Fiction Book Club selections are also listed.

We plan to meet about twice yearly to go through donated books for inclusion in our library. Books not used are donated to the Santa Monica Library for resale, to Sunset Hall or other local charities.

Long-Term Planning **Contact: TBA**

Ad-hoc task group appointed by the church President. (Not currently seeking new members.)

Committee On Ministry

Anne Gustafson

Judy Federick

Sean Kerr

The primary objectives of this committee are to strengthen the quality of ministry within this congregation, to serve as a support group for the minister, and to be a communication channel between the minister and the congregation. The committee meets periodically with the minister. We will be meeting a few more times this year to discuss Judith's sabbatical.

Each year the committee evaluates the minister, measuring progress in the achievement of her stated objectives, and obtaining comments and suggestions from various constituents of the congregation, including the Board, our paid staff, committee members, RE families and members at large. This year's report was completed in February, and will be presented to the Board at the meeting in April. Our minister continues to receive very favorable remarks.

Members of the Board are Anne Gustafson, Judy Federick and Sean Kerr. We are always interested in and receptive to your comments on how to enhance the value and enrich the experience of our church's ministry.

Music Committee

Contact: Peter VanDenBeemt, chair

The past year has been a busy one for the music committee. What you've seen are the four "Stevenings," evenings with Steve Wight in which he cogently and cleverly explores different aspects of music, the first (we hope of many) Louis Durra Trio concerts, and the appearance of the music table on most 3rd and 4th (and when there is one, 5th) Sundays.

What's less obvious is the work that's gone into setting up what you see. We've built a publicity process (posters, fliers and "notesicles" in church, and press releases to newspapers and radio stations, and a Music Events email list to extend our reach). We've organized receptions to follow the evening events. We've built a display, written a music program FAQ, and designed and generated choir CDs with attractive labels for the music table. We've been working with Liz Fuller to add a stylish music section to an already stylish WWW.UUSM.ORG website.

All this is just some of what we've done, and we're working on even more ideas to go even further in building a music program worthy of our UUCSM church.

The music committee includes (in alphabetical order): Sharon Voigt Damerell, Gaye Follmer Deal (member emeritus), Ilse Kleinman, Dayla McDonald (associate member), Judith Schonebaum, Maria Simpson, Diana Spears, Peter van den Beemt (chair), and Dean Voegtlen (member in memoriam).

We invite all lovers of music, regardless of ability or knowledge, to join us!

New Member Dinners

Contact: Helen Burns

Organizes quarterly social programs for new members.

New Members' Evening with the Minister

Contact: Laurel Bleak

Hosts an evening program where new members can share experiences of Unitarian Universalism and our church.

Newcomer Orientation

Contacts: Judith Meyer, Ofelia Lachtman

Sponsors a monthly orientation that provides information on UU history and philosophy and governance of our denomination and congregation.

Nominating

Kathy Cook, Chair

The Nominating Committee (NC) consists of six members, elected by the congregation. The role of the Nominating Committee is to select members of the congregation to serve on the Executive Board (President, 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary) and as At-Large members of the Board of Directors. The NC also selects new members of the NC as current members complete designated terms. This year the NC consisted of Kathy Cook (chair), John Fels, SJ Guidotti, Shawn Kerr and Linda Van Lighten. In February and March the NC met to develop the slates currently under consideration of the congregation at the May 15th annual meeting. In an effort to gain a better understanding of board processes, the NC members have attended Board meetings as observers. They also asked Board members to complete a confidential survey with questions related to areas of strength and weakness, representation of a diverse congregation and to offer recommendations for filling vacant positions. All Board members responded and their feedback was helpful in the deliberation process.

Personnell Committee

Pat Parkerton, Chair

The Personnel Committee is charged under the By-Laws of UCCSM with the responsibility “for recommending to the Board, and Advising the Board on, general and specific personnel policies and procedures and personnel issues regarding the Church paid staff and ministers.” The Committee oversees job descriptions, performance evaluations, employment agreements and compensation for all paid staff of the Church. The Committee also deals with grievances and disciplinary matters regarding the paid staff.

The Committee meets on a regular basis once a month and is comprised of six Church members, the Minister, and the Church Administrator, in an ex-officio capacity. The Committee members from the Church membership are John Fels, Pat Parkerton, John Eger, Jerry Gates, Karen Raiford, and John Schroeder. John Schroeder and Karen Raiford were elected Co-Chairs of the Committee for the June 2004 – June 2006 term. Sadly, due to health problems, Karen Raiford resigned from the Committee in late December 2004. The Committee is profoundly appreciative of the tireless dedication Karen gave to its work and will miss her immensely.

A few of the issues that have come before the Committee this year are the staffing of the new part-time Administrative Assistant in the Church office, the writing of policies for obtaining background information on childcare workers, a review of medical insurance coverage for staff, the hiring of Sunday morning Caregivers for the nursery, the writing of annual performance reviews for each staff member, the awarding of annual compensation changes to all paid staff, and a comprehensive review of the Personnel Policies manual.

Pilgrims Feast

Contact: TBA

Organizes annual Thanksgiving potluck dinner for the congregation, held on the Saturday before Thanksgiving.

Planned Giving

Contact: Ron Crane

Promotes to church members the advantages of participating in the planned giving program established by the UUA.

Pulpit Committee

Contact: Vilma Ortiz

The mission of the Pulpit Committee is to maintain the quality, consistency and sanctity of the Sunday service. We serve at the invitation of the minister, Rev. Judith Meyer, who is responsible for the structure and content of weekly worship services. We meet monthly to evaluate the services, discuss issues related to worship, and plan Sunday services when Judith is not in the pulpit. The Pulpit Committee, in collaboration with Judith, finds preachers and pulpit hosts for one Sunday a month from September through June and for the months of July and August.

September through July. For the one Sunday a month between September and June when Judith is not in the pulpit, we rely on guest speakers. Our goal is to have Unitarian Universalist ministers lead Sunday worship as often as possible, and to have ordained clergy from other faiths at other times. Over the years, we have developed relationships with a group of clergy who have a special affinity for our congregation and these individuals are invited to preach approximately once a year. We also seek out clergy who have an interfaith ministry, or a ministry focused on an issue of concern to Unitarian Universalism. We are fortunate that we have been able to identify and bring guest preachers to the church that help us provide a consistently high quality worship service when Judith is not in the pulpit. This year, we also benefited from our intern minister, Rev. Stefanie Etzbach-Dale, who served in the pulpit several Sundays.

Pulpit Hosts. It is the practice of our church to have lay congregation members serve as pulpit host when we have a guest preacher. The Pulpit Committee recruits, trains, assigns, and assists our skilled and committed group of lay pulpit hosts, who plan and conduct individual services with the visiting ministers. This is a task requiring courage, perseverance, creativity, organization, thought, and time management. We keep a script for pulpit hosts, which is updated regularly, so that they have the support they need to conduct the service.

Summer. Rev. Nardoni will again be available to take the pulpit for part of August this year, as he has for the last few years. We are fortunate to have other speakers already lined up for the rest of the summer.

Committee members include Vilma Ortiz, Sue Bickford, Kathy Cook and Phil Bonacich. Alison Chipman is our Board liaison.

Religious Exploration Council

Janet Goodwin, Chair

We currently have a full program being offered at both the 9:00 and 11:00 services. This is our third year using the Way Cool Sunday School format.

Way Cool Sunday School incorporates regular Worship, Social Justice, and Arts Sundays as well as curriculum-based Classroom Sundays, all grounded in the Unitarian Universalist principles. Way Cool is a structure for Kindergarten through 6th grade to have a balanced program reflecting the goals and values of our RE program. This year our focus is on exploring both the second UU principle (Justice, equity and compassion in human relations) and third UU principle (Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregation).

Each month begins with a Worship Sunday where all the children meet to explore the more spiritual aspects of our UU tradition. The second and third Sundays are spent in age-specific classrooms settings to learn more about our UU principles. The fourth Sunday is a Social Action Sunday where all come together to participate in action projects. This year, the social justice program sponsored the Empty Bowls Project, which raised nearly \$1000 for the Westside Food Bank, through the creation and sale of ceramic bowls as well as a special Empty Bowls spaghetti luncheon. Arts Sunday is on the fifth Sunday when it presents itself. Our preschool children meet every week in their classroom. Neighboring Faiths (6th & 7th grades), Coming of Age (8th grade) and YRUU (9th -12th grades) all meet each week to pursue their spiritual journey. Nursery childcare is available downstairs during each service with a team of very capable caretakers.

We currently have 127 children registered in our RE program (55 at 9:00 and 72 at 11:00). In addition, there are frequent visitors in each group.

GROUP 9:00 AM 11:00 AM
Nursery (3 years and below) 4 3
Pre-school (3-5 year olds) 5 13
Kindergarten & 1st grade 5 7
2nd & 3rd grade 9 9
4th & 5th grade 13 7
6th & 7th (Neighboring Faiths) 8 11
8th grade (Coming of Age) 11
9th-12th grades (YRUU) 17

Our Coming of Age group is the largest we have had in many years (11 youth). Teens are busy with social events sponsored by Youth Activities Committee. They have had Beach BBQs, rock climbing, bowling and overnight lock-ins at the church. We are seeing more and more of our YRUU teens joining as church members. In fact, one YRUU youth serves on the RE council (Amelia Harati) and another serves on the board (Daniel Teplitz). Our YRUU group led both services on April 10th, showing us how we can go beyond acceptance (our 3rd principle) to understanding. Our Coming of Age class will present their credos and lead the Sunday services on May 22nd.

Our Whole Lives (aka OWL) has been very active this year. We have had 16 of our youth in 8th & 9th grade OWL, a 14-week program, which was accompanied by parallel sessions in which the parents were able to discuss the curriculum and the same issues as

their children. The senior high OWL program (for 10th through 12th graders) has included 10 of our youth.

This active program is administered by our full time DRE Catherine Farmer. The council meets monthly with the following representation: Chris Brown (YRUU), Beth Rendeiro (OWL), Amelia Harati (youth representative); Karen Patch (PAC); Linda Van Ligten (Classroom support); Janet Goodwin (chair). We look at the big picture, plan events, address policy issues and discuss other matters affecting the program. We have exciting new ideas for summer and the coming year. We plan to recruit volunteers for this summer and next year during the next few weeks. We are recruiting classroom teaching teams as well as single or short-term assistance with social action and arts projects. Come share your talent and enthusiasm with our young people!

Sharing the Caring

Contact: Peggy Kharraz

Provides a structure within our church community to focus and express concern for members in need. Types of help provided include cards, phone calls, hospital visits, rides to church services or medical appointments, picking up groceries.

UU Service Committee (UUSC) Liaison

Contacts: Simon Huss, Rachael Donaldson

Under the auspices of the Faith in Action Commission, connects us with the program and activities of the UUSC worldwide.

UU UNO Liaison

Contact: Eleanor Eagan

Under the auspices of the Faith in Action Commission, supports and advocates for the United Nations, through affiliation with the UUA's UU-UNO office.

Stewardship Committee

Jacki Weber, Chair

Stewardship's major initiative for 2004 was to begin an annual canvass. This is a time when members of a canvass committee (a dozen or so), each sought to meet with a dozen or so church members. We worked with the most recent joiners as our target population.

Feedback was very positive: those who were canvassed were able to talk to others in the church about their experiences, providing a much needed feedback loop and bringing important information to light. Those who did the canvassing found it a joy to talk with people about the church. So often, we don't have the time or the forum for conversations like these.

We also continued to make headway with regular sending of pledge statements, acknowledging of pledge changes and looking at membership trends.

This year's work will focus on stewardship's role in the transformational process, expanding the annual canvass and increasing membership retention.

The book *The Almost Church* is currently informing our work.

The committee is officially comprised of Jacki Weber (chair), Phil Bonacich, Rob Briner, Ron Crane, Sanjeev Jain, Ofelia Lachtman, and Pat Wright. We meet regularly as a committee, and seek dialogue with all members of the congregation.

TASK-ORIENTED VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Task-Oriented Volunteer Opportunities are the kinds of pitching-in-to-get-the-work-done jobs for which you can sign up once or as many times as you like, without committing to long-term membership or leadership on an ongoing committee or council. Instead, you can simply lend a hand with specific administrative chores, or at various kinds of special events or activities (often during Sunday coffee hours)...which is a great way to get involved, meet new friends and find a niche in our congregation.

Adult Religious Growth and Learning

Contact: Jane Machnik

Facilitate, lead or teach classes or workshops designed to support members and friends in their spiritual journey, their search for understanding, and their knowledge of our Unitarian Universalist traditions.

"Ask Me"

Contact: Melinda Ewen

Available during Sunday coffee hours, to help newcomers learn more about our church. Volunteers should be long-term UUs and enjoy talking to people.

Audio Taping Services & Special Events

Contact: Phil Bennett

Tape services and prepare tapes for sale at church Book Cart.

Book Cart

Contact: Max Joffe

Present and sell books and CDs on Unitarian-Universalism, religious freedom and philosophy from the book cart in Forbes Hall, after Sunday services.

Bulletin Boards & Literature Management

Contact: Marie Kashmer-Stiebing

Assist church administrator with organizing, posting and coordinating contents of church bulletin boards.

Child Care

Contacts: Director of Religious Education, Church Administrator

Provide care for infants and toddlers on Sunday mornings and at selected church events.

Choir

Contact: Steve Wight

Sings at 11:00 worship service, rehearses Thursday evenings and Sunday mornings; off first Sunday of each month and two months of summer.

Church Directory

Contact: Marie Kashmer-Stiebing

Help church administrator update, publish and/or distribute church membership directory.

Circle Supper Hosts

Contact: TBA

Provide space in your home for a potluck dinner in which 6-10 members of the congregation gather to meet and get to know each other in a relaxed, informal environment. Circle Suppers are held several times a year. Hosts may volunteer once or several times.

Coffee Hosts

Contact: Ellen Boag

We have some new faces serving coffee. Nels Hanson, Jennifer Westbay, Carl Hoppe, Lindsay Pinkham, Leah Moore. Nancy Babbitt, Patrick and Amy Meighan are there when the month has five Sundays.

Still in there greeting and pouring coffee, preparing the table and cleaning up, are Robert Kory assisted by sons, Kevin and Ryan, Dan Nannini, Wally Boag, Lily Wilson, Sandra Trutt, Pam Teplitz, Alison Chipman, and Gerrie Lambson.

Without these wonderful volunteers, who commit to serving once a month, there would be no coffee, no cookies and no lively sounds in Forbes after the services.

Courtyard Connections

Contact Julie Nyquist

Help to cook, set up, serve and clean up after our occasional themed lunches after church.

Dining for Dollars Hosts

Contact: Helen Burns

Host, prepare and serve a themed meal for our major fundraising event of the year. Once a year we auction off places at about 50 such meals to the highest bidders among the

congregation. Past events have included ethnic meals, sailboat brunches and murder-mystery dinners.

Enrollment Team

Contacts: Richard Boothe (scheduling), John Fels (general)

Help enroll new members for the church.

Greeters

Contact: Arvid Knudsen

Once a month, provide a warm welcome to all who attend Sunday services, with special attention to visitors.

Newsletter

Contact: Carol Agate

The newsletter continues much the same as last year, but with the relationship of the staff being strengthened by semi-annual meetings. We enjoyed ourselves so much at the February meeting - debating punctuation styles - that Nels Hansen wrote a newsletter article about it. Rob Briner has accelerated his pace of providing articles about our history with information he is gleaning from the church archives. Nels specializes as the event reporter and Paula Bernstein specializes in interviews.

Marv Pulliam has joined the staff as a backup editor. Paula remains the first-line editor, reviewing all articles as they are submitted. She then forwards them to Carol Agate, who formats them and arranges them by page. Marv will serve as a backup when either Paula or Carol is not available. We are now expecting all newsletter articles and photographs to be submitted by email. Charles Haskell continues taking photos of many church events and individuals.

Karen Lang has joined the editor/proofreader staff. Other members are Joyce Holmen, Jennifer Westbay, Liz Fuller, Carol-Jean Tueffel, and Jackie Schwartz. Gerrie Lambson serves as editor/proofreader while also coordinating the work done by the others. She gives the newsletter its final approval.

The art directors are the people who make the newsletter look so great. Pam Teplitz, Carol Ring, and Dayla McDonald rotate responsibility for the finished product. As soon as the art director sends the newsletter to the printer, she also sends it to Liz Fuller, who posts it on our web site and sends a message to all our online subscribers giving them the

code for accessing it. The subscribers get to read the newsletter about a week before the snail mail recipients, and in color. Liz also takes information from the newsletter and updates the portions of the web site that are for public access.

Office administrator Marie Kashmer-Steibing, ascertains from the printer when the newsletter will be ready and notifies Anne MacQueen. Anne summons her mailing crew and supervises getting the newsletter in the mail.

Marie is studying the cost of having our own copier/collator in the office and comparing that to the costs of having this job and other printing work done outside.

As of April 4 there were 216 people subscribing to the newsletter on line.

Office Volunteers

Contact: Anne MacQueen

Office volunteers give time and energy to the church by assembling materials for meetings and by preparing mailings by stuffing envelopes and affixing labels, stamps and fasteners. On call are: Lyn Armondo, Sylvia Berke, Sheila Bjornlie, Ellen Boag, Helen Brown, Otto Cahn, Mary Cole, Irene Holland, Jue Jameson, Gist Lavoie, Jean Maucieri, Francine Moore, Sue Moore, John Raiford, Jean Rutowski, Serena Shames, Myra Wald, Grace Weaver, and Michael Young.

Pilgrims Feast

Contact: TBA

Help to organize, publicize, set up and clean up after our annual turkey potluck dinner, held the Saturday before Thanksgiving.

Religious Education

Contact: Wendy Salz Johnston

Work with children on Sunday mornings, in our Way Cool Sunday School program.

Sound & Lights

Contacts: Warren Mathews, Jim Cadwell

Operate sanctuary lighting and sound systems for various church events.

Ushers

Contact: Pat McGuire

Greet and help seat attendees at Sunday services, count heads for attendance, hand out Orders of Service, and collect offerings. One Sunday a month.

Website

Contact: Liz Fuller

For the first time in a long time, we've made no major changes to the church website this year, but have continued our never-ending process of expansion. The latest addition is a new top-level section for the Church's music program, which includes biographies of Steve Wight and Louis Durra, news on upcoming music events, a lengthy FAQ on the choir, a list of choir CDs available for purchase (including several downloadable sample tracks from the CDs), and a humorous list of the "Top 10 Reasons for Not Joining the Choir...and Why That's No Excuse!"

We've also recently added a section on Covenant Groups, a new page of "Other UU News & Events" (including news from PSWD, PSWIRL, UULMCA, Camp de Benneville Pines and other groups), and monthly postings of our board meeting agendas, prior to each meeting.

At the moment, because our website host, Pair.com, offers us the opportunity to create "@uusm.org" e-mail addresses, we're also in the process of setting up e-mail aliases for many of our most active church committees. As a result, you may now reach members of the Building Committee at building@uusm.org, the Stewardship Committee at stewardship-committee@uusm.org and the people who receive newsletter submissions at newsletter@uusm.org (If you'd like to create an e-mail alias to simplify communications for your committee, just contact Marie at the church office and let her know a) your committee name, b) the @uusm.org address you'd like to create for your committee, and c) the names and personal e-mail addresses of your committee members who should receive mail from that address.)

Finally, it's a pleasure to report that visits to our site are growing almost every month, with the both the daily (175) and monthly (5447) totals in March nearly double those for the same month a year ago. The Sermons, Calendar and current month's newsletter .pdf (which is available only to member and friend subscribers) are the most popular pages.

ACTIVITIES & SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

Activities and Special Interest Groups are more social than work oriented, and bring together people who share specific interests. These groups and occasions offer fellowship, support, intellectual stimulation, community involvement and/or just plain fun. Some meet or occur regularly, and some just now and then...but all of them can provide a great way to get to know new people, learn new things, and indulge your personal passions.

Books R' Us

Contacts: Phil & Edna Bonacich

Books R' us is a monthly fiction discussion group that meets at 7:30 P.M., usually on the fourth Wednesday of the month, at the home of Phil and Edna Bonacich in the Mar Vista area. The group averages twelve to fifteen people at each meeting. The only rule is to have read the book before coming. Light refreshments are served.

Camp De Benneville Pines Weekend

Contacts: Marv Pulliam, Sharon Damerell

Members and friends gather at the UU camp in the San Bernadino mountains, on the third weekend after Memorial Day each year, for hot tubbing, swimming, hiking, children's activities, dam building, arts and crafts, discussion groups, lazing around, or whatever else people want to do.

Caregivers' Support Group

Contacts: Marie Kashmer-Stiebing, Nancy Miller

Being responsible for providing care for a chronically ill family member or friend can be alternately rewarding, frustrating, isolating, and overwhelming. It's good to discuss what happening with others who are in the same boat. The Caregivers' Support Group can help you deal with day-to-day problems and questions while maintaining your own life. Members also encourage each other to mind their own health and well being while doing so very much else that is necessary.

A support group can be a small thing that helps you get through tough times. Some of us in this group provide round-the-clock care every day, and others do long-distance caregiving. Between us we have experience in taking care of loved ones with conditions including Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, diabetes, cancer, depression, heart problems, and

more. Our small group has been meeting for four and a half years and this winter, after consulting with Judith Meyer, we made the transition to being self-led. Founder Nancy Miller has moved on in her life, and we are most grateful for her valuable leadership.

Newcomers are always welcome, or you might just want to contact one of us even if you can't attend a meeting. You'll find on the third Tuesday of the month, from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m., upstairs in Room 6 or in Forbes Hall. For information, please contact Joyce Holmen or Helen Brown.

Circle Suppers

Contact: TBA

Sign up to be a guest at one of these periodic, informal potluck dinners, held in members' homes as a way for church members to get to know each other in small groups of 6-10 people.

Couples' Club

Jean Rutowski, Contact

Couples' Club structured potluck dinners provide a friendly, informal meeting place for church couples of all ages to become better acquainted. Dinners are held the third Saturday of the month three or four times a year in members' homes. All interested couples are invited to join.

Courtyard Connections

Contact: Julie Nyquist

Join other members and friends for themed lunches after church, held several times a year. Past events include "Potatoes on the Patio," "Pizza on the Patio," "Kabobs in the Courtyard," and "Cowboy Cookout."

Covenant of UU Pagans (CUUPs)

Contact: Dan March

A spirituality group focusing on the natural rhythm of seasons, nature and humanity.

Dances of Universal Peace

Contact: Melinda Ewen

Meets on the fourth Friday of every month to enjoy simple circle dances, performed in groups and set to live music, that celebrate and foster the spirit of peace. All ages (from kids to seniors) welcome. Suggested donation \$10.

Dining for Dollars

Contact: Helen Burns

Bid on and attend one (or more) of approximately 50 themed meals, hosted by other members of the congregation in our biggest fundraiser of the year. Past events have included ethnic meals, sailboat brunches and murder-mystery dinners. Bidding for the next round of Dining for Dollars events takes place in February.

Ethics Study Group

Contact: Charles Haskell

Organization within the Faith in Action program, which discusses and presents discussion events on a wide range of ethics-related topics.

FUUsion

Contact: Andy Bistline

Dedicated to fun and fellowship for people ages 21 to 35.

Hiking

Contact: Richard Boothe

Group selects a variety of Saturday morning hikes to enjoy nature. Meets alternate months. Gather in front of the church at 9 a.m. Usually includes lunch at a local restaurant after the hike. Bring your sun hat, sunglasses, water bottle, tennis or hiking shoes, and money for parking and lunch. These hikes are socially paced, suitable for anyone who can walk six blocks up hill.

Hunger Task Force
Contact: Cathy Gentile

Task force of the Faith in Action Commission, which plans and participates in activities relating to easing and/or eliminating hunger in our midst.

Interweave
Contact: Ron Crane

Group for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender concerns. Includes a support group, an e-mail list for group members, and business meetings on the third Sunday of the month, after church service. Our next meeting will be on April 18 . All are welcome. See our Interweave page for more information.

Men's Group
Contact: Achim Jung

Meets every other Thursday, from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m., to focus on what makes men alike as a group, and what sets them apart as individuals. This month we meet on April 1, 15 and 29.

Over-50 Lunch Bunch
Contact: Gaye Follmer Deal

The Over-50 Club meets at noon on the third Monday of each month, except the summer months of July and August. Usually each person brings his/her own lunch, except in December and May, when we share a potluck luncheon. Coffee, tea, and cookies are served. Following a Memoirs theme, we had "do-it-yourself" programs where each person talked for five to ten minutes. People of all ages are cordially invited. For further information, call Gaye Follmer Deal.

Parenting Support Group
Contact: Judith Martin Straw

If you're the parent of a small Unitarian (age 5 or under) or are about to become one, join us for a monthly potluck and discussion. Topics include day care, clothing and toy swaps,

best bedtime books, etc. Child care is available on site for a small fee, so bring the little ones and some easy finger food.

Peace Task Force

Contact: S. J. Guidotti

Task force of the Faith in Action Commission, which plans and participates in activities relating to the opposition of unilateral war, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and controlling weapons of mass destruction.

Picnics in Palisades Park

Contacts: Serena Shames or Nedra Bickel

Informal summer suppers providing a sociable, peaceful and pleasant community good time. Join us every Monday each August, at 5:30 p.m. We meet at the Palisades Park picnic area north of Montana. There are cool breezes from the ocean, so bring your sweater. You will know our table by the red tablecloth. Bring your own supper. (Many folks just pick up a salad on the way home from work before they join us.) There is parking on Ocean Avenue.

Pilgrims Feast

Contact: TBA

Attend our annual potluck dinner featuring turkey and all the trimmings, held every year on the Saturday before Thanksgiving.

Poetry Group

Contact: Jeff Greenman

The Poetry Group came into existence in, roughly, the Spring of 2000. Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month at 7:30 P.M. The group is primarily dedicated to reading and discussing prominent, published poets in sessions led by various, interested group members. We are comprised of church and non-church members. Once-a-year or so, we bring some of our own things to read. Meetings take place at the homes of group members with the will and the spatial resources to accommodate us. Shirlee Frank and Chris and Pat Shinaberger have long been generous in opening their homes and cupboards to the group. Recently, Julie Gilliam has welcomed us to her lovely abode.

This year included some unique events for us. Last May, we held a special meeting at the Sunset Hall Library, initially in order to reconnect with Jack Behr. Though, ironically, Jack was unable to attend, we did connect with an enthusiastic group of residents there. We also had an enjoyable and rare Saturday Forbes Hall meeting in December, including a program of limericks and song, as well as poetry and Julie's reading and discussion of Clement Moore's "A Visit From St. Nicholas." There was great food, too. We had a wonderful exchange of Valentines in February, in large part due to the inspiration and work of Diana Spears.

Participation this year has ranged, roughly, from eight to 12, with a core group of eight to ten present for most meetings (four or five men and four or five women).

Several relatively new members, including Karen Lang, have joined us at times over the past year. George Serruta and Julie Gilliam have become regular attendees and contributors this year, as well. Diane Monteith has also become a regular and welcome attendee of late. In addition to those, returning regulars include Shirlee Frank, Diana Spears, Pat and Chris Shinaberger, Jeff Greenman, and Arvid Knudsen. (Carolyn Berry is always a welcome addition when her rehearsal schedule allows.)

The past year was marked with tragedy, in that Diane Keller (an original, recently-returned member of the group from year 2000) died in a sad and untimely fashion last summer. Her intensity, intelligence and laughter are greatly missed. Still felt is the absence of Jack Behr -- long a mainstay of, and inspiration to, our group--. Jack's progressive illness has kept him away from us on second Tuesdays.

The past year has also been full, poetically speaking, with featured offerings that have included Shakespeare's Sonnets, Sylvia Plath, Dylan Thomas, Theodore Roethke, the poetry of Love, the poetry of Humor, Elizabeth Bishop, (a smattering of French poets, thanks to George Serruta) and the collected works of 2004 National Book Award winner Jean Valentine. As this is written, a presentation of the New York School poet Kenneth Koch is in the works for May, with a look at Haiku in June, and quite possibly a feature of the work of the late Robert Creeley in July. We're looking forward to another inspiring, mind and heart-bending year of poetry. Please come and check us out.

Small Group Ministry **Marv Pulliam, Chair**

The Small Group Ministry program was launched under the leadership of Stefanie Etzbach-Dale, who introduced the concept to UUSM by an extensive training program in early 2004. In May 2004, she helped set up a Covenant Group Implementation Team with the charter to start forming covenant groups in the Fall of 2004. Training of facilitators occurred in August and September, and the first two groups were formed in October with

a minimum six month commitment. In the meantime, we developed our own logo, a Policy Manual and a Brochure for Small Group Ministry at UUSM. A monthly facilitator's covenant group meeting was established led by Judith Meyer. In March 2005, eight new facilitators were trained and two new groups were formed in April. A resource Manual was assembled from existing material to be used as a ready reference by facilitators. The current plan is to launch at least two more groups in the Fall of 2005.

Science Non-Fiction Book Discussion Group

Contact: Rebecca Crawford

The Science Non-Fiction Book Group meets on the third Tuesday of each month at a private home, to discuss books of popular science or biographies of scientists. Recent books include Collapse by Jared Diamond, The Fabric of the Cosmos by Brian Greene, and Astro Turf by M.G.Lord. All are welcome to join us, provided they have read the book.

The Adventure Group (TAG)

Contact: S. J. Guidotti

The Adventure Group has recently celebrated the second anniversary of not having changed it's name, wrapping up a year that began with the Skydiving for Birthdays Celebration and ended with the bi-annual Pizzarama Bake-off. In between activities included hikes in the Santa Monica mountains, a Set The Clocks Forward Beach Get Together, a Mid-Summer Goddess Party, rock and roll outings to Little Feat, Railroad Earth and others, a Rain Dance Party, representing both Pro and Con, a baseball game, and a July 4th camping excursion to Santa Cruz Island which featured ocean cave kayaking and a winner take off showdown with wild pigs for the contents of our coolers.

Our motto with regard to age continues to be: "If you think you're too old you probably are and if you think you're too young you should probably go play a video game." As for others, you can log onto our active list serve unless you're the born-again Christian who accidentally got on a year ago and whom we still talk about abusively.

Peace & Civil Liberties Committee

S. J. Guidotti, Chair

In the fall of 2003 the Peace Committee voted to expand its purview to include civil liberties. This change has been reflected in the speaker program that the committee has sponsored on Fri. nights and Sun. afternoons with many of the speakers lecturing on this vital and threatened area.

In addition to the speaker series, the committee has continued to publicize and promote anti-war vigils and demonstrations, as well as screenings of political videos by Saul Landau and UNPRECEDENTED, an expose of how the 2000 election was stolen.

Our meetings take place on the first Wednesday of every month and are held in Room A of the 17th St. facility.

Women's Alliance

The Women's Alliance was founded by wise women in 1927, the same year they helped found our church. For nearly eight decades the Alliance, as an affiliated organization, has provided ordinary and extraordinary opportunities for leadership training, interesting programs, fundraising, worship, good food, community outreach, personal growth, and getting to know some amazing women. Our twin-circles logo acknowledges the many gifts received from our Unitarian and Universalist foremothers, and we now tend the flame that they tended for us.

In 2005, the Alliance has 19 members, a nice mix of our congregation's long-timers and relative newcomers. In our circle we share from the heart as well as the head. We gather quarterly on Sundays in the Sanctuary or Forbes Hall for a program to further "the living tradition." 2004-05 programs:

Asking about Marriage and what it means to you -- religious marriage, being allowed or forbidden civil marriage, what it feels like to you to be married or divorced or (bringing back a 19th century word) a spinster.

Good Friends Talk about Dying -- medical, legal, and financial arrangements; coping with illness, disability, insurance, nursing homes; helpful books, websites, the funeral society; spiritual questions, memorial services, caregiving, and advocacy.

Highlighting the legacy of Malvina Reynolds (1900-1978), folk song writer, political activist, atheist, and "Steve Fritchman Unitarian" who wanted us to keep on being uppity and having fun.

Asking, "Why Reach Out to Ancient Goddesses?" -- feminists and UUs have made a point of studying ancient Goddesses and earth-centered religions. We'll sing and chant and discuss this modern enigma at our April 24th meeting.

Dues are only \$20, which lets us maintain membership in the Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation (UUWF). The continental UUWF has a newsletter, program materials and support, interfaith opportunities, and workshops for those able to go to the denomination's General Assembly in June. An historic vote in 2004 began the radical transformation of UUWF from a direct services membership organization to a grant-

giving and advocacy organization. Projects to be funded can be small, exciting, and co-sponsored by more than one group, so we're looking forward to hearing how to apply for these upcoming grants -- and to doing some dreaming together.

The district UUWF helps sponsor a women's retreat the first weekend of May at Camp de Benneville Pines, but hasn't provided other activities this past year. Several of our members attended the rousing UUA General Assembly in Long Beach, last June. A few of us joined in the 6th annual February retreat with songwriter Carolyn McDade; you know three of her songs from the UUA hymnal in our pews. Also in February, Lyn Armondo organized us to sell lunches to Dining for Dollars bidders. She regularly invited us to make dinner for Step Up On Second. And Alliance members enjoyed helping with the picnic that Interweave offers church-goers each summer.

Non-members are more than welcome to attend Alliance meetings. Please see the church newsletter or website for program themes for July 3rd and October 16th. Whether you're new to the church or not, we'd like to get to know you.

Zen Meditation

Contact: Bernard Silvers

Instruction on meditation is provided in this ongoing gathering. Beginners and questions are welcome. The class is informal, and meditation is done sitting on chairs. Meetings begin with readings or handouts, then a short discussion (from a religious perspective) of issues such as "anger." Buddhist and other forms of meditation are demonstrated.

Historian/Archivist

Rob Briner, chair

Since taking over from longtime historian/archivist Milt Holmen in late 2003, I've completed an initial inventory of the approximately 6,000 documents contained in our archives - including Orders of Service, weekly bulletins and monthly newsletters, printed sermons, board minutes, annual meeting minutes, rosters, and many other documents. This culled base of documents fill 20 standard file boxes, which will in the future be stored in the administrative building next door to the sanctuary. Most of these archived documents can and should be much better organized in the future, perhaps with the aid of scanning, duplication, and some form of on-demand recall.

The main historical project in 2005 is the 75th anniversary of the sanctuary in April; 2006 will mark the 50th anniversary of calling Ernie Pipes to be our minister; and 2007 will include the congregation's 80th annual meeting - that I will suggest be held in conjunction with a catered lunch at the Miramar Hotel, where the 1st annual meeting was held in 1928.

